
How to plan an effective advertising campaign.

Advertising is an investment in your business and is similar to other investments that are designed to improve and expand your business. The return you receive depends on the planning and thought that precede the actual commitment and expenditure of advertising dollars. By first developing an effective advertising plan, you increase the likelihood of a positive return on your advertising investment, regardless of the amount of money you spend.

Four Basic Questions

The basic premise of an advertising plan requires you to thoroughly analyze the answers to key questions before you can make effective advertising decisions. In a specific business situation, each question has any number of potential answers. As you think about each question, do not accept any answer until you have considered and explored the full range of possibilities.

What Do I Want My Advertising To Accomplish?

The first step in developing your advertising plan is to specify your advertising goals. Be as precise as you can as to why you are advertising and what you want to achieve. Everyone wants advertising to increase business, but for your advertising plan to work, it requires you to be more precise. Some possible goals are:

- To increase awareness of your business.
- To attract competitors' customers.
- To increase the likelihood of keeping current customers and developing their loyalty.
- To generate immediate sales or sales leads.

It is possible that you may want your advertising to achieve all of these goals plus some others. What is important is that you prioritize your goals. Advertising works best when it is developed to meet one specific goal at a time.

Who Should My Advertising Speak To?

Once you determine your advertising goals, you can then select the target audience for your message. Keep in mind that advertising that tries to reach "everyone" rarely succeeds. Successful advertising is written with a specific customer in mind. Try to picture the person you must reach in order to achieve your advertising goals. Try to describe your target consumers in each of the following:

- Demographics: such as gender, age, income, location of residence or business, etc.
- Behaviors: such as current awareness of your business; the products, services or vendors they currently use; loyalty to you or your competitor's business, etc.
- Needs or desires: such as what benefits consumers look for, the basis on which they will decide whether to use your product or service, how your business can fulfill those needs, etc.

What Should My Advertising Say?

Once you know who your target audience is and what they are looking for in terms of the product or service you offer, you can decide what your advertising will say. Advertising should always be written to communicate a message that will be seen as important by your target customer. Your advertising should clearly and convincingly "speak" to your target audience, explaining the important benefits your prod-

uct or service offers. In deciding how to discuss the major benefits of your product or service in your advertising, keep "AIDA" in mind: attract Attention, hold Interest, arouse Desire and motivate Action.

Where Should I Place My Advertising?

Every month, new advertising options become available. Beyond "traditional" media you can place ads in airports, on ski lifts and on television monitors in the front of grocery carts. Where you place your advertising should be guided by a simple principle: *Go where your target audience will have the highest likelihood of seeing or hearing it.* There is no single medium that is inherently good or bad. In fact, a good medium for one product or service may be a poor medium for another. As you consider media choices, look for one that fits your advertising goals, reaches your target efficiently and cost effectively and is within your advertising budget.

Creative Marketing Services provides marketing, creative and sales promotion services on an "outsourced" basis without the high-cost or overhead of a traditional advertising agency. To discover how you can make your marketing more effective, visit www.mysalespromotion.com
