

Advertising Checklist

By Jake R Brady

- Know Your Goals
 - Why are you running this campaign? Are you advertising to increase your immediate cash flow or to increase exposure for your company? In other words, do you need to make money now with this campaign or are you advertising to expand your customer base for future promotions?
 - Who is your target audience? Who do you hope to attract with your advertising? Are you trying to tell current clients about a new service or are you trying to attract new clients with an already existing service?
 - How much money do you need to make with this promotion? It's not unheard of for companies to run what they call a Loss Leader ad. With this type of advertising, you don't expect to make a profit off of the specific item you're advertising, in fact you may even show a loss. However, you gain it back and then some on the backend sales or future sales that you'll make as a result of the new clients you've attracted with your campaign.
 - What is your advertising budget? Keeping in mind whether you plan to make a profit off of your promotion or use it as a loss leader, and your overall business budget, how much money can you afford to spend specifically on advertising?
- Know Your Competition
 - What types of promotions are your competitors running? Are they promoting a specific product or service or have they put together an attractive package of products or services?
 - Who is their target audience? If you know your competition you should be able to tell from their ad what type of business they're trying to attract. Are they looking for new customers? Are they trying to attract seasonal business? Are they trying to lock in long term clients with a contract or membership fee?
 - What is their regular price on this product or service? Knowing your competition's regular price versus their sale price will give you an indication of their advertising goals. You'll be able to tell if they're using this promotion as a loss leader to attract future business and backend sales or if they're just trying to generate additional sales. If your goals differ from theirs, for example if they're willing to take a loss and you're not, then you may not want to try to compete with them on price alone.
- Know Your Own Business
 - What types of promotions have been successful in the past? Always build on past successes and keep in mind what doesn't work, too.

- How can you make your product more attractive? It's not always necessary to compete on price alone. People are also interested in value. Compare your promotion to your competitor's and see what you can do to make your promotion more attractive without necessarily lowering the price.
- Are you prepared for an increase in sales? Do you have enough product on hand to cover the expected increase in sales? Will you be able to meet the demand for increased services if you're a service provider? Nothing looks worse to potential new customers than for you to run out of your sale item on the first day of the sale.
- Are you prepared for future/backend sales? Especially if you're running some type of loss leader ad, are you prepared with additional related profit building items to promote to generate even more sales? For example, if you're having a sale on paint do you have extra paint brushes and painting supplies available at the regular price to help you make up the profits you're losing on the paint itself?
- Running Your Ad
 - What type of advertising should you run? This is why you'll need to know who your target audience is and where you can find them. Do they read the newspaper or get all of their information from the internet? Do they hang out in restaurants or bars or should you promote to them on campus? Do they read magazines and periodicals or do they hang out at the online social networks like Twitter and Facebook? Do you already have a list that you can promote to via email or would it be better if you made sales calls and presented your promotion face to face or over the phone?
- The Ad Copy
 - Does your ad copy get their attention? Effective sales copy starts off by creating a need in the reader's mind for your product or service. For example Are You Suffering From Severe Back Pain? or Is The Bank About To Foreclose And Kick You Out Of Your Home?
 - Is your product or service clearly defined? The next step of your sales copy should tell your reader that your product will solve their problem. Our ABC Widget Instantly Relieves And Eliminates Back Pain or Our Expert Negotiators Can Save Your Home And Lower Your Payment.
 - Have you shown the features and benefits of your offer? Now you need to tell them how your product works and how that benefits them. By Relieving The Pressure On Your Vertebrae, Our ABC Widget Instantly And Permanently Reduces Pain Causing Inflammation.
 - Have you clearly stated the price? Make sure your reader clearly understands the price of your offer and the value he's going to receive by showing your regular price versus your sales price and the amount of the savings.
 - Have you created a sense of urgency? Don't let your readers think that you're going to extend this price indefinitely or they'll never take action and buy. Let them know that this is a limited time offer or that supplies are limited.

- Have you given a call to action? Tell your readers exactly what you want them to do** If you're advertising online then you want them to Click Here And Buy Now. If you're advertising in print then you want them to Pick Up That Phone Right Now And Call 123-4567.
- Have you included contact information? Make sure they know how to contact you for more information or how to find your location** Give a clear address with easy to understand directions or a small map when using print advertising.
- Increase The Effectiveness Of Your Ad**
 - Consult A Professional Copywriter** Regardless of how large or how small your business is or how much profit you hope to gain from your promotion, your goal is to increase exposure for your company and your sales copy is your one chance at making a good first impression. There are all sorts of psychological factors to take into consideration when writing sales copy, the font size, font face, font color, the words you use to create the need for your product and the words you use to create a sense of urgency. A professional copywriter has been trained to write sales copy that takes all of this into consideration and generates sales. Every penny you spend on advertising is important and you don't want to waste a single cent. Consult a professional copywriter before you run your next ad.