

"Nobody does a better job of showing how to use design to build relationships than Roger C. Parker!"

Jay Conrad Levinson
author, *Guerrilla Marketing*

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Roger C. Parker's

Guerrilla Marketing & Design

Got rhythm?

Use rhythmic reading to drive your message home!

Rhythm is essential to the creation of easy-to-read newsletters, proposals and reports. If your publications lack rhythm, your message may go unread.

Rhythmic reading is based on repeated left-to-right eye movements of equal length. It's achieved by correctly making three important formatting decisions:

- *Type size:* choose a type size that permits readers to scan several words at a time.
- *Line length:* use lines of equal length throughout your publication.
- *Line spacing:* pay particular attention to line spacing, known as *leading*. White space between lines helps words stand out and guides your reader's eyes across each line.

Type size, line length and line spacing form the "holy trinity" of rhythmic reading. Type size, line length and line spacing must be in harmony for rhythmic reading to take place.

Long lines of small type make your message hard to read; so will short lines of large type. Likewise, too much or too little line spacing seriously interferes with rhythmic reading.

Why take a chance?

Every time you introduce a change that interrupts your reader's consistent, rhythmic left-to-right eye movement, you raise the possibility that he will put down your publication and may never pick it up again.

Thus, avoid unnecessary changes in type size, line length or line spacing. Instead, make it as easy as possible for readers to establish a consistent rhythm (similar to the way jogging becomes easier when you establish an even pace).

Typeface choice

Typeface choice also contributes to rhythmic reading.

Encourage rhythmic reading by choosing serif typeface designs such as Garamond, Minion (which you're reading now) and Times Roman. The serifs, or tiny strokes at the ends of each letter, give each character a unique shape and help guide your reader's eyes from word to word.

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Minion, a serif typeface design

r

Frutiger, a sans serif design (note its less distinctive shape)

Rhythmic reading is an unconscious, but incredibly complex, event.

Reserve the use of sans serif typefaces, like Arial, Frutiger (used in this newsletter) and Helvetica) for headlines, sub-heads and pull-outs (like the quote to the left).

Text wraps

When possible, avoid text wraps, which occur when graphics, such as clip art or photographs, extend into adjacent text columns and reduce line length.

Text wraps interrupt rhythmic reading by forcing readers to frequently adjust their pace to adjust to different line lengths.

How people read

Rhythmic reading is an unconscious, but incredibly complex, event. As you're reading this, for example, you're not "sounding out" each word.

Instead, your eyes are scanning the patterns, or shapes, of the words on each line while your brain simultaneously translates the *word shapes* into an understandable message.

When type size, line length and line spacing are consistent and correct, and a serif typeface is being used, this "translation" occurs instantaneously, without conscious effort on your reader's part.

Reading is easy when there are few, if any, interruptions to the rhythmic left-

to-right scanning process. Easy reading permits readers to focus on comprehending and remembering your message.

Reading is hard when there are frequent changes in type size, line length or line spacing. Each interruption slows reading down, reducing message retention.

Reading extended text set in a sans serif typeface interferes with rhythmic reading because readers have to work harder to recognize word shapes.

Want to learn more?

Visit www.GMarketingDesign.com to learn more about creating attractive, easy-to-read newsletters, proposals and reports.

Over one and a half million readers own copies of Roger C. Parker's books. His books have been translated into thirty-seven languages. The *New York Times* called Roger's LOOKING GOOD IN PRINT "the one book to buy when you're buying only one."

Call 603-742-9673 for information about Roger's telecourse: "How to Promote Your Business With a One-Page Newsletter." Jay Conrad Levinson, author of GUERRILLA MARKETING (the world's bestselling marketing books), calls the one-page newsletter the "quintessential Guerrilla Marketing tool."



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