

EXPIRATION-DATED ADVERTISING

By Roy H. Williams (www.WizardOfAds.com)

People who refer to the earth as “round” are technically wrong, but directionally accurate. Technically, our planet is an oblate spheroid. But to explain that subtle difference just wouldn’t be worth the trouble, so we usually say, “the earth is round,” and leave it at that.

Likewise, what you are about to read is technically wrong, but directionally accurate.

For each of our senses, the brain offers short-term and long-term memory. Short-term memory is electrical. Long-term memory is chemical.

The objective of “branding” is to cause your product to be the one the customer thinks of first and feels the best about when their moment of need arises. Consequently, branding must be accomplished in long-term memory. No problem, it’s just a matter of repetition, right? Wrong. The brain, you see, is a very smart organ. It knows better than to transfer information into long-term memory when that information is flashing a “soon-to-expire” message in neon letters.

I’m referring to ads that make a limited-time offer. When an advertiser insists on trying to “whip people into action” with the urgency of a limited-time offer, they can be sure that their message will never make it into long-term memory. At best, the message will stay in short-term memory only until the expiration date has passed and then it will be forever erased from the brain. Consequently, you cannot use a series of limited-time offers as the foundation for a long-term branding campaign.

The bottom line is that you can’t have your cake and eat it, too. So which kind of advertising will you do? Short-term or long term? Will you have a little piece of cake right now or a series of larger pieces later on? This is the choice that every advertiser makes, either consciously or unconsciously. I want you to make it consciously.

Yes, limited-time offers, when they work, cause people to take action immediately. The downside is that limited-time offers don’t work better and better as time goes by. In truth, they work worse and worse. **When an advertiser makes a limited-time offer, the only thing that goes into long-term memory is, “this advertiser makes limited-time offers.” In essence, the advertiser is training the customer to ask, “When does this go on sale?”**

Will you invest your ad dollars in a long, slow, tedious branding campaign that will work better and better as time goes by, or will you do short-term, high impact, grab-for-the-brass-ring ads and look for a quick-hit payoff? Will you ride the tortoise... or the hare? --- It’s always your choice. Just know what you’re choosing.

Compliments of Coffee News of Scottsdale

Patrick Lyons-Publisher-602-323-1111