

HOW TO MAKE ADVERTISING WORK

Writing the advertisement

Advertising is only one of the many ways to market your business. It is probably the most expensive and often the least effective. You do not need to advertise to make your business grow. The body shop is reputed to have never advertised.

Advertising ranges from the newspaper, magazines, television and radio to direct mail sent to either several people in one firm or just one person. Scatter advertising through the media has the least cost per potential customer. Direct mail is much more expensive and usually more effective.

An advertisement should be trying to:-

- Attract **A**ttention
- Generate **I**nterest
- Create a **D**esire
- Stimulate **A**ction

Remember **AIDA**.

Design

The three things to consider when designing an advertisement are (with % denoting important)

1. Your Target Market- 40%

Who should this advertisement be aimed at?

Use your records to profile your ideal customer. Find out which are the best and go after more like them.

Consider the interests of the proposed customer:

Magazines they read

Sports Interests

Cinema

Do they watch the television, if so what programmes?

Clubs and hobbies

Radio Station- What time do they tune in?

Are they caught in the rush hour?

Demographics

Stage of life

Age

Sex

Income and Occupation

2. Your Offer - 40 %

What are you offering to do for me, the reader?

70% of people read the headline only of an advertisement. Therefore think what our headline has to do. It is by far the most important part of your advertisement. Write many headlines, work on them and put together the best you can.

A "P.S." attracts attention. It is very powerful. Use it to reinforce your offer, not add information.

Emotion is very important. Use it in advertising.

WIIFM

Your advertisements should draw attention to BENEFITS for the person reading the advertisement. WIIFM stands for "What's In It For Me?"

Most amateur advertisers think that they should be telling the world what they have for sale. They should reverse that thinking. Instead of viewing advertising from their point of view, they should look from the customer's side. That is why they should be talking about the BENEFITS to the customer.

Risk Reversal

An unconditional money back guarantee takes the risk away for the buyer. Reversing the risk from buyer to seller helps make sense.

Another form of risk reversal is to offer free samples.

Some years ago, Chrysler Corporation offered a new car on a one month trial basis. The only condition was a small payment to cover some of the loss in value. Many people accepted the offer and almost all of them bought the car at the end of the month.

The body of the advertisement should reinforce the headline.

3. Design- 20%

How should it all look?

Here are some tips:

Typeface Matters. Serif is easy to read.

Use short paragraphs.

Indent paragraphs.

When you write an advertisement feel free to break as many rules of "Good English" as you consider necessary.

If it is a long advertisement put headings so the reader can pick up the main points quickly and then look at the detail under any heading of interest. Make the advertisement easy to read. Use white space. Concentrate on only one main idea.

Use the present tense.

Ensure reasonable amount of white space to make the advertisement as easy as possible to read.

Keep lines short.

Use pictures. Worth a thousand words?
Numbers catch the eye. 7 not seven. 7 ways you can save... 11 things you can do... odd numbers seem to be better than even unless they are large. Heinz 57 varieties.

Power Word

Use power words. They will add to the power of your advertisement. The most effective ones are YOU and HOW. The following is a list of power words.

Facts, now, get, offer, stop, easy, fast, earn, here, gain, find, discount, try, free quick, put, guarantee.

E.G. How to... so you can get...

Black on white is better than reverse.
Colour can help. Blue indicates strong images. Green is restful. Red indicates danger.

Infomercials

You can make your advertisement read like a news item. This is called an Infomercial. Who wants to read advertisements? If it reads as a piece of news you will have caught attention.

Ego

Who cares, except you, about your business? What does it matter who you are? Therefore, don't put your firm's name in big letters at the top of the advertisement. It does nothing for the reader except encourage her to look for something less boring. There is no harm in your name being at the bottom of the ad in smaller type. Once customers are interested they will look for your name and contact details.

Most people concentrate too much on design. It is far less important than the other two considerations.

Other Tips

Write your own Yellow Pages ad. If you leave it to Telecom, they may produce something looking like other peoples'. It is important to be, and appear to be, different.

For direct mail use other people's names if you can BUT spell them correctly. If need be, ring the firm to get the name of the person you are targeting. Remember some people are not called by their first Christian name. Some older folk can be offended when strangers call them by their first name.

Logos help to reinforce the image of the firm.

Why do you advertise?

Consider the most appropriate ways of promoting your products/ services. There are many of them.

Here are a few to consider:

- Trade shows
- Networking (joining clubs etc)
- Public speaking
- Asking for referrals
- Telemarketing

Work to a plan

Have advertising reinforcing other forms of marketing and other advertising. Choose the most appropriate way of advertising, e.g. published advertisements, direct mail, billboards, T.V., Radio etc.

When to advertise?

Plan your advertising. It should be part of your business plan. Often your advertising must be prepared when you are most busy, so it can run to improve sales when you are least busy. The post Christmas sales are an example.

One shot advertising is rarely effective. Plan your promotion. Reinforce one medium with another.

When you receive offers to advertise go back to your plan and see if the offer fits. If it doesn't, turn the offer down.

Getting the responses

Visibility

People do not read advertisements. They scan them. You have to gain attention within three seconds, maximum.

People tend to look more at right hand pages than left hand pages. Ask for a right hand page. The front pages are better than those further back.

If placing regular advertisements, ensure they are out in a place in the same section of the paper, which should be where your target customers are likely to be looking. Page three of a newspaper is usually a good spot. Front page is best, and back page is next because people turn to the sports section quite randomly.

Coupons

When using a cut out coupon, put the coupon at the bottom of the page preferably on an outside corner. Don't have your advertisement stuck in the middle of the page. The outside edge is better. Too many people are

reluctant to hack into the centre of the page. Make it easy to cut out the coupon.

Contacting You

Make contacting you as easy as possible. Better to invite customers to call you than use a cut out coupon.

Don't offer your cell phone number. Route calls through your home phone to your cell phone rather than expect customers to pay to contact you.

Use an 0800 number.

Make sure customers will be able to contact you quickly when they ring. Many people do not like leaving messages.

After the Advertisement

Don't waste your advertising Money

Most advertisements fail to pay for themselves. Therefore, **follow up as fast as you can**, the new contacts your advertisements have produced and make the most of them. This is usually the far most important part of advertising.

Consider lifetime value of a customer. This means the total value of one new customer is the profit you will make from her over the months or years she will continue to buy from you. Although an advertising campaign may not seem to pay for itself from the sales it produces, when viewed in relation to the lifetime value of the new customers, it may be an excellent investment.

Testing

Change your advertisements frequently and see which ones give you the best result. There will be surprises. If an advertisement is producing only acceptable results, change it. You might have an even better advertisement producing brilliant results. You can always go back to the first one. If you are getting brilliant results, don't tinker with the ad; leave it alone. Count the responses you get from each ad. In this way you can find out which works best.

WARNING: This information is simplified and condensed. It is only a guide and should not be relied upon as a substitute for professional advice.