

# ***PRINT ADVERTISING MISTAKES MANY BUSINESSES MAKE THAT CAN BE AVOIDED***

***by Conrad Berke***

For many businesses, print advertising is substantially more cost-effective than television, radio or the Internet. For much less money than what it costs to produce and air television or radio ads, print can at least as effectively...

- Build customer traffic to your business.
- Stimulate word of mouth about your product or service.
- Introduce your business to new residents.

**The challenge:** Creating the right ad for your market and determining which print publications to buy space in. To succeed, avoid these costly mistakes...

**Mistake: Playing "Follow the Leader" with your competitor.** Your competitor's marketing agenda may not resemble yours, so copying his/her advertising strategy isn't the best way to be effective.

**Better:** Set your own marketing goals. What do you really want to accomplish? Attract more customers? Attract new customers? Bring back old customers? Offer special or bigger packages for repeat clients? Answering these questions is the first major step toward an effective advertising campaign.

**Mistake: Assuming that bigger and louder is always better.** Trying to get attention with shouting, screaming words and big, multi-colored logos is a mistake. What you say is infinitely more important than how you say it.

**Example:** Headlines that promise a specific benefit are very effective. Use phrases like "Relieve your pain" ... "Make you rich" ... "Save you money" ... "Save your life" ... "Make you happy/beautiful" ... "Improve your marriage/popularity/sex life" and so on.

Then—put the headlines together with powerful copy.

**Important:** Every ad should start with a headline that clearly explains the product's or services unique benefit. It should also contain copy that describes the products or services you sell and tells consumers why they should buy them.

**Example:** "Speak Spanish in two months. The trick is how we teach you. When the course starts, you'll start right out with simple words—*el almuerzo* (lunch) and *más vino* (more wine). From there we teach you how to master the language at a speedy pace."

When you put great headlines together with great copy, you'll quickly find that the precious dollars you spend to place the ads are well spent.

**Mistake:** Spending too little on advertising. Be frugal with your advertising budget, but don't be foolish. Spend as much as it takes to get the job done and reach your sales objective. Modest sales gains may call for small budgets, while big gains require more effort ... and money. Buying too little ad space to sell your product or service will not provide quite enough information to make the sale.

**Key:** Readers are bombarded by hundreds of sales messages every day. To grab a reader's attention, you need an ad that is large enough—in the right publication—to say everything you need to say in large-enough, bold-enough type.

## **MEASURING SUCCESS**

If you don't get the results you expected from your print ad, the trouble is probably with the ad itself, rather than the publication or the placement of your ad. Here are some common problems...

- **Wrong price.** Is your price high for the products/services advertised?
- **Wrong merchandise.** Are you advertising swimsuits when you should be advertising snowsuits?
- **Wrong benefit.** After the holidays, people may be more interested in products that make them look slimmer and healthier than products that claim to improve their memory.

**Key:** Don't stop advertising just because a single ad campaign failed. Use results to come up with different benefits, prices and offers. Keep testing.

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