

Writing file 6

Writing a mail shot

1 Work with a partner and discuss these questions.

- 1 How often do you receive mail shots from companies trying to sell you things? Do you read them?
- 2 Have you ever purchased anything because of a mail shot?
- 3 Does your company send out mail shots to clients? Are they successful?

2 Read the mail shot and decide which of the following headlines would work best. Discuss your opinion with a partner, then write your chosen headline at the top of the mail shot.

- 1 Imagine having total confidence in your computer protection software.
- 2 Free three-month trial of Databuild 3.1 – the most advanced protection software available.
- 3 Improve the security of your systems – take advantage of this amazing offer.

Dear Ms Malinder,

You have been especially chosen for a unique customer offer. You are among 2,000 of our special clients who have qualified for early purchasing of our latest computer protection software.

Just think – you could have a real edge over your competitors by getting your hands on this software a full six months before it goes on general sale. Databuild 3.1 is the simply the best protection out there.

'Since trialling Databuild 3.1 we've had zero security breaches on our system. It's easy to implement and is frankly the best protection software out there right now – we got lucky having early access.' John Brydon, IT Director, UJ Publishing.

Hackers could be attacking your computer as we speak. With old versions of protection software and back doors left open on your system, hackers can come in and take what they want, when they want. Eliminate this risk now by taking advantage of our special 'three month's free trial' offer. That's right – there is no cost to you for three months. And in three months time, if you don't think Databuild 3.1 has made your systems safer, then simply return the product. So whichever way you look at it, this is a win-win offer.

Sounds too good to be true? Well, try us. Call us now on 435-0201-4965.

Yours sincerely

Santiago Roethlisberger

P.S. Don't delay – get Databuild 3.1 before your competitors and be protected for free for three months – offer ends 31st October 2010.

3 Work with a partner. Look at this advice about writing a mail shot. Which statements do you agree with?

- 1 Get to the point.
- 2 Be shy about the offer.
- 3 Use testimonials (comments from people who already use the product).
- 4 Make it hard to respond.
- 5 Highlight the key benefits.
- 6 Personalize the message – use *you* and *your* where possible.
- 7 Use a P.S.
- 8 Invite the recipient of the mail shot to act.
- 9 Try to use humour.
- 10 Use exclamation marks.
- 11 Include a deadline to create a sense of urgency.
- 12 Use complex and descriptive vocabulary.

4 Work with your partner. Look at the mail shot again. Based on the advice you discussed in 3, how could the mail shot be improved?

5 Underline the sentences / phrases in the letter that perform the following functions.

- 1 Give specific details about the offer.
- 2 Address the reader as one of a group of important people.
- 3 Remind the reader of the offer and create a sense of urgency.
- 4 Give an objective comment / testimonial about the product.
- 5 Mention the key benefit.
- 6 Make the letter sound more like a conversation.
- 7 Call the reader to action.
- 8 Mention further benefits.

6 Choose a product or service that your company sells and think of a special offer you could send to customers. Make notes on the offer and plan what to include in a mail shot.

7 Write your mail shot in 150–250 words. Remember to use the recommended techniques discussed during this lesson.

8 Exchange mail shots with a partner. Is your partner's mail shot effective? Does it use the recommended techniques? Could it be improved in any way?