



Print Ads Made Easy

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Often my clients ask me to review existing or prior print ads they have used but that did not produce the desired results. 99% of the time I see the same few issues again and again.

No matter what product or service you are marketing, I do believe that a business owner can create their own effective ads if they follow a few basic guidelines and understand that advertising is just ONE marketing method that when implemented correctly creates a cohesive marketing strategy.

Following are some basic “isms” as I call them to help make this process easier for you to create ads as well as purchase the space they’ll appear in that has a much better chance of succeeding for you.

First – Sell the sizzle, not the steak.

Because they are so close to their own product or service they know what it is, but not why people buy it. In other words, they are selling features not benefits.

The fix - Try this fun but powerful exercise to try for yourself - Turn 3 features of your product or service into benefits. For example, “weights less than a pound” would be stated in all marketing and advertising as “lightweight and portable”.

Second – Twice and Thrice is Better than Once.

Another powerful concept in advertising is frequency. This means that an ad seen just once is lost in the jungle of advertising. Ads seen more than once will produce much better. The problem is that it costs more and most small businesses are looking to save money.

The fix – design a smaller ad and place it more than once. This will be approximately the same cost as a larger ad placed once and should (all other things being equal) pull better for you.

Third – Audience is everything and 60% of your marketing success relies on getting this right.

It's easy to fall prey to those salespeople who call and promise you the "best way to advertise" but is it really best for YOU?

When you get a call from a well known media outlet and are sure who their audience is, great. That's an easier decision. Then it comes down to price and whether your budget is available. Of course, some due diligence is required here as well.

But when you get a call from an unknown or lesser-known publication do your homework with a thorough due diligence. Do not fall prey to very seasoned salespeople.

The fix – Ask the right questions. Ask for a media kit (often they are available online). Ask for rerun rates (how many advertisers rerun their ads). Ask if they have a graphics department and if the ad creation is included in the price. Ask if they offer remnant rates (last minute discounts for available space).

Bottom line it's your budget, your image, your company – do your homework and your chances of success are higher.

Fourth – be clear and concise.

Esoteric, vague or overly designed ads can be great when used by a fashion house or other well-known higher end brand that has an established image. But when trying to sell an unknown, be as clear as you can be about the offer.

The fix – send the ad for review to friends and family. Ask them for their honest evaluation. If they saw this ad in print would they know what the product's benefits are? Where they can buy it? Why they should buy it? If not, rewrite it to be sure you don't lose buyers.

Fifth – be sure to proofread.

Have you ever read an ad and saw a typo or other mistake? You have to wonder how THAT happened.

The fix - Dial the phone number, log on to the website and send an email to the address in the ad. Make sure your ad reads perfectly before it goes to press.

Once you have the benefits down and know the right way to implement marketing and advertising, you are well on your way to creating an impactful, successful campaign that will drive revenue to your bottom line.

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