

# ***ANSWERS TO THE THREE BIG ADVERTISING QUESTIONS***

by Ilise Benun

Advertising is an important part of any successful marketing campaign. However, it can be a daunting task. Here are three of the most frequently asked questions regarding advertising. The answers will help you create a better advertising strategy for your business.

## **1. Does advertising work?**

Well, advertising can work, but it's neither magic nor immediate. Have you heard this joke before?

*I know my advertising is 50% successful. I just don't know which 50%.*

Well, it's not a joke. Unless you're running direct response ads (such as infomercials that encourage people to send money or to call an 800-number immediately), it's nearly impossible to accurately measure the effect of advertising.

The way advertising works -- and the way all marketing works, for that matter -- is through repetition. You gain your market's confidence through high visibility and the consistent reinforcement of your marketing message. These messages work as triggers to remind your prospects that they are interested in your services and products. It's got to sink in, below the surface, so that when your prospect has a need, your name, your logo and your message come to mind.

So the first rule of advertising is this: Once is not enough. In fact, once is a waste. The chances that your prospect will just happen to see your ad the one time you just happen to advertise are very slim. You have to start small, go slowly and give it a chance, which means you must run your ad over the course of six months.

During that time, you can change a word here or there to test its effect on response. Or test three versions of one ad in the same type of media and see if the differences affect response. Using this strategy, you'll be able to track the results, at least enough to get a sense of which ad is more effective.

## **2. Isn't advertising expensive?**

Many businesses fail because they don't spend enough money on advertising; others fail because they spend too much or buy inappropriate ad space. The cost of advertising is measured, not in dollars, but in response. If you buy an expensive ad and lots of people respond to it, then it wasn't expensive at all. And, likewise, the fact that you get a great deal becomes irrelevant if no one sees your ad.

The expensive ads aren't even necessarily the most effective. For example, a classified ad in the back of a neighborhood paper can be more effective -- and cheaper -- than a snazzy, four-color display ad in a national magazine. But size is only one of the issues to consider. Another is the quality of the ad itself: what it looks like, what it says and how everything is laid out.

It's essential that you create a high-quality ad, no matter what kind you choose. According to Jay Conrad Levinson, author of the Guerilla Marketing series, "Far more people will see your ad than will see you or your place of business, so their opinion will be shaped by your ad."

### **3. Where should I advertise?**

Be proactive, be decisive and be creative in your media buy. Put yourself in a prospect's shoes and imagine his or her moment of need. You know your customers. What are their resources? What is the easiest thing for them to do? Go to the Yellow Pages? Call colleagues for referrals? Look in files they may be keeping just for moments like these?

If you don't know, or if you want more concrete answers, don't hesitate to ask your customers. They'll tell you. Survey the competition; where do they advertise? Or do they? If they don't, there may be a reason for that.

If you're considering buying space in a magazine that reaches your target audience, review several consecutive issues of that magazine. Chances are that if you see repeated ads for products or services that your target audience is likely to buy, you're on the right track.

Before signing a contract, review other advertisers, maybe even a few former advertisers. And don't advertise just in the media outlets whose sales reps are persistent with you. You must research your market's buying habits and make the best choices for your business.

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**Sincerely,**

**Patrick Lyons 602-323-1111**