

Title:

Be Imaginative

Word Count:

637

Summary:

A good advertising campaign will reach your target audience and talk to them on a personal level. This has a valuable effect on your sales and reputation. A great advertising campaign will do more than that. It will create a buzz outside of your target audience.

Keywords:

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Article Body:

What's the easiest way to kill a great ad campaign before it even begins? Take it too seriously. Advertising is not rocket science. You shouldn't need a degree in the physical sciences to create or understand an ad.

And you should never, ever, under any circumstances, kill an ad because it is not literal enough. On the contrary, if you find your ads are too literal, you should destroy them all and start fresh.

Are Volkswagens flawed pieces of junk? No, but an ad with the headline "Lemon" gets your attention, doesn't it? It makes you want to read the story, which goes on to explain how the particular car shown in the ad would never be driven because VW cares so much it weeds out the lemons so you never get a bad car. Think what an opportunity would have been missed if the folks at Volkswagen had taken that headline too literally.

Think about it from this angle. Why do people read an ad or watch a commercial? The majority do so because they find them entertaining and informative. If your ads are all information and no entertainment, you've wasted your budget.

This is not to say that an ad should be created purely for entertainment purposes. Again, a great ad is both entertaining and informative. The entertainment value should be derived from a feature of your product or brand. In other words, what you're selling should be the star of the show. Sounds simple enough, but it is often hard to strike the right balance. That's what makes advertising so fun.

How much information does your audience really need? What kind of story will they find entertaining? These are questions that should be asked and answered early on so that when you finally are presented with an ad or a campaign, you can judge the work according to these preordained guidelines.

A good campaign will reach your target audience and talk to them on a personal level. This has a valuable effect on your sales and reputation. A great advertising campaign will do more than that. It will create a buzz outside of your target audience.

Apple Computer's "1984" commercial ran only once. But it is still one of the most talked about commercials because it was rebroadcast on every major news show and written about in every major newspaper for weeks and months. And none of this cost Apple anything more than a single TV buy.

It's worth noting that Apple's Super Bowl commercial helped make the company a household name and created unbelievable demand for the new Macintosh computer—yet the ad never showed the product or explained any details about it.

BMW's Mini Cooper was one of the first cars to be introduced in the United States with no TV advertising. Blasphemy! Instead, they bolted the Minis to the roofs of SUVs and drove them around major cities. They created tongue-in-cheek billboards, interactive print ads and great guerrilla promotions. Most importantly, they created a waiting list of customers who couldn't wait to get a Mini.

Companies that think bigger become bigger. It's a self-fulfilling cycle. If you just think like a local operation, you might miss the opportunity to expand regionally, nationally, or even internationally. Your advertising campaign should reflect the direction of your company—even if you're not yet there.

Challenge yourself and your agency to think bigger. •

This article introduced the third of twelve steps. Challenge yourself, your staff and your advertising agency to revolutionize your ad program. If you missed a previous step, contact the author for a complimentary copy. And, remember, every revolution begins with just one step.

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