

10 Most Common Advertising Mistakes

A Special Report on Marketing



Advertising is expensive enough when it does work, and way too expensive to waste money on when it doesn't. Here are ten common advertising mistakes to help ensure your advertising makes you money (instead of wasting it):

1. Not Targeting Your Advertising. Don't waste your money advertising in areas and to markets that you have little hope of return on. If you receive the vast majority of your business in a 5-mile radius, think long and hard before you advertise in a publication with a 30-mile radius. You're wasting your money on all those readers outside your target area.

2. Advertising Based on Cost Alone. Cost per thousand shouldn't be your primary basis for comparison. What matters is cost of advertising per customer. If your advertising is working, it pays for itself and the cost is free.

3. Expecting Advertising to Solve All Problems. Advertising is a "piece" of the puzzle; it's not the whole puzzle. If you don't have solid products, enviable service, or a very well-run business platform, the best ad in the world will offer no more than a short-term solution.

4. Failure to Remember the Needs of the Customer. You may be proud of a whole list of things your company offers, but unless there's a customer out there looking for those exact things, to advertise them would be futile. Learn the benefits of benefit advertising. Figure out what your customer is looking for and advertise that.

5. Not Differentiating. Be different from your competitors. Be unique. Watch what they aren't doing and do it. By setting yourself apart from everyone else you'll be remembered.

6. Not Asking For the Sale. There are only two reasons to advertise – ever. One: to inform and educate. Two: to incite action. Even if your reason for advertising is to inform, don't miss out on the opportunity to call for action. Granted, there may be a limited number of people in the market for your products and services at any given moment, but that number grows exponentially if you include people who know people who may be in the



market. Simply ask, "If you or someone you know is thinking of (xxx), call and request a free brochure on (xxx)."

7. Advertising Infrequently. Repetition, repetition, repetition – believe it or not, research says an ad needs to run nine times before a company is seen as credible in the eyes of the consumer. A landmark study stated that the average person receives 4,000 marketing messages on a daily basis, and only one in three ads is even seen by the consumer. Repetition works.

8. Not Testing. If you are going to advertise, at least measure the results to see whether it worked. Don't make the same offer with every ad; this allows you to test accurately. And when you get responses, keep track of where they come from.

9. Confusing the Ad With the Message. You want a pleasing ad, true, but don't confuse graphic beauty with effective advertising. The message is the key.

10. Not Knowing Why You Do It. Advertising because "the paper was there" isn't good enough. Know what you want to accomplish with your advertising. Set goals, determine your market, track your results, and you'll soon have a formula for accomplishing what you need to within your advertising budget.

Although advertising may work splendidly for announcements to the public, to try to expand your market, or to build an image in your town, there is no better way to ensure repeat and referral business than repeated contact with your customer base. We have testimonies from clients who've gone from 20% repeat and referral business to 80% repeat and referral business JUST by mailing postcards regularly. Advertise intelligently and keep in touch with your current client base - that is the surest way to guarantee advertising success.

