

# What consumers really want from a bottle of tomato sauce

 By [Hansie Smit](#)

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A familiar technique often used by copywriters to build a rock-solid sales argument answers five simple questions:

1. What is the problem?
2. Why is it still a problem?
3. What's possible?
4. What makes our product different?
5. What should you do now?

It's not groundbreaking stuff - I don't think it features in any of David Ogilvy's writings - but it's been tried and tested and kind of works.

Sadly, however, what the average copywriter comes up with is rarely in touch with reality and the questions require him/her to answer them from his/her point of view.

So I decided to try a little experiment and answered the questions as I think a consumer (let's call her Suzie) would, given our current economic climate.

## What is the problem?

**SUZIE:** God, where to begin? Zuma fired Finance Minister Nhlanhla Nene and the rand is going through the roof. Pikitup is still on strike, which means my garbage is piling up, which means I get a whiff of it every time I get into the car which, by the way, is making that funny noise again. What else? Oh, my work discontinued our pension plan so it looks like I will be spending my golden years sucking soup through a straw living with one of the kids in a second-rate security complex.

## Why is it still a problem?

**SUZIE:** Zuma is still president.

## What's possible?

**SUZIE:** Unicorns grazing on a lawn made of Lindt chocolate in a land where there's service delivery, super fast internet and a Springbok rugby team that meets transformation criteria. But let's get real. I think you confused 'what's possible' with 'what's probable'. What's probable is, is I will probably never get an increase and the interest rate will go up by another

percent. Wait, that's an assumption. The interest rate will probably go up by another five percent.

### **What makes our product different?**

**SUZIE:** Listen pal, if you want to sell me the world's best tomato sauce, it had better be a miracle cure for tantrums and alleviate ADHD. If you can make it sing a lullaby, all the better.

### **What should you do now?**

**SUZIE:** You, my friend, should try to write ads that speak to me like I'm a living human being and not some consumer from planet special offer in the galaxy of I don't give a s\*&t because if I hear one more radio ad in an American accent promising the world, I'm going to hurl this Sony CD/Radio device so hard through the window it's going to smash into my neighbour's car and you'll never get the opportunity to interrupt my mid-morning tea break ever again.

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### **ABOUT HANSIE SMIT**

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