

Title:

Creating an Effective Advertising Campaign

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Summary:

Talk to almost any advertising agency, or Fortune 500 company exec about advertising and promotion, and you will almost certainly hear the buzz words "fragmented advertising" and "consumer-centric campaigns" and long discussions about the many pitfalls and difficulties of creating effective advertising campaigns today.

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Article Body:

Talk to almost any advertising agency, or Fortune 500 company exec about advertising and promotion, and you will almost certainly hear the buzz words "fragmented advertising" and "consumer-centric campaigns" and long discussions about the many pitfalls and difficulties of creating effective advertising campaigns today.

What is fragmentation exactly? It's the increase in the number of available methods for getting your message to your audience.

One of the main difficulties faced by any entrepreneur is that advertising has changed and evolved over the last few years. It now includes visual, audio and electronic media.

In fact, if you do a Google search for advertising, you may feel overwhelmed by all the options available to you now -- if you just look at the options for your Website you'll find popups, popovers, audio messages, flash video, RSS, even animated "sales people" that can be programmed to appear right on your Website and interact with your customers. And that's just the tip of the iceberg!

So is traditional advertising -- which includes billboards, radio, television, newspaper and magazine -- dead?

Not by a long shot. According to one top advertising mogul, traditional advertising methods are still around because they still work.

The trick is to figure out who your target market is, what they want, and how they look for that information.

Mark Twain said, "Many a small thing has been made large by the right kind of advertising."

If you know customers, you can spend your advertising dollars on the mediums they use to look for answers.

If your customers are senior citizens who are not online, then focus the majority of your advertising dollars on the newspapers, magazines, television, and radio that they are reading, watching or listening to.

If your target market are working parents, you need to know how, when and where they get their information. Is it on the Internet? What radio stations do they listen to? What magazines are they reading? Do they watch television? When? Why?

So what are your best options for creating an effective advertising campaign?

Here are some simple steps:

1. Know your audience. What do they want? Where do they shop? What do they read? How old are they? Where do they hang out? Do they need your product or services? Can they afford your product or services?

2. Know your competition. Be prepared to do a little detective work. What are your three main competitors doing to advertise? Where are they advertising? How often? What types of advertising methods are they using? How long have they been running? Are you reaching the same audience? Is your message different?

Look at what they're doing right, and figure out creative ways that you can make your advertising just a little bit better, or differentiate yourself from the crowd.

3. Next take a look at what the "big dogs" in your field are doing, and see if you can adapt some of their methods to your target audience and your budget.

4. Know your message. What exactly are you trying to say? What do your customers want to hear? Why should they buy from you, and not someone else? Make every word count.

Chances are, your customers are much more tech-savvy than they were five years

ago, or even one year ago. The Internet has made unbelievable amounts of information accessible, but it also has contributed to the "information overload" consumers complain of.

Another side effect of the Internet is that your customers have probably become used to getting "instant gratification" when they are looking for information, products or services. They want it, and they want it now. Are you giving your customers what they want, when they want it?

If you want to have an effective advertising campaign, don't try to be everything to everyone. Think of your advertising as a conversation between you and your one "ideal" customer.

Remember, if you're giving your customers what they want, they don't perceive your ads as a nuisance, they see them as a service.

Traditional advertising is not dead and you can use it to your advantage if you pay attention to who your customers are, and what they want.