

# **NAHU's Guide to Buying Media**



# **2008**

# **Tips for Buying Media**

**Words 2,435**

## **Introduction**

To assist NAHU chapters with placing ads, NAHU has created a new ad co-op fund that provides state and local chapters the formal opportunity to request assistance in buying print and broadcast advertisement. All NAHU chapters are eligible to receive up to 50 percent of the cost of running advertisements up to a maximum of \$500 per year. Chapters can use this assistance to place one or several ads throughout the year.

Many of our chapters don't have the financial resources or expertise to create and place ads. So, to assist you in this effort the NAHU Media Relations Committee developed a print ad "You Don't Have to Do It Alone" and a 30-second radio ad that promotes the important role that health insurance agents play in our industry.

When it comes to advertising, a lot of people really don't know what they want, where to get it or what to do with it after they have it. This guide will help you determine what type of advertising media is best for your chapter and how to get it.

## **Newspaper Advertising**

Every advertising medium has characteristics that give it natural advantages and limitations. As you look through your newspaper(s), you'll notice some businesses that advertise regularly. Observe who they are and how they advertise their products and services. This will help you ascertain what works and what doesn't.

## **Some Advantages in Newspaper Advertising**

Almost every home in the United States receives a newspaper, either by newsstand or home delivery. Reading the newspaper is a habit for most families. And, there is something for everybody— sports, comics, crosswords, news, classifieds, etc. You can reach certain types of people by placing your ad in different sections of the paper.

There are many advantages to advertising in the newspaper.

From the advertiser's point-of-view, newspaper advertising can be convenient because production changes can be made quickly, if necessary, and you can often insert a new advertisement on short notice. Another advantage is the large variety of ad sizes newspaper advertising offers. Even though you may not have a lot of money in your budget, you can still place a series of small ads that will reach a significant amount of readers.

## **Some Disadvantages with Newspaper Advertising**

Advertising in the newspaper offers many advantages, but it is not without its inherent disadvantages, such as:

- Newspapers usually are read once and stay in the house for just a day.
- The print quality of newspapers isn't always the best, especially for photographs. So use simple artwork and line drawings for best results.
- The page size of a newspaper is fairly large and small ads can look minuscule.
- Your ad has to compete with other ads for the reader's attention.
- You're not assured that every person who gets the newspaper will read your ad. They may not read the section you advertised in, or they may simply have skipped the page because there wasn't any interesting news on it.
- Many people watch TV for their news instead of reading the paper.

### **Why Should I Work with my Newspaper Representative?**

Every newspaper has its own sales staff, and you're normally appointed your personal newspaper "Sales Representative." A newspaper sales rep can be very helpful. He or she can keep you posted on special sections or promotions that your chapter can use, but always keep in mind it is the sales rep's job to sell you advertising.

### **Buying Newspaper Advertising Space**

Since the Expanded Standard Advertising Unit System was adopted back in 1984, it is now easier to buy advertising space in newspapers. Advertising is sold by column and inch, instead of just line rates. You can determine the size ad you want just by looking in the newspaper in which you want to advertise. If you can't locate an ad that's the size you want, just measure the columns across and the inches down. For example, an ad that measures 3 columns across and 7 inches down would be a 21 inch ad. If the inch rate is \$45.67, your ad would cost \$959.07. In case your newspaper is still on the line rate system, remember there are 14 lines to an inch. So, if the line rate is \$3.75, multiply it by 14 and you will have the cost of an inch rate. (the rate would be \$45.50 an inch.)

Other important tips to remember are:

- Before you advertise, have in mind a definite plan for what it is you want to promote.
- Create short, descriptive copy for your ad. Include prices if applicable. Consider using a copywriter or ask your newspaper for free copy assistance.
- Neat, uncluttered and orderly ads encourage readership.
- Don't try to crowd everything you can in the layout space. If the newspaper helps you with the layout, be sure to request a proof of the final version so you can approve it or make changes before it is printed.

- Always make sure you are satisfied with what your advertising says and how it looks before it goes to print.

## **Magazine Advertising**

Many of the same "print" type principles which apply to newspaper advertising also apply to magazine advertising. The biggest differences are:

- Magazines are usually weekly or monthly publications instead of daily.
- Advertising messages are more image-oriented and less price-oriented.
- The quality of the pictures and paper are superior to newsprint.
- Advertisements often involve more color.
- Magazines typically have a longer "shelf-life" than newspapers.

Because ads in magazines are not immediate, they take more planning. Often, an ad for a monthly magazine must be prepared at least a month in advance of publication, so ads detailing prices and items have to be carefully crafted to insure accuracy.

Since the quality of the magazines is superior, the advertising that you generate must be superior as well. Negatives are usually required instead of prints or "PMTs" (photo-mechanical transfers). Consider getting assistance from a graphic artist or an advertising agency.

## **Radio Advertising**

Since its inception, radio has become an integral part of American culture. In some way, it touches the lives of almost everyone, every day. Radio, as a medium, offers a form of entertainment that attracts listeners while they are working, traveling, relaxing or doing almost anything.

### **What Are Some of the Good Things About Radio?**

Radio is a relatively inexpensive way of reaching people. It has often been called the "theatre of the mind" because voices or sounds can be used to create moods or images.

Advantages to radio advertising include:

- The ability to easily change and update scripts are paramount to radio broadcasting, since news stories can and often do happen live.
- Radio is a personal advertising medium. Station personalities have a good rapport with their listeners. If a radio personality announces your commercial, it's almost an implied endorsement.
- Radio is also a way to support your printed advertising.

## **What are Some Limitations to Radio Advertising?**

Radio advertising is not without its disadvantages either, such as:

- You can't review a radio commercial. Once it plays, it's gone. If you didn't catch all of the message, you can't go back and hear it again.
- Since there are a lot of radio stations, the total listening audience for any one station is just a piece of a much larger whole. That's why it's important to know what stations your prospective audience probably listens to. Therefore, most of the time, you'll have to buy time on several radio stations to reach the market you are targeting.
- People don't listen to the radio all the time...only during certain times of day. So, it's important to know when your target audience is listening.

One of the most popular times to reach people is during Drive Times (from 6 am. to 10 am. and 3 pm. to 7 pm.) It's called that because most people are going to or from work during this period, and because most people listen to their radio when they drive.

Unfortunately, radio stations know that this is a favorite time to advertise, so commercial costs are much higher during this time.

## **How Should I Buy Time on the Radio?**

Like a newspaper, each radio station has its own advertising staff. Each wants you to believe that their station is the absolute best buy for your money...and many will go to great lengths to prove it. But if you've done your research, you probably have a good idea of the station you want to buy time on and when. If you don't know which stations you want to use, ask each station for its own research, that is, the type of programming, musical format, geographic reach, number of listeners and station ratings.

Since you can't automatically recall the radio commercial and hear it again, you may have to hear the same commercial two, four, or maybe six times before the message sinks in. If you missed a part of the radio ad the first time, you consciously or subconsciously are hoping the commercial will be aired again so you can get the information you need. That's the way radio advertising works. And that's also the way you buy it.

Most of the time, radio advertising should be bought in chunks. High frequency over a short period of time is much more effective than low frequency over a longer period of time. It's important for your audience to hear your spot again to get more information out of it.

If you decide to write your own radio scripts, remember these basic copy writing rules:

- Get your listener's attention immediately.
- Write in conversational style.
- Avoid using buzz words or jargon.

- Repeat your important points.
- Make your ending strong and positive with call-to-action for response.

### **Public Service Announcements – What Are They and How Do They Work?**

Most radio stations run free public service announcement (PSAs) during unsold blocks of advertising time or station identification breaks. Station managers are always on the lookout for PSAs that are well-written, that carry messages of importance to their audiences, and that represent an opportunity for stations to perform a “public service” in their communities.

Before your spot is heard by anyone, you will have to overcome the stiff competition for air time. Most stations receive hundreds of requests from national, state and local non-profit groups who want access to a limited amount of public service air time. Your strongest advantage is that your PSA is local and vital to the community which the station serves.

### **Discount on Radio Ads from Clear Channel**

Clear Channel Radio has partnered with NAHU to offer a 15 percent discount on radio ads for its 1200 radio stations nationwide. Clear Channel Radio is a leading radio company focused on serving local communities across the U.S. with more than 110 million listeners choosing Clear Channel Radio programming each week.

### **Television Advertising**

Television is often called the "king" of the advertising media, since a majority of people spend more hours watching TV per day than any other medium. It combines the use of sight, color, sound and motion...and it works. TV has proven its persuasive power in influencing human behavior time and time again. But it's also the "king" of advertising costs.

### **Advantages in Television Advertising**

Television reaches very large audiences that are usually larger than the audience your city's newspaper reaches. The area that a television station's broadcast signal covers is called A.D.I., which stands for "Area of Dominant Influence."

Some advantages of television advertising include the following:

- Advertising on television can give instant validity and prominence.
- Since there are fewer television stations than radio stations in a given area, each TV audience is divided into much larger segments, which enables you to reach a larger, yet, more diverse audience.

## **Disadvantages in Television Advertising**

Because TV has such a larger A.D.I., the stations can charge more for commercials based on the larger number of viewers reached.

The cost of television commercial time is based on two variables:

- The number of viewers who watch the program.
- The time during the day the program airs.

One 30 second television commercial during prime time viewing (8 pm. to 11 pm.) can cost 10 to 30 times more than one radio spot during drive time (which is considered prime listening time).

Producing a commercial is also an important variable to consider. On the whole, television audiences have become more sophisticated and have come to expect quality commercials. A poorly produced commercial could severely limit the effectiveness of your message, and may even create a bad image for your chapter.

Remember, like radio, the message comes and goes...and that's it. The viewer doesn't see the commercial again unless you buy more placements.

## **Don't Use TV Unless Your Budget Allows**

Attempting to use TV advertising by using a poorly-produced commercial; buying inexpensive late night commercial time that few people watch; or just placing your commercial a couple times on the air will guarantee disappointing results. To obtain positive results from TV advertising you must have enough money in your budget to:

- Pay for the cost of producing a good TV commercial (today costs range from \$2,500 to \$20,000 and above).
- Pay for effective commercial time that will reach your viewer at least 5-7 times.

Properly done, television advertising is the most effective medium there is. But it is big league advertising...and you shouldn't attempt it unless you have enough money in your budget to do it right.

## **Buying Television Advertising Time**

There are many things to know and consider before buying a TV programming schedule. That's why, in most cases, using an advertising agency or a media buying service is recommended when advertising on TV. If these services are unavailable, find a TV representative that you can trust. Your agency or representative can help you select the programs you should advertise on in order to reach your market.

## **Cable Advertising**

Cable advertising is a lower cost alternative to advertising on broadcast television. It has many of the same qualities as broadcast television, and in fact, since it offers more programming, it's even easier to reach a designated audience.

The trouble with cable is it doesn't reach everyone in the market area, since the signal has to be wired instead of broadcast, and also because not everyone subscribes to cable.

## **Conclusion**

There is no one—sure-fire—best way to advertise. It is important to explore the various advertising media and select those which will most effectively convey your message to your audience in a cost-efficient manner.