



CREATING ADS THAT RING UP SALES

If I asked you to watch two hours of primetime TV and pick the most effective ad spots, could you do it? Chances are, you could name the ones you found the most entertaining. But could you identify the commercials that had the power to move the audience – really motivate viewers to learn more about, or buy, what's being advertised?

If you're a bit fuzzy on what it takes to create advertising that actually works, you'll be happy to know it's not your fault. There's just so much ill-conceived advertising out there, throughout all marketing media. What makes it tough for entrepreneurs to understand how to create their own campaigns is the fact that so many of the big-budget ads from major advertisers are so bad. They're self-indulgent and cute, and although they may be creative, they probably sell very little.

The first duty of advertising is to make something happen. Any campaign worth its salt must produce a desired result. Rework your current ad campaign, or create a new one that motivates prospects to take action by understanding these four important advertising rules.

1. Good advertising changes the customer's relationship with what's being marketed.

The first step to affecting the way your customers think is to make them look at what you offer in a new or different way. A good ad has the power to completely change the mind of the reader, viewer or listener, whether that applies to choosing the best tyres to purchase for rainy areas or the qualifications of a political candidate.

Your ads can open minds to possibilities by introducing a new type of service or revealing fresh discoveries or facts. Advertising that does a good job of educating audiences, such as in B2B trade publications, can demonstrate the advantages of a new product. And some advertising, such as direct mail, can allow you to tell a deeper story and create a strong, new connection with your customer.

2. Effective advertising tells prospects "why". Good advertising makes it immediately clear why prospects should care about your marketing message.

For best results, your ads must demonstrate a valuable, desirable benefit to your target audience. This benefit can be either tangible or intangible. For example, saving money is a tangible benefit, while peace of mind may be intangible but equally desirable depending on your target audience and what you're marketing.

What benefits do your ads promise, and are your promises markedly different from those of your competitors? If not, you need to rethink your product or service offering from your customers' point of view until the benefits you offer will help you stand out from your competitors.

3. The best ads ring true.

Broadcast ads on radio and TV work best when they present scenarios that feel real and true to the intended target audience. Prospects should be able to identify with the characters or situations presented and see themselves reflected in a positive light. Your offer should present a believable solution to fulfil a perceived need. Print advertising, out-of-home and online advertising, while less able to present real-life scenarios, still must offer reasonable solutions that meet the real needs of your target audience.

4. Successful advertising moves customers to the next level.

The bottom line is, marketing exists to support sales. If your current advertising doesn't produce, it's like having a slack employee: your best option is to fire them. Before you design your next campaign, decide what you want your prospects to do in response to your advertising, and design each ad with that result in mind. Whether you want them to call for a free appointment, visit your website, go to your store or visit your trade show booth, be sure your call to action takes your prospects to the next level.

5. Finally, be prepared to track and measure the responses as they arrive.

After all, you can't run an effective campaign unless you know what's worked in the past. Continually fine-tune your ad campaign to capitalise on the elements that make the phone or the cash register ring, and soon you'll have good ads that make all the right things happen.

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