

Ten Ways to Blow Your Advertising Campaign

Ignore Your Target Audience

If you don't want any customers, be sure to ignore your target audience. Don't worry that you're trying to sell scooters for the elderly in a teen magazine. Your target audience doesn't really matter, does it?

Knowing your target audience is crucial to any successful ad campaign. Always identify your potential customers before beginning any work on your ad campaign.

Don't Let the Pros Handle Your Materials

Save a buck and create your own materials. It won't make that much difference right?

There's a reason people hire ad agencies, freelance copywriters, freelance graphic designers and production houses to handle their ads. You're an expert in your field and they're experts in their fields.

Writing that brochure on your own and printing it out in black and white on your printer may sound like a good idea to save money.

All it will do, though, is make your company look unprofessional.

Copywriters are specifically trained to write copy that sells. Graphic designers are trained to create eye-catching materials that make your company stand out. Taking a stab at it yourself may sound like a good idea but the selling message will suffer and your company will lose sales.

Plans? Who Needs Plans?

Just start advertising willy nilly without really thinking about your budget and the right places for you to advertise and you're sure to blow your ad campaign quickly.

Every successful ad campaign begins with a well-conceived plan. From identifying the target audience to knowing exactly where you need to advertise, your plan is a must for your ad budget to be spent wisely and your potential customers to be turned into paying customers.

Run That Ad Just Once

Your ad is so great, you only need it to appear once to make a huge splash. Whether

it's a commercial or a print ad, just run it once and you'll instantly blow your ad campaign.

Frequency is the key. When you know your target audience, you also know where you need to advertise. How often you run the ad makes a big difference in if the ad will be effective.

One ad won't do the trick. It's better to run that one print ad multiple times than just once if you really want to gain customers.

Who Needs Consistency?

Trash all of your hard work on an ad campaign by making each ad different. Who needs the same tag line in every ad? Who wants the logo to look the same every time?

If you're not keeping your materials consistent, you're not making an impression with customers. The more people see your logo, your tag line, even the same colors in your ads, the more they'll begin to associate your company and products with the place they need to be spending their money.

Don't Tell the Customer to Act Now

Your "Call to Action" is completely optional if you want to turn your ad campaign into a disaster. You might as well tell customers, "Contact us if you want to or when you get around to it."

A compelling Call to Action is crucial to completing the sale. Tell customers to, "Call Now!" or "Hurry! This offer expires soon." If you're not telling the customers to act right away, they won't. They'll put your company in the back of their mind and then forget about you in a few minutes.

Budgets are for Schmucks

Don't worry about the numbers and you'll find yourself in a jam when it comes to advertising. Of course, that means you'll lose out on advertising opportunities you could've invested in but you didn't want any sales, right?

Plan out your ad budget to the penny.

This way, you'll know exactly what you can afford for your ad materials as well as how often you can advertise and in what types of mediums.

If your budget is low, you may find a commercial is out of the question and your money would be better spent in print. After all, since frequency is the key, you don't want to spend your entire ad budget on one commercial that can only air once when you could've run a print ad multiple times to gain customers.

If They Have Good Rates, Spend Your Money Wherever

That budget publication can offer you more for your buck than those bigger publications. Advertise with them no matter what if you want to blow your ad dollars.

Shop around. You're the customer when it comes to buying space in publications or on the airwaves.

Anyone who doesn't want to blow the company's ad campaign will compare the rates to how many people the publication or time slot will reach. A commercial at 2 a.m. will be dirt cheap compared to one that airs during the nightly news but how many people will actually see the ad at 2 a.m.?

A print ad running in a small publication will be much cheaper than running an ad in a national publication or even a local magazine but are you talking about reaching a handful of prospects or thousands? Compare the price difference with the difference in viewers/subscribers and it will be easy to see where you should be spending your ad dollars to make the campaign effective.

Write to a Broad Audience

You want to appeal to everyone so you can reach every single consumer with the product or service you're trying to sell.

Back to the real world now. That's just not possible if you want to write an effective advertisement that will reel in the customers. You think your big screen TVs would definitely be right for a college student but what college student is going to be able to shell out hundreds of dollars for your product? Write to a specific audience - your target audience - that person who you're going to speak directly to and who has the wallet with the cash needed to buy your product.

Any Old Publication Will Do

You're selling disposable underwear for the elderly and this entertainment magazine has great rates. It's a no-brainer. They've got the subscriber base you want and you're seeing dollar signs.

How many elderly people do you know who like to read about Brad Pitt's latest movie or George Clooney's current girlfriend? Think about who will be reading the publication you're interested in and how that content relates to your target audience. If your target audience isn't buying that publication, they won't be seeing your ad.

Be smart with your ad dollars and your ad campaign. Your company's success depends on it.

Apryl Duncan, Your Guide to Advertising