



## **Helpful Hints to Grow Your Business**

# Advertising – The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

To define what constitutes good print advertising, we begin with what a good print ad is not:

- It is not creative for the sake of being creative.
- It is not designed to please copywriters, art directors, agency presidents, or even clients.
- Its main purpose is not to entertain, win awards, or shout at the readers, “I am an *ad*. Don’t you admire my fine writing, bold graphics, and clever concept?”

In other words, ignore most of what you would learn as a student in any basic advertising class or as a trainee in one of the big Madison Avenue consumer ad agencies.

Okay. So that’s what an ad shouldn’t be. As for what an ad *should* be, here are some characteristics shared by successful direct response print ads:

- They stress a benefit. The main selling proposition is not cleverly hidden but is made immediately clear. Example: “How to Win Friends and Influence People.”
- They arouse curiosity and invite readership. The key here is not to be outrageous but to address the strongest interests and concerns of your target audience. Example: “Do you Make These Mistakes in English?” appeals to the reader’s desire to avoid embarrassment and write and speak properly.
- They provide information. The headline “How to Stop Emission Problems—at Half the Cost of Conventional Air Pollution Control Devices” lures the reader because it promises useful information. Prospects today seek specific, usable information on highly specialized topics. Ads that provide information the reader wants get higher readership and better response.
- They are knowledgeable. Successful ad copy reflects a high level of knowledge and understanding of the product and the problem it solves. An effective technique is to tell the reader something he already knows, proving that you, the advertiser, are well-versed in his industry, application, or requirement.

An opposite style, ineffectively used by many “professional” agency copywriters, is to reduce everything to the simplest common denominator and assume the reader is completely ignorant. But this can insult the reader’s intelligence and destroy your credibility with him.

- They have a strong free offer. Good ads contain a stronger offer. They tell the reader the next step in the buying process and encourage him to take it NOW.

All ads should have an offer, because the offer generates immediate response and business from prospects that are ready to buy now or at least thinking about buying. Without an offer, these “urgent” prospects are not encouraged to reach out to you, and you lose many potential customers.

In addition, strong offers increase readership, because people like ads that offer them something—especially if it is free and has high perceived value.

Writers of image advertising may object, “But doesn’t making an offer cheapen the ad, destroy our image? After all, we want awareness, not response.” But how does offering a free booklet weaken the rest of the ad? It doesn’t, of course. The entire notion that you cannot simultaneously elicit a response and communicate a message is absurd and without foundation.

- They are designed to emphasize the offer.

Graphic techniques such as “kickers” or eyebrows (copy lines above the headline), bold headlines, liberal use of subheads, bulleted or numbered copy points, coupons, sketches of telephone, toll-free numbers set in large type, pictures of response booklets and brochures, dashed borders, asterisks, and marginal notes make your ads more eye-catching and response-oriented, increasing readership.

Why? My theory is that when people see a non-direct response ad, they know it’s just a reminder-type ad and figure they don’t have to read it. But when they see response-type graphic devices, these visuals say to the reader, “Stop! This is a response ad! Read it so you can find out what we are offering. And mail the coupon—so you can get it NOW!”

- They are clearly illustrated. Good advertising does not use abstract art or concepts that force the reader to puzzle out what is being sold. Ideally, you should be able to understand *exactly* what the advertiser’s proposition is within five seconds of looking at the ad. As John Caples observed a long time ago, the best visual for an ad for a record club is probably a picture of records.

At about this point, someone from DDB will stand up and object: “Wait a minute. You said these are the characteristics of a successful *direct response* ad. But isn’t general advertising different?”

Maybe. But one of the ways to make your general advertising more effective is to *write and design it as a direct response ad*. Applying all the stock-in-trade techniques of the direct marketer (coupons, toll-free numbers, free booklets, reason-why copy, benefit-headlines, informative subheads) virtually guarantees that your advertisement will be better read—and get more response—than the average “image” ad.

I agree with Howard Ruff when he says that everything a marketer does should be direct response. I think the general advertising people who claim that a coupon or free booklet offer “ruins” their lyrical copy or stark, dramatic layout are ineffectual artists more interested in appearance and portfolios than results.

#### ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

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# 28 Successful Marketing Practices

There are certain things that make sense common. As you read through the following practices, think about how each might help you in some way. Write down your thoughts and let them distill into a new action plan or adjustments to your existing marketing efforts.

## 1. Focus on Helping, Instead of Selling

You shouldn't be trying to force people into purchasing your product or service. You should find people who want your product or service and then focus on offering any helpful information to them so that they can make an informed decision.

## 2. Target

If you're trying to target everybody, then chances are, you're not targeting anybody. For example, if you're selling something that homeowners would want, as opposed to renters, then target homeowners. State your target clearly in all of your marketing materials.

## 3. Stop Spending Money on Ineffective Marketing

One great way to save money is to stop wasting it on marketing and advertising that isn't producing for you. Don't forget to track the number of responses you are getting from whatever method you use. If you're not reaching your goals, then your strategy needs to be revised.

## 4. Network

Networking is a great way to get your message out to a large number of people, for free. Since each person knows about 250 other people, you can spread the word about your business pretty quickly. Go to your local Chamber of Commerce meetings. Shake hands at business functions. Exchange business cards with associates you see in stores, churches and community events.

## 5. Set Goals and Deadlines

Collect your thoughts for a moment or two, and set goals and deadlines. These are vital to your business success. State your goals as specific numbers. (e.g. 10 new accounts, 11% increase in sales, etc.)

## 6. Focus on Benefits Not on Features

Spend your time focusing on how your prospects will benefit if they purchase your product or service. For example, if you're selling central air conditioning units, don't sell the power of the unit. Sell the benefit of comfort. Selling insurance? Don't sell the coverage amount. Sell the benefit of security.

## 7. Write Tips Articles

Newspapers and other publications are always looking for helpful tips articles that would be of benefit to their readers. Submit simple, problem/solution type articles related to your product or service. State the problem, and then share some insightful tips that can help to solve the problem. Always include information at the end of your articles so that people will know how to contact you to receive more information about your services.

## **8. Be Persistent**

Persistence is power when it comes to increasing your sales and profit. Far too many firms fail because they don't follow-up long enough to produce results. Most sales are made after the seventh or eighth contact--the sale is rarely made after just one contact.

## **9. Submit Press Releases**

Press releases are a very cost-effective way to get your message out to many people . . . for free. Submit your press releases to a wide variety of publications for immediate release. Keep in mind that the newspapers will usually only print releases that are of interest to their readers, rather than of a selling nature.

## **10. Offer to be a Speaker**

Business and civic organizations are always looking for speakers for their meetings and get together. Make yourself available by contacting these groups and offering to talk about your area of expertise.

## **11. Give a Free Demonstration**

If possible, give free demonstrations of your product or service to those that might be interested. Follow-up with these prospects in a timely manner to attempt sales conversion.

## **12. Distribute Samples**

If possible, get samples into the hands of people who may be potential customers. People like to try before they buy.

## **13. Distribute Informative Literature**

Make sure that you get your product benefits, features and ideas into the hands of your prospects. If people don't know what you have, how can they make a decision to purchase it?

## **14. Use the Telephone**

The telephone can be one of your most effective, and least expensive, sales tools. Call people who you would like to do business with. Ask for a few minutes of their time so you can show them how your services can help them save time, cut costs, increase sales, etc.

## **15. Generate Referrals**

Referrals are a great way to generate new business. Don't just wait for people to refer you. Proactively ask for referrals from existing customers, acquaintances, family and friends. Don't forget to graciously thank anybody who refers your business to someone.

## **16. Have Fun**

Frustration and stress will slow you down. You will succeed far better when you're doing something that you love.

### **17. Talk to Your Customers About Them and Their Needs**

Most company publications, ads, letters and sales literature are filled with words, photographs and information that do nothing more than toot the company's horn. Talk about your customers needs instead. Rather than using the words, "I," "me," "my," use "you" and "your."

### **18. Develop Customer-Oriented Relationships**

Take an interest in your prospects and customers. Send them helpful articles that you think would interest them. If you know of an event that your prospect or customer will be celebrating, such as an anniversary or birthday, send them a card or small gift. They will appreciate your generosity and will think of you when they need your service, or if they know someone else who may need your service.

### **19. Tell Your Prospects and Customers What to Do**

Getting your message into the marketplace is important, but getting prospects/customers to respond is the real test. Tell your prospects exactly what you want them to do next (e.g. call for your free brochure, drop your reply card in the mail, etc.)

### **20. Take Advantage of Testimonials**

Whenever an existing or potential customer says something positive about your company, ask them if you could use their statement in your marketing materials. Your company's credibility will increase with the use of testimonials from happy customers.

### **21. Make it Easy for People to do Business with You**

Your customer is not going to work for you. You have to work for them. Do anything you can to make doing business with your company easy and a pleasure.

### **22. Content First, Form Second**

When developing your sales materials and literature, spend less time worrying about the graphics and colors, and more time working on the content -- what's in it for your customers. As long as your message is enticing, black ink on white paper could work just as effectively as expensive four-color materials.

### **23. Give to Get**

There's an old saying, "You can get everything you want, by helping enough people get what they want." Listen carefully to your prospects and customers so you'll know exactly what they want and be generous in your offers. That way you'll be sure to reap the maximum rewards.

### **24. Learn a New Marketing Technique Every Day**

Read, go to seminars, listen to audio tapes. Continuously improving your sales and marketing skills will help you to increase your sales and profits.

## 25. Associate with Positive, Successful People

Talking to and learning from people who are always striving for and meeting their goals, will help you commit to and achieve your own objectives.

## 26. Believe in the Product or Service You Sell

If you don't believe in the quality and benefits of your product and service, your prospects won't either. Present the benefits of your product/service with confidence and enthusiasm.

## 27. Focus on the Lifetime Value of Your Customers

Don't focus on generating one-time customers. Build a relationship so that a prospect becomes a repeat, lifetime customer.

## 28. Learn from Someone Who Has Experience

Marketing is an important skill based on both knowledge and experience. The fastest way to gain that knowledge is to find someone who knows what works and has done it successfully. Ask about his or her specific experience in generating marketing results, as well as references, or testimonials. Reasonably priced marketing materials, like books, courses, workbooks, newsletters, audio cassettes, etc. can be excellent resources that allow you to learn and apply effective marketing systems at your own pace.

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Relationship marketing is always important. On-demand listening targets your customers with messages that are relevant to your business. [2 Small Biz Guys](#) is such a resource. Listen to our shows and see if they are relevant to you and your audience. You'll find crib notes for to business books, interviews with business leaders and more.

Consider being a guest, advertiser or sponsor.



# THE 6 STEPS TO A SUCCESSFUL HOMEPAGE!

We want to help your business be successful. This can be a distinct competitive advantage for you... meaning converting or not and of course getting a return on your investment. The following will help get you on the right track or help you adjust your current effort to more optimal results.

## Step #1. Ask yourself a few questions

- \* Why are you building a website or landing page?
- \* What will be your expected conversions?
  1. E-commerce — adding an item to a shopping cart and beginning the checkout process.
  2. Lead generation — filling out a registration form to accept an offer (generally free) with the implicit understanding that this may lead someday to a sale.
  3. Branding/education — spending a significant amount of time examining and/or interacting with content on the site that the Home page is a gateway for
  4. Relationship — opting-in to receive communications from the brand/publisher on an ongoing basis.
  5. Membership — registering to actively use the site on an ongoing basis in exchange for either payment, an implied agreement to view advertising, or to allow one's activity data to be measured.
  6. Viral — telling personal and professional contacts about the Home page, perhaps via an email tool, blog links, word-of-mouth, etc.

## Step #2. Selecting URLs

One big mistake is to assume that a home page or website for that matter can handle two or three different conversion goals.

**Sorry but, if you are in business you must know that it is all about converting....**

1. This is quite crucial. I recommend you to find a name that will reflect your main activity promoted on the landing page or your website, which means search engines will find your webpage based on the specific of the name and key word density of the same inside your main page.
2. Consider having as many URL's as you have activities, this will spawn additional traffic and direct visitors accordingly to their needs, thus growing your conversion rate.

## Step #3. Demographic research

1. Get into your prospect's mind, who will be my client?
2. Is my product or services suited for the demographic that I am reaching out with my communication strategy
3. Create a profile of your perfect converter. If you have more than one, look at each profile and decide which the biggest market is. Then construct your home page for that particular one and ignore the ancillaries.

4. Don't construct a page to appeal broadly across a wide variety of "typical" users. It won't appeal to anyone at all and your conversions will suffer.
5. You have 0-8 seconds to convince visitors this page is for them and them alone.

**Here is the interesting part... At most they'll read 15-30 words.**

#### Step #4. Graphic elements, layout, and form design

1. Make a list of all the specific elements that have to be included on the page such as your graphics, imagery (people don't read) calls to action guiding to registration form or purchase page
2. Have a strong sentence that say something like " We Make It Happen" or "use a few "magic" key words
3. Make sure that your phone number is displayed in a prominent location (not hidden), yes right at the top of your page so you don't have to spend 3 minutes finding it, remember they are only on your site for 0-8 seconds.

#### Step #5. Copywriting

1. Your headline copy. Like a newspaper or magazine editorial, the headline is the most important, make sure that it has a "newsworthy" appeal; chock and surprise your visitors
2. Your calls to action need to be prominent
3. Body copy: subheads, bulleted lists, guarantees, testimonials, explanations and descriptions, etc.

**Bad news! Only 15-20% of your visitors will read part of this copy.**

#### Step #6. Testing, measuring, and tweaking

- Make sure that Google Analytics or other measurement tools are setup on your site, then review the following:
- eCommerce — eg. Sales as a percent of total visitors.
- Lead generation — Leads as a percent of total visitors, estimated sales value per average lead generated by traffic source.
- Branding/education — Percent of total visitors who stay longer than 30 seconds, the percent over one minute.
- Relationship — Percent of return versus one-time visitors.
- Viral — Emails with tell-a-friend tools





## Social Media Integration



How do you construct your web of influence with a focus on social media? That is a question most business owners consider daily. Some have learned how, most have not. That is where we come in. We do it for you and then show you how to manage it effectively to drive customers to your door, or website as the case may be. We suggest you have a WordPress themed website first. Many already do, but they don't know how to manage the inner-workings of it.

### How do we do that for you?

There are many specific activities and protocols for effective social media marketing plans. The four major platforms (Facebook, Google+, LinkedIn and Twitter) have expanded to include Instagram and Pinterest, allowing images and videos to be shared instantly. How do you set your business up for success in the social media mayhem?

### We do it for you. Here's how:

- SEO optimization of your content and graphics
- Create Business Pages
  - Facebook
  - Google+
  - LinkedIn
  - Profiles on Twitter, Instagram and Pinterest
- Social Plugins
- Calls to Action
- Blogging for Business Instruction



Trust does not come easily, but it starts with transparency.

Once we gain access to your website, we carefully install the necessary plugins that protect and serve your business best. Then we work our magic, science not understood yet, and provide you with an integrated package; your website and social media outlets are one. The process generally takes 7 - 10 days and we keep you informed of the progress so you can see what is being done and understand why.

Doesn't it make sense to get expert help to connect the dots?

## Our Social Media Integration Package Price = \$499

**We're available for appointments to speak to you in person. We're local and like it that way.**

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