

“Top Eight Reasons Your Advertising Does Not Work”

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My boss once told me, “Advertising doesn’t work.” I found that statement rather ironic, as I was a selling advertising for him. After fourteen years in the advertising business I realized he was correct. Advertising doesn’t work; at least in the way most people think it does. I’ve come to find out advertising is not a cure- all nor is it an evil. With that said, I know very few companies that are number one in their category(s) that don’t know how to advertise well. So that begs the question, why doesn’t your advertising work?

1. You’re in the wrong place... There are a lot of choices when it comes to advertising but the objective is to choose the venue that appeals to your prospective clientele. This sounds simple, but it may require more work than you think. A business must profile their current customers. You need to know their age, gender, geographical location, financial bracket, needs and desires. **DO NOT MAKE AN ASSUMPTION.** You must conduct a survey of your customers. After you have established your customer’s profile you match that profile with the appropriate media. This will require you working closely with your sales representative and asking very pointed questions to determine if their audience matches your profile. One of the biggest mistakes business owners make when selecting media is they assume that what they read, watch, or listen to is what their prospects enjoy as well. This process must be statistical and focused if you’re serious about being more effective.

2. You have no Frequency... Frequency is the number of times a person hears your message in a given time period. The better the message the less frequency you may need. Generally, your radio message should be heard over three times by the same prospect in seven days. When it comes to TV, your message should be conveyed two times in two weeks to the same prospect. Print and direct mail also have greater impact when frequency is applied. The actual point where people react to an ad is up for debate but all critics will agree high repetition is important.

3. You have too little Reach... Reach is the number of people that see your message in a given time period. Purchasing media with large reach allows you to reap the benefits of advertising more quickly. The odds are the more prospects you reach the greater the percentage will be that need your product or service right now. However, buying too much reach without repetition can be disastrous for your company’s long-term growth. Buy as much reach as you can afford but **DO NOT** sacrifice frequency in the process.

4. You have boring, dull, pointless copy... When a business owner sees their own ad they always get excited. When their prospect sees the ad they look at you as an interruption. You need to look at your ad from your prospect’s point of view. Your company must share their Unique Selling Proposition (USP) in the ad. Your USP is what sets you apart from all your competitors and inspires your customers to do business with you. If you don’t have a USP you must create one. Your USP will act as an anchor for every piece of advertising you do. Waves of advertising will come and go but nothing should move your anchor.

Never utilize words like *quality, service, convenient,* and the list goes on and on. If you choose to communicate quality you must illustrate it by explaining how you are able to offer quality rather than actually saying quality. A general rule of thumb is when your prospect sees your ad if they can say, “Well I would expect that,” you’ve just wasted their time and your money.

According to *33 Ruthless Rules in Local Advertising*, “45 percent of the people reached by your ad copy are motivated by the emotional benefits.” It goes on to say, “45 percent are motivated by practical logical aspects of your product/service. The remaining 10 percent are attracted to a product or service both emotionally and practically.” It’s imperative that you write ads incorporating the emotional and practical benefits of your product or service or you will not be as effective as you could be.

5. You have a poor, or worse yet no headline... *According to 33 Ruthless Rules in Local Advertising*, “Advertising Great David Ogilvy said, ‘On the average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body of copy.’ He goes on to say ‘Unless your headline sells your product, you’ve wasted 80% of your money.’ Put quotation marks around the headline. You’ll get 25% better results.”

6. You never gave it a chance to work... Generally speaking you should be committed to a specific media for at least twelve to eighteen months assuming you’ve done all your homework and you know that media matches your prospects profile.

7. You have a misconception of how advertising works... Media reps are running around telling clients, “Buy ads with us, spend \$\$\$\$ and we will increase your business by ten or twenty fold.” Unfortunately, I’ve spent many counseling sessions with clients that invested exorbitant amounts of money for a cure-all and just ended up broke or even worse, further in debt. Advertising works slower than most people care to admit but when you understand this you will reap the long-term benefits. The objective, in my point of view, is you must reach as many of your prospects on a repetitive basis with a message that cleverly articulates who you are, what you are, where you are, and what makes you different (USP). Measure what you are doing every two years by interviewing a sample of your prospects and confirm your message is having an impact. In the meantime measure your traffic flow and cash register monthly.

Consider this, if you spent \$10,000 on a radio station and only brought in 3 customers that generated \$3,000 in profit, this campaign would have failed, right? Every business owner that I have ever met, and I’ve met with hundreds, has told me that referrals are their number one source of advertising. If that’s true and each customer where to refer one client each year this would create a domino effect creating \$45,000.00 in five years. If you think advertising is running some ads for a month and waiting for your return on investment you have a seriously flawed ideology. I’ve had many business owners disagree with me on this approach and many of which are now out of business.

8. Your business is just not that good... The best advertising will only assist in putting a bad business out of business sooner. One of the most frustrating and all too common things I am asked is to help a bad business advertise. Businesses need to honestly examine themselves from their client’s perspective and make changes based on those findings on a regular basis. Your worst marketing enemy is to become content with where you are at in your operations. Make the hard decisions today and your business will thrive for many more years to come.