Bob Bly – Hooking Your Reader

Mikhail: Hi everyone, and welcome to Health Copywriting Profits, the online event that can help take your copywriting skills and income to the next level. Today we're talking to Bob Bly, and Bob is a freelance direct response copywriter, with nearly four decades of experience writing for over 100 clients in a wide range of industries. He's won countless marketing and copywriting awards, including AWAI's Copyrighter of the Year. And he's the author of 100 published books, which is more than most people even read during their lifetime. So, glad to have you on, Bob. Welcome.

Bob Bly: Thanks for inviting me. And I'm glad to be here.

Mikhail: So can you tell us a little bit about, I mean, you've got this long career in copywriting, kind of how you got started?

Bob Bly: My way was back then and, you know, I started in the late '70s, it was unusual. Today, I hear it more. I went to college and studied and got a BS in chemical engineering. And I intended to be an engineer. But when you're an engineering major, companies come on campus to recruit you. And a recruiter said to me, "You know what, you have a technical background, I see you also like writing," like I had been an editor of the school paper, he said, "We need some marcomm," I didn't even know what that was, "marketing communications writers with a technical background. So would you be interested in that job.?" So I interviewed for it, I met the guy who would be my boss, Terry Smith. I instantly liked him. And although this was-- I worked for him in '79 and '80, we're still friends today. And so that's how I got into it. I was writing corporate marcomm, so to speak, for a company that made aerospace equipment.

Mikhail: Well, that's a very different industry than what we're talking about here today in Health. So kind of how did you transition from that into-- I know you do health, you do and so many different industries,--how did you kind of end up in this different-- from that engineering aspect?

Bob Bly: Well, the first year or two, maybe just a year of my freelancing career, I naturally gravitated toward technical companies that made industrial equipment, high tech electronics. And you know, when you're active, people get known. And one day someone called me and said, "I work for a company. And I know you've done electronics. We make a heart monitor." So it was health. It was, you know, it was FDA approved medical equipment. It sounded interesting, and like sounded up my alley, and I get it. And I started to do medical equipment. And the next thing, I got a call from Physicians' Desk Reference, and they said, "Hey, we've seen some of your medical copy, do you want to write a control for selling Physicians' Desk Reference?" So that was more traditional direct marketing. And from there, I did health books, ads and direct mail, health newsletters, and it was only an end, a lot of those companies also sold dietary supplements. And I moved. And I started to do a lot of that, which I still do today.

Mikhail: Right, right. So one of the things, especially when you're selling supplements, you know, they are kind of a commodity. I guess one of the things as a copywriter that you need to do when you're writing your copy is to kind of differentiate your product from what everyone else is selling what is available, even you know, when you go to the pharmacies, and that kind of thing. What's kind of your approach when you take a look at that?

Bob Bly: Well, there are multiple techniques for differentiating your product. And depending on what the product is, and which of these characteristics it possesses, I will pick and I have about a dozen. I will pick one of those techniques that fits the product best and I'll apply it. So for example-- would you like me to give an example?

Mikhail: Yeah, yeah, that'd be perfect.

Bob Bly: Yeah. So I had a client approach me in a category, which is you know, there's a lot of competition, prostate supplements. So what I noticed is, he had-- you know, there are a number of ingredients that are recognized to be used in prostate. He had a lot of them. A lot of ingredients in his tablet, more than usual, and more than the top two or three competitors significantly more. So that's what we went-- that's what we went for. We are hook, or hook so to speak, was that these guys have this and this and this, but they don't have A, B, C, D and E, so you're missing out. And the typical way to handle this in a promotion is you show a table, and the left column lists all the ingredients. And the column to the right is your product. And it's under each one it says 'yes'. And then you show the competitive products and the other two columns or three columns, usually two, and only a few of each ingredient are checked. So at a glance, it looks like the product that you are selling is the most comprehensive, full spectrum product. And the others are sorely lacking. You know, for example, they don't have __05:57__. And you do. And in your copy, you explain why that's important, and why it's a mistake for that not to have it. So that's one of the approaches I use for differentiating products.

Mikhail: Yeah, so you mentioned today, you talked about a hook. Can you explain a little bit on what you mean by a hook or what it is and why it's so important?

Bob Bly: Well, if it's a product that is no, like in a category where people want it and they know the benefits of it. Your hook is your point of differentiation, what's different about your joint supplement than other joint supplements, that could be one. Another hook could be starting with the pain point. If it's a symptom-- you know, there's two kinds of conditions supplements treat: symptomatic, where the person has a problem now; and asymptomatic. And if it's symptomatic, for example, you can first do what we might call problem intensification to talk about how bad it is, and if you don't do something, how bad it's going to get. Can I give an example of that?

Mikhail: Yeah, sure.

Bob Bly: So this was not for a supplement. This was for in another country, a dental implant clinic. And, you know, I wrote an ad for dental implants. And it's in some ways a difficult sell, because they're very expensive. So people are hesitant. And it's easy to read the ad and say, "Well, I'll put this off, maybe, you know, if I save enough money, I could get some implants in two years." We needed to create a sense of urgency. That was the hook. And I talking to the dentist, I found out something I didn't know. A lot of these people are, who get implants, are missing teeth. And if you are missing teeth, the bone structure of your jaw actually changes. It tightens, and it does it slowly. But if you leave it untreated, it will tighten to the point where you can't put in a denture or an implant, your jaw is misaligned. So we gave that as a reason, you know, do it now before your, you know, your loss of smile, loss of teeth becomes permanent. And once that bone change happens, it's too late. There's nothing you can do.

Mikhail: Yeah, that's a really good point. And I guess it talks stuff, an objection that they would have had that you kind of also address.

Bob Bly: it's an objection. But also, as you know, with all supplements, or most supplements, you know, urgency is a powerful factor. That's part of your copy. Yes, you want to say the benefits, you know the use of it, what is unique about it, and be very specific about that. But you also want to say why should you buy this now instead of later. So there are a variety of ways to do that. We looked at the dental implant example. But for example, another example is knees-- rheumatoid arthritis and knees. If you wait too long, and you have joint arthritis, and there's bone on bone contact, then it gets really painful. And it may reach a point where it can't be repaired or can't be fixed or be very difficult to fix with procedures like a pill or electricity or light. And so you tell them that there's a, you know, A, first it's going to get worse, never going to get better. It's going to get worse. It's going to start to hurt. It's going to interfere with your life, your mobility. And if you keep waiting, it may be permanent.

Mikhail: Yeah, those are good. Can you share some of the characteristics that you look at? I mean, you said there's 12 things you look at when you kind of look into come up with a hook. Can you share some of those?

Bob Bly: Yeah. One of them is the opposite of using a lot of ingredients. And that's how some companies fight back against the multi ingredient people. Their argument against it is to say, "Hey, if these guys have 25 ingredients, the amount of each in the tablet is clinically insignificant, because they couldn't fit large doses of 25 nutrients in a capsule, it would be the size of a football." So you can take the-- you can argue the opposite approach, "Hey, our supplement--" And there's very famous, I won't name them, prostate supplement that does just that, that basically has one ingredient and they say, "Hey, this is the best ingredient. And we're the only one who gives you dosages that match with the clinical literature says works." So you can go the opposite direction, you can be selective and have fewer, and say the rest of it is always you just pouring your money down the drain. That's it. That's the second approach we use.

Mikhail: Yeah, so it sounds like I guess the process with coming up with your hook is you really have to have an understanding of what the competitors are doing, and what your product and really compare and see where you can find something to stand out.

Bob Bly: Right. Because even if you understand your market very well, your target prospect and their pain. And sometimes you have to learn it, like I don't have arthritis, but I do a lot of joint supplements. I don't have prostate problems, but I do a lot of prostate. But you can learn-- either you have it or you can learn it. I do have, like you do, I wear glasses. So I've done vision supplements that I can relate to more. So you find out the pain of the prospect. But that's not enough. Because once you identify that pain, let's say you have the solution. So do the other nine supplements on the market make the exact same point. So the key is really the differentiation. And I could go into more methods of that if you would like.

Mikhail: Yeah, yeah, I think that would be really good.

Bob Bly: One of them is, is to tell a fascinating, compelling story. People, especially those of us who buy through direct response, are sold by stories. For example, I also do a lot of work with investment

newsletters. And one of the most successful publishers in the field, who has been a client of mine said to me, "You know what investors want?" And I say, "To be rich. Would it be more having better results in their portfolio?" He said, "No, they want to a story about, one, a fascinating story about one stock that's going to increase in share price tenfold." So they buy it based on the story and you see these in different financial promotions that you receive all the time. You know, "Hey, this is forget 5 G, this is gonna be 6G," you know, that kind of thing. So you can do that in supplements too. I did one for a CBD product. Now, how do you differentiate that? Well, there are a number of ways for CBD. But when I asked questions of the maker, he said our plants, our hemp that we source is grown in the ideal conditions on the side of a volcanic mountain so it gets a unique amount and blend of sunlight. The soil is super rich with nutrients because it's volcanic. And the temperature, the climate, it was in a like a moderate zone, maybe tropical zone is perfect all year round. So you can make that the difference. I once did an ad that said, that was for skin cream in Australia, and we said now the gift of beauty is a gift-- no-- we said, now you get beauty from-- I don't remember the exact headline-- as a gift from the sea. And what the gift from the sea was is part of this cream was made with jelly fish extract. So after we got the retention with gift from the sea, we immediately went into the main ingredient and showed why this is a superior skin product and pointed out that almost no one else was using it. So it was a big point of differentiation. So you can tell a fascinating story and more often than not, more often than not, almost every ingredient out there, if you look hard enough, has one fascinating story. And I don't mean the science of it. I mean something unusual. For example, I did a promotion for a product that among other things had magnesium. And I said the secret of getting-- I can't even remember what it was for, you know, the secret of getting-- maybe it was an energy product, more energy is a mineral or metal, an element on the periodic table that helped the first intercontinental jet fly without refueling, because I researched it. And the first intercontinental jet that was actually able to fly the distance without fuelling did so because it was made out of magnesium alloy, and it was so much lighter than the other jets. So you can always --if you look deep enough, you can always find something. Sometimes the story is strong and gets attention and makes sense. Sometimes you're sort of forcing it, and you say, maybe people are not going to quite buy this until you do something else.

Mikhail: Yeah, so again, you talk into more research, right? You have to get into that research of-- really trying to find something that's interesting and compelling that's gonna pique your readers' interest and have them actually read your promotion.

Bob Bly: Yeah, one of the big or well respected supplement makers, who, you know, I've also written copy for him, said to a group of us at a meeting, he said, "Don't sit there and try to think of your idea. Do research, do deep research, you will find in the deep research, you'll uncover what the important sales point is, and the point of differentiation." And he's usually right.

Mikhail: Yeah, so it's one of those things. I guess, when you find that, you know you found it.

Bob Bly: Yes, no, but it rings true. There's proof. And it's so engaging, or interesting, you haven't heard that story before. Another one was, you know, how a NASA space shuttle, space station experiment found the cure for arthritis on earth. And NASA, early on, on the space shuttle-- space station, rather, they were growing their own plants to eat food. And they also did experiments on plants. And they found that to grow plants in space, red light was the most beneficial, the plants grew __17:38__ Vegas ____. And so they took that back to earth and found it once again. And the reason was red light had a

characteristic where it can penetrate deeper through the leaf or in a human through the skin, you know, to hit the inside target. And so we said, you know, NASA broke the secret of how to treat arthritis. And one of the modes of arthritis treatment, especially if you're at a clinic where they do _multimode __18:08__ treatment, one of them is red light. Sometimes it's a red LED, sometimes it's a red laser, or sometimes it's just an intense red light. So that's how they came up with that.

Mikhail: Yeah, well, let's continue with more things that you kind of look for to use to find your hook.

Bob Bly: Well, here's one that when it works is very effective. And it pops out, really gets the attention as a reader right from the get go. If you're-- especially if you're promoting to an educated audience, and you know that in the dietary supplement field, a lot of these people, a lot of our prospects are information junkies, they are health junkies, they read about health all the time. A regular person who doesn't buy supplements and has arthritis, you know, they go to the doctor, but that's it. But a supplement buyer or an alternative health believer, they do a lot of research. And so they know more about the product categories. So a colleague of mine had the assignment to write a tabloid mailer for an eye supplement. And her clients had a lot of the typical ingredients and a couple that weren't, but it also didn't have two have the most common that many of the competitors were trumpeting in their headlines or their leads. And so she did a headline to bash them. Now you can't bash them by name, but it didn't matter. Her headline was "Why bilberry and lutein don't work." So you read that, if you're knowledgeable in eye supplements, you go, "What? Everybody has bilberry and lutein." You know, bilberry was proven in the war to help pilots see better. Why doesn't it work? And of course, she didn't make that up, you know. If you do research, and most often, when you research a supplement, the clinical studies range from supporting it to saying it's so-so, to saying it doesn't work. So, you know, we had-- she had, I didn't do this promotion-- she had plenty of studies to back up the assertion that they don't work. And then she said, "Well, what does work?" And then they went into the ingredients they had in their vision supplement. So, and I've used variations of this in other industries. For example, in financial, I was selling a trading software, option trading software. And the area, I don't know if you follow it, but of option trading software, selling is very hyped. Every promotion, you get online, it's the same thing, "Hey, I had 72 out of 74 winning trades, you know, making me a profit of $87,000 and 324 cents or something. You know, in three weeks." They all sound the same. And people became cynical. You know, you read that, you kind of don't believe it. So, and also people's experience, I don't know if you trade options, or any stocks, but people's experiences, the systems, some of them just never work. And a lot of them work for a short while. But then market conditions change and they don't work. I mean, I read an article that said, " Warren Buffett's system is not working so well the last two or three years." You know, he was outperformed by the, you know, the broad market indices. So we did a promotion for our options trading system that says why most options trading software doesn't work, dot, dot, dot, and never will. And it tripled the control. So it was sort of a knockoff of this other writers, bilberry and lutein. And obviously, you know, another point here is that, if you're writing health, you shouldn't just study health, your control, your swipe file shouldn't just be health promotions. Anytime you come across a headline, or a marketing technique in another field that strikes you and you go, "Wow, that's effective," keep it in your swipe file, you may be able to adapt that to health.

Mikhail: Yeah, really good point there on the swipe file. I guess, you know, one of the messages I've been in talking throughout the entire event, we've had a couple of guys who specialize in finance. And even though that this is a health event, you know, the principles that they talk about, it's just core

copywriting principles. So it doesn't matter if it's health, finance, or whatever industry you're in. They're just these principles that, you know, they go across industries. So that's a really good point in terms of looking at the other industries and getting your inspiration and swipe files from there and seeing how you can use that and adapted to your own promotion.

Bob Bly: I agree. And I'm not surprised that I'd probably know some of them if you name them, but I'm not surprised they said that at all. Because a lot of us who work in health, dietary supplements also work in investment newsletters, they have some similarity between them in selling them, the methodologies, you know, consumer products sold with direct response, where copy is very important, and offer is very important.

Mikhail: Exactly, yep. Yeah. So we've got another hook to add in there, we now use the--

Bob Bly: Of course. We talked about bashing your competitors' ingredients. Another one is it's a little more sophisticated, but people understand it, and it works. And it's often the case. You have an ingredient in your supplement. Let's say it's beta glucan -- I had never known how to pronounce it, beta glucan-- and other people have that ingredient in the supplement too. Let's say you're doing a immunity supplement. But there's like seven or eight forms of the molecules if you study it, and they each a little different in their structure. And you're using one that you found in literature and also in your product that works better. And not only does it work better, but there are reasons based on the molecular structure that it does work better. So you talk about you have-- you know, other people have this ingredient, but you use the optimal molecular, you know, formulation of it that has better efficacy, and better absorbability than the ingredient that your competitor uses. So you can make a molecular argument. Another way to do that is, for example, I worked on something that was something to strengthen the legs, and part of it was it built collagen. Let me just get rid of this noise. And it built collagen. You know, when you get older, I don't know if you know this because you're a young guy, that the most common reason for death in people over 60 is not cancer, it's not prostate, it's they don't have balance anymore because their legs are weakened, they fall, and they break their hip, and they die within a year. So this product strengthened the legs because part of lack of balance is weakness in leg muscles, and it strengthened the bones in the legs. And it did that by building a collagen. The problem was, collagen supplements are very difficult for the body to absorb. But collagens break up, you can-- can be broken up, which is what this company did into smaller molecules, bio peptides. So you take this pill, it can pass right through the barriers, get into your bloodstream. And when it ends up at the bone, it forms on the bone new collagen. So you know, and it's again molecular, just, you know, a smaller form of essentially the same molecule.

Mikhail: Yeah, that's a really good point. That is one I guess, you see being used pretty often now. They always talk about either that the ingredient itself is a better absorbed or something like that, or they have complementary ingredients in it that helps with absorption, those kind of things.

Bob Bly: Yes, I mean, sometimes, you know, even the absorption is not only-- it can be a complimentary ingredient, a better form of the main ingredient, it can also be the delivery system. You know, if you're selling CBD, is vaping the fastest delivery system, is tincture, oil, for pain? There's arguments and I've read research that says it's a topical cream, because it really is absorbed fast through the derma, the skin. And so yeah, you know, there's a variety of ways to differentiate ingredient. One is the chemistry.

One is the delivery system. And one is sort of, I wouldn't call them catalysts, but additional ingredients that help their delivery and, you know, make them absorb and delivered faster.

Mikhail: Yeah. So I just want to cover just what we've talked about so far. We've got-- if you've got lots of ingredients in your product, you can highlight that and compare it to your competitors, showing them like you have ingredients that they don't have. Then there's also the opposite of that if, you know, you just have got one really powerful ingredient, you highlight that-- one or two, yeah. We've got a-- if you can use a fascinating, compelling story. We've got __passion 28:51__ competitors, ingredients. And now we have-- if you have a better version or better absorbed type of ingredients, you can use that as a way to differentiate. Did I miss any?

Bob Bly: No, no, I'm just saying I treated them separately. Can have a molecular advantage that isn't always has to do with the absorption, the bio peptide example did.

Mikhail: Okay.

Bob Bly: But other ones will say because this-- like this something-- like an example would be chelated minerals, the collation, which is a different form of the, you know, the molecule is, you know, that's better absorbed. So, but like in beta glucan, it does more to help to boost the immune system, it's not absorption. So it's molecular advantage and bio availability. And we also talk about delivery system, which might affect bio availability, but it also affects consumer preference. For example, I don't have pain as a chronic pain, but if I had to take CBD, I know I wouldn't vape. And a client of mine asked me to write a promotion on a cream. And coincidentally, like the other day, the day after he sent it to me, I was doing some work around the house, and kind of hurt my shoulder. And I put it on and it was the pain was relieved, you know, like within two minutes. So, and I like that better than taking a tincture or a pill or smoking something. So it's the delivery system. And those are some of the ways, there's still others, but you know, those are some of the major ways to differentiate and hook the consumer.

Mikhail: Yeah, I think that's a lot we can use there.

Bob Bly: Sorry. Go ahead.

Mikhail: Yeah. Is there anything, I mean, we've been kind of talking about mainly the ingredients and stuff. Is there anything in the offer that you kind of look for? Or that you can use in your differentiation?

Bob Bly: In the offer? Did you say?

Mikhail: Yeah, yeah.

Bob Bly: Oh, many. The offer, as you know, and I'm sure your other guests talk about this. Next to differentiation, offer is a huge variable, a variable in selling dietary supplements direct response to the consumer. For instance, you see __31:44__ , you see-- let's say a lot of supplements are sold through half page newspaper ads, with heavy copy. Some of them say, "Get a free bottle." And who doesn't want a free bottle? Now when you call, they do ask you to pay shipping and handling. And usually it's better if you actually say that in the ad. So they get your credit card, and you think you've gotten a free bottle,

but now they have you in their system, they have your credit card. And if you don't cancel, you get an auto ship every month. So free bottle offers are strong, auto ship options are strong. Sometimes, and we've seen it, you wouldn't think it would make a big difference, but the topic and the number of special bonus reports. You know, In most supplement makers that sell direct response, you have special health reports. And the topics matter. And also the number. You know, I'm trying to think you've seen advertisers that offer-- they send out a flyer and it looks like there's 14 reports. I'm not saying that's better. Others do-- usually do with a good and also as you know, very popular offer in supplements is good, better, best. So the best offer is buy 12 bottles for this big discount and get four of our reports. That's the best. The medium offer, which we call better, is buy-- I'm just making this up-- six bottles at still a discount price off the single bottle but not as big a discount as when you buy the dozen and you get two of the reports. And then the good offer, which is actually the low end offer, is buy one bottle, full price, no reports and you have to pay shipping and handling. And as you know, because you're experienced in this field, when you do that, the reason you're doing that is most of the people usually-- the offer that usually gets the most orders is the middle offer, the better offer. Sometimes though, if you can do things to shift it toward the best offer, you know, you still have more people take the middle, but your average sale, your average dollar amount of sale will be better because you might find that 70% are taking, you know, the better but 25% are taking the best because you made it really appealing. And 10 or 5% are taking the single bottle.

Mikhail: Yeah, and that's sort of about, you know, increasing your customer value.

Bob Bly: Yeah. And then you have to decide, how are you going to-- are you going to use an auto ship offer? How are you going to use it? And what's the incentive that gets people into it. For example, a very common line in auto ship copies, if you get this now, you'll always-- auto ship will always get you your monthly bottle at the lowest available price. Doesn't say the lowest price it was ever sold at, because if the price goes up, you know, you could pay that, but you're never paying extra, like you might have to store a premium price. Or, and that's-- you know, so you get that advantage. And the other benefit-- there are many, but the other benefit of auto ship is you'll never run out. You know, people worry about running out of medicine, both people that take, you know, natural medicines, but also people that take prescriptions. You know, I mean to take an exaggerated case, if you're a diabetic and you look and you run out of insulin in five days before your renewal, that's pretty serious. And so people worry about that with their supplements.

Mikhail: Yeah. Anything else?

Bob Bly: Yeah, one other thing is we talked about symptomatic versus asymptomatic. And if the disease's symptomatic or the condition, if you can find a way to demonstrate that your product improves or mitigates or reduces the symptoms, that is very powerful. So once I wrote a mailing, this was different from the one I talked about before, that wasn't mine, I wrote a tabloid mailing for an eye supplement, you know, big tabloid, and we included in there a letter, an optometrist letter chart. You know, when you go to the optometrist, read the first line. And we gave instructions to how to use it because you can do it at home. You know, stand this far away, put your hand over this eye, put your hand over this eye. And we said, "Do it now, before your product arrives, or when it arrives." Then do it-- product was guaranteed for 90 days-- do it 60 days from now, after taking the product daily for 60 days, and see if there was a difference. And I have, you know, not perfect vision. I'm assuming you don't

either, because you're wearing glasses, and there was an improvement. So if you do that, and you've proven that it works to the customer, that is very powerful for preventing real returns and for increasing lifetime value of that customer because they know it works. And there's other ways to do those things. But that was one of my favorites.

Mikhail: Yeah, I think that's a really good example you gave.

Bob Bly: Yeah, I think I was-- as far as I know, I was the first person copywriter to put an eye chart in a magalog or tabloid. So I was proud of that, I have to admit,

Mikhail: Yeah, yeah. I think, you know, there's so many of the supplements, you can't really measure. Like that would be something you can actually measure and see improvement with taking it. And just by doing that, you know, you build-- yes, you have the proof, but you also improve the chances of that person continuing to reorder their supplements when they can actually go back and do that exercise and see how much it has improved by.

Bob Bly: Yeah, and there are, again, some asymptomatic products that you can still in some ways demonstrate that they work, but a lot of asymptomatic products, and most of them, you can't, it's very difficult. You sell a heart product. You know, you're not having a heart attack when you take it. So you're taking it to protect yourself against the heart attack. And that's much harder to prove. Because if you go six months without a heart attack, you might have gone six months without a heart attack anyway. So yeah, that's more difficult.

Mikhail: Yeah.

Bob Bly: In the old days, this was not innovative. When everybody today of course advertises antioxidant products, but years ago, early in this business, you may not be old enough, when antioxidants were new, people didn't get them. And so not just me, but other people in their copy said, "Here's what you do. Get an apple, slice it into slices, leave it on a bowl in the refrigerator-- I'm sorry, on the kitchen counter, come back three hours later. See it's turned brown. Oxygen destroys cells. Because back then people didn't know it, you had to demonstrate it. Now you wouldn't have to do that.

Mikhail: Yeah, yeah. That's a good point. Yeah. So we've got-- is that it? What other--

Bob Bly: No, there are others. I don't know how much you want me to go on here. Speed and duration. Here is a way to formulate certain supplements. People want them to. And again, a good example would be a joint supplement, a pain supplement would be even better. You know, people want them to last, you know, at least for, you know, for 24 hours, but even better for longer. However, the ones that last often take a few hours to kick in. So people are disappointed because if you have pain, let's say for example, you want quick reliefs. So one of my clients, for example, in their pain supplement, they have a long lasting ingredient. But they also put in with the mix-- I forget what the substance was-- a short one, where the clinical research said that it was measured that in two minutes this would reduce the pain. Now two minutes is an even number. So I said in-- and it's 120 seconds, so I said in 127 seconds, because it's more memorable, this will get rid of your pain, and it'll last for the next 48 hours. So, speed of efficacy is an advantage.

Another one that is often used, and you would think it's not the strongest, but sometimes it is very strong, it's social proof. The obvious example is McDonald's, McDonald's slogan for years has been Over 5 Trillion Sold. Or when I was a kid, it was like "Over a Million Sold." But, you know, and the idea is that people like it, social proof, because look at the volume we've sold. However, does really logically does McDonald's make the best hamburger in the world? You know, not even close. But that's so people believe that just like book publishers. New York Times best seller, a lot of people read crap books and a lot of the best books are too above their head, or they, you know, are too literary. So, but social proof works. A way to do that in supplements is to say, for example, that you know, you've been selling this since 19-- you know, for at least 10 years or five years. And if you've been selling it for seven years, don't say you've been selling it for seven years. Say for nearly a decade. And you know, and then you have a lot of people who have purchased it. So that's social proof. And then sometimes, if the numbers work out, even better social proof is, you know, we've sold 25,000 units, and in five years have had only one request for refund. And that was because the lady said It did work but she didn't like the taste. So, you know, that's another form of social proof.

You know, another one is we talk about citing clinical studies. But one technique that I saw-- I learned from somebody else, I learned it from the late Clayton Makepeace, who was a friend of mine, he would sometimes not just cite clinical studies, but on the cover of the mailing piece, or the top of the web page, he would say "This has been proven clinically in studies published in" and then he would list all the peer reviewed magazines, like it was 30. And wouldn't tell what happened in each study, but just the sheer abundance of them or the sheer quantity, you know, created a form of social proof that, you know, convince people. So that's another one.

And then one we're leaving out, and that's usually not my primary, but with some products it can be, and I'm trying to think of one, an example and hopefully it will come to me is quality of ingredients, quality control, quality inspection. For instance, you know, our plant that we make the ingredient for is grown in pure soil where unlike the rest of it grown in the United States, you know, which is soaks up the poisons, you know, that are used in the fertilizers. These are growing, as I said, for that CBD, on the mountain, there's no fertilizer. The soil is the fertilizer. So you're not getting that chemical. Quality inspection. The obvious thing is to name the standards it meets. But beyond that, you'll see some people say-- some companies will say "In every batch-- we inspect a bottle in every batch to ensure quality." But other people say we test every bottle. So which is the stronger quality control thing? And the other thing you read about is they love to hear that there's no solvents, no metals, and no toxins. And not every product in their category can make that claim. So that's another point of differentiation.

And I think one that I also left out was the delivery system, the package, I saw, for example, an ad for, another fish oil, an omega product. And I forget what the technology was, but the capsule had something in it that prevented spoilage. So when you pick the capsule and, you know, open in your mouth, you can smell it, there is no rancid odor. And that's a big thing. A, it's not spoiled, so it's good for you. And B, people hate the rancid over a bad omega. So it's very easy to tell if it's spoiled or not. So, delivery system again, very important. Like we said with the CBD, you have to vape it, you can rub it on your arms. It's big difference.

Mikhail: Yeah, those are really good. I think we've got a lot of good lists there too, and I'm sure no matter what product, you can find something to use. I guess just before we wrap up, can you talk a little bit in terms of how you use the hook? I mean, where-- Is it something you include in the headline?

Bob Bly: A good hook should be strong enough that you can use it on the headline of the sales page in online sales page, the headline of the email that drives traffic to the sales page, the cover of the magalog or, you know, the headline of the first page of the sales letter. That's where you want to have the point of differentiation. Because if it's good, that'll be the strongest thing that convinces someone to buy your product, versus the five other prostate supplements with 20 other joint supplements that they could choose from. So, use it right up front.

Now some of the characteristics, you can reintroduce it later in the in the copy. For example, of the things we reviewed, we have like six differentiators. One might be the strongest, and that's the lead. But the other five can appear in the body copy maybe as bullets or in a table. So you know, you have plenty of use. Often you don't have one differentiator, you have many, but you have to pick the one that's key. And that means the one that's most important, because that's most different and that you can spin the most interesting or credible story about.

Mikhail: Yeah, that's good. That's exactly what I was wanting, you know, is that you just choose one and you go with it, but you kind of have to just stack them up on one another.

Bob Bly: Exactly. You can stack them up. But yeah, you have to choose the primary one. That is the theme and the attention getter. And as you said, the hook of the promotion.

Mikhail: All right, thanks. Thanks so much for taking the time to talk to us today, Bob, about these hooks and the process that you kind of go through when you've got a promotion to write. For people that kind of want to learn some more about you, some more of your products or what you do, where can they go to get some of that information?

Bob Bly: Easiest is to go to my website. And the URL is www.bly --B as in boy-- L-Y.com. And years ago, I was told I have the last three letter URL in existence, but you can't get them anymore.

Mikhail: Okay,

Bob Bly: Under the dot com. So I got into the internet late, but I reserved it early. And it's my last name. So you know, I was glad I was able to get it, it worked out for me.

Mikhail: Yeah, that's a really cool website. Yep. All right. Thanks so much, Bob. And thanks for being a part of it. You've given a lot of valuable information here today.

Bob Bly: It was my absolute pleasure and a lot of fun. IT was nice doing it.