

## **Creating an Effective Advertisement**

Seems everybody is competing for our attention. A simple walk down the street can practically lead to sensory overload. We are being bombarded with messages and advertisements – so much so that the only way we can protect ourselves from developing nervous twitches is to shut our eyes and refuse to receive or process all or most of what is being transmitted to us.

The result has been that most of us have put up a protective shield to protect us from all the unwanted and unnecessary advertising messages we are exposed to daily. While advertising still has an important role to play in how we buy and sell products, the abuse of advertising has made it all the more difficult for good products and services to stand out. When one considers that so much of the advertising we see is mediocre and fails to catch our attention in positive and enlightening ways, the challenge of good advertising becomes all the more pressing.

There is a vital role for advertising to play. On the advertisers side, the ability to advertise provides for consumer awareness, branding opportunities, and a marketing channel. For consumers advertising serves to inform us and make us aware of products and services we may require or desire. Advertising also serves to save us money and improve products and services as it plays a part in creating and maintaining a competitive marketplace.

So how do we get the attention of our targets without being loud, obnoxious, overtly sexual, misleading or employ the other unfortunate ploys so many marketers have sunk to using? The answer is deceptively simple – by using advertisements that are amusing, touching, intelligent, and entertaining. Even eye candy advertisement, when done well, can serve to satisfy us with images that excite us and allow us to escape even briefly into a fantasy.

### **When constructing an advertisement one should keep the following in mind:**

1. Your advertisements are extensions of your company and its overall marketing campaign. You need to make sure that the messages being sent are consistent with other marketing channels being used, both in content and in style.
2. The advertisement vehicles you use are not only a function of budget but also of target market. No point in advertising in national vehicles if your market is local, even if you can afford it. Similarly, no point in placing ads on radio if your market is better reached via print. So the research and planning stages of preparing your ad strategy are critical.
3. The structure of your advertisements should be a reflection of your overall strategy. Is your ad going to be informative or promotional in function? Is its job to create awareness or (for example by including a special, limited time offer) promote an immediate consumer response? Make sure your ad meets its objective and make sure that its objective is part of a broader plan that includes other marketing tactics. This way your ad serves to reinforce and support these other tactics as well.

In developing an advertisement there are a number of elements that are important to consider. They are:

1. Relevance – make sure your ad establishes its relevance to the targeted market. Do not make an assumption that the people viewing your ad will understand or immediately recognize why your product or service is important to them. You can create relevance by describing a market need, emotion, solution or sentiment that you have come to understand (through researching your market) are hot buttons in your targeted market.
2. Benefit – make sure your benefit is the focus of the ad. You need to clearly articulate what you deliver and how you deliver it. Why is your product the right solution? Why does your product meet the emotional or sentimental needs of your audience? How does your product or service help your targeted make or save money, or satisfy a need a desire? This “what they get” message needs to be your core focus.
3. Branding – your ad needs to reinforce and further your brand. This means the ad should be consistent with your company’s overall branding strategy of colors, logo and message.
4. Action Item or Contact Information – the ad should give interested parties the ability to follow up either by providing an action item (call now!), or contact information where they can make further inquiries.

Ads can also be used to refocus or reposition consumer perceptions. If, for example, you wish to create an emotional relationship with consumers and want them to associate with your company specific emotional experiences, you can do so by creating the desires associated feelings through your ads. Non-profits use this strategy often and with great success. Business can do this as well, providing the benefits delivered serve to provide some level of emotional gratification (such as pharmaceuticals or medical devices).

Advertising is a powerful and effective tool when used properly. Make sure it is a tool you use thoughtfully and consistently, alongside your other marketing