

Simple Tips to Creating An Effective Ad

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It is important that business owners understand the basics of writing a good advertisement.

All businesses need promotion. I have seen thousands and millions of dollars wasted on ineffective, poor or outright bad ads—and I want to save you that pain. But most importantly, I want you to expand your business and effective advertising in all its forms is essential.

After all, you need new customers because without them your business will fail. The good news is that the core principles of how to produce a proper advertisement apply to practically anything you may want to use as a promotional tool.

This includes, but is not limited to:

- Brochures
- Emails

- Fliers and other mailers and handouts
- Magazine and newspaper ads
- Online advertisements (display, etc.)
- Postcards
- Web sites, including those used with online advertising
- And more.

It can take a bit of trial and error (testing) to build an ad or ad campaign that really works, but following these 11 tried and true tips can help you get the results that you're hoping for.

1. What Makes You Stand Out From Your Competition?



What makes you stand out from the competition?

People come in contact with advertisements from all types of businesses all the time.

So, what will make your potential customers buy your company's product or service versus going with one of your competitors? That's what you have to figure out and focus on with your advertisement. Show your potential customers why your business is their number one choice and why they shouldn't even consider your competitors. Then, there is a good chance that they won't.

What I am talking about here is commonly referred to in marketing circles as the "Unique Selling Proposition." In his excellent book *Reality in Advertising*, author Rosser Reeves defines what a USP is:

1. *Each advertisement must make a proposition to the consumer-not just words, product puffery, or show-window advertising. Each advertisement must say to each reader: "Buy this product, for this specific benefit."*
2. *The proposition must be one the competition cannot or does not offer. It must be unique-either in the brand or in a claim the rest of that particular advertising area does not make.*
3. *The proposition must be strong enough to move the masses, i.e., attract new customers as well as potential customers.*

Here are some good examples of products with a clear USP from Wikipedia:

- Head & Shoulders: “You get rid of dandruff”
- Anacin “Fast, fast, incredibly fast relief”
- Domino’s Pizza: “You get fresh, hot pizza delivered to your door in 30 minutes or less-or it’s free.”
- FedEx: “When your package absolutely, positively has to get there overnight.”
- M&Ms: “Melts in your mouth, not in your hand.”
- Metropolitan Life: “Get Met. It Pays.”
- Southwest Airlines: “We are the low-fare airline.”

There are many more examples.

The goal here is to help you develop your USP yourself.

What makes you different? Unique? What do you have that no one else does? This is the kind of thing you’re looking for.

For example, my marketing firm is about to start working with an immigration attorney and I already see several things that can make her stand out from the competition. For one, she’s an immigration attorney that is also an immigrant. She also contributes to an online magazine to assist others who wish to immigrate to the U.S. through education. She is a colorful personality and instantly likeable. And although she does not deliver different services than her competitors, she has some unique ways that she conducts business that few others do. We plan on using all this when developing her USP.

Please keep in mind that any USP is almost better than none, and that this can change and be refined later.

One more thing to keep in mind is that you do not have to be the only one doing something or delivering some product to include it in your USP. It can be something others are doing, but no one else is really promoting.

Get out a pad of paper and some pens and have fun with this. I am sure you will start coming up with brilliant ideas right off the bat!

2. Use A Powerful Headline: Grab Their Attention!



Getting attention can be subtle too

People scan things quickly. They come into contact with so many advertisements each day that they can't possibly read each one. This is why you have to make sure that your advertisement actually grabs and keeps their attention.

You do that with an effective headline.

The greatest advertising man in history, David Ogilvy, said "On average, five times as many people read the headline as read the body copy. When you have written your headline, you have spent eighty cents out of your dollar."

The question you need to ask is "Who are you trying to attract? What would get their attention?"

Yesterday, I received an email newsletter from a recruitment firm with the headline "Would You Hire Obama?" As a CEO who is interested in recruiting new talent, this caught my attention. It drove me to their website and I read the entire article, learning about their unique process. As a result, I requested a sales call for next week.

All that came from an effective headline.

I have written sales letters that have gotten tremendous response mainly due to powerful headlines.

In one case I helped a company sign more than \$1 million in contracts with a single letter.

In another, I obtained one sales appointment for every 200 letters – and this for a service that started at \$10,000!

In still another case, I created a flier that was sent to a very restricted, high-end list of 134 names which resulted in nine sales appointments with the first mailing!

Great headlines come in many forms.

Ogilvy once remarked that he would write an advertisement in three hours and then take three weeks to come up with the headline.

Some headlines are newsworthy, such as in the release of a new service or product. Others have a very strong benefit. Most are specific, as opposed to general, in their facts. Others use a negative angle (such as "reducing costs" as opposed to "increasing profits").

Jay Abraham, an online marketer and consultant, compiled a list of the [100 best headlines ever written](#).

3. Make Them An Offer They Can't Refuse!

Consumers love a bargain. So offer them a good one so that they'll come back to you time and time again.

Whether you're offering an unbeatable price, a free trial, free shipping or a bundled package, going out of your way to provide your customers with a good deal will help you be successful.

Once you come up with your irresistible offer, make sure that you advertise it proudly. When people see that you have something great to offer them, they will have a difficult time resisting it.

In determining how much you can spend for an introductory product or service, think of the overall Client Lifetime Value (CLV), the amount a client will benefit a company over time, for your firm.

One client I worked with was initially hesitant to lose \$150 in profit for an intro service to acquire a new client. He was extremely surprised to discover though that those new clients had a CLV of \$5,000 – a number more than 33 times the initial investment in terms of lost profit. So he had been losing \$4,850 every time he didn't invest the \$150 to obtain a new client.

This is a very powerful concept and can make or break your business. To understand more, take a few minutes and [watch this video](#) by Jay Abraham.

4. Talk About The Benefits – What's In It For Them!



Ah, a desirable benefit

Explaining the features of your products or services is important, but explaining the benefits for the customer is really what it's all about. After all, people are more interested in what they get from your services than what you do. Make sense?

This is not complicated. Here's what you do to figure this out:

1. List out all your services (or products).

2. For each one, list out everything that service (feature) does.
3. Then, next list out what the result of each feature is – the benefit for the client.

For example, say you are a tax accountant. One feature of your service is that you have a website where clients can log in and access their tax documents 24/7. The huge benefit is that it saves time and inconvenience for the client.

5. Tell Your News: Create an Advertorial!

Webster's Dictionary says that an “advertorial” is “an advertisement that imitates editorial format.” In other words, it’s an ad that looks like a news article!

Here is why this is important.

People are seven times more likely to read a news article than an advertisement.

People come in contact with regular ads all day long. There is really no incentive for them to read your ad if you don’t offer them more than what everyone else is offering.

Creating an effective ad that grabs attention and provides plenty of information isn’t always easy. But an advertorial can achieve this as it is far more likely to be clicked on and read.



This type of advertisement encourages readers to get interested in your company because it includes more information. Readers want to read more once they realize the article isn’t just advertising your business but helping them. For example, the ad can provide them with lots of advice, tips and information and how your company and products can help them.

The best example that comes to mind is an ad that ran in the *Wall Street Journal* more than 60 years ago. The ad ran with the headline “What Everybody Ought to Know About This Stock and Bond Business” and contained a mammoth 6,540 words! It was presented in advertorial format and generated 10,000 inquiries in a single day.

Now that’s results!

6. Take Away Their Fear: Make Your Offer As Risk-Free As Possible!

People are nervous about spending their money. There are too many scammers and low-quality products out there. People worry that they'll be wasting their hard-earned cash when it comes to many products and services.

If people fear that they're going to lose their money and regret their purchase, they are unlikely to purchase your product. But, if you remove these doubts, people are given an incentive to give your product or service a try.

So it's a great idea to offer a risk-free guarantee. Knowing there is no risk and that they don't have anything to lose by purchasing your product or service, is a powerful purchasing inducement. This "reverses" the risk and places some of it on the seller. This is called "risk reversal."

If potential customers know that they can get their money back if they aren't satisfied, they'll be less concerned about wasting cash and will be more likely to give it a try.

Plus, a lot of people instantly feel better about a product if the company is willing to stand behind it. It shows that your product is worthwhile and that you aren't afraid to back it up with a risk-free guarantee.

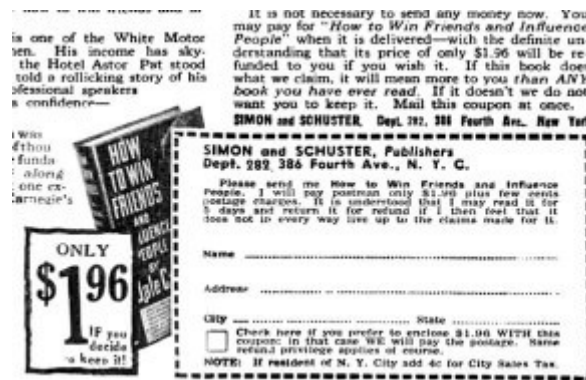
Almost all major department stores (Sears, Bloomingdale's, Dillard's, Macy's, Walmart, Target, Hudson's Bay in Canada, etc.) use risk-reversal and have a money-back guarantee on their products. Last week, I purchased a high-end television from Best Buy for my father and the first thing I was told was that I could return it anytime within a specific period. Got to love it.

Other types of companies do the same thing. Two days ago I received an offer for an information product that sells for \$4,500. The seller used a risk reversal strategy to promote the product and build confidence in it and him. The offer only asked for a \$500 deposit which was fully refundable to test drive the product for a month. I'd get my deposit back if I didn't think the product was worth it within that time. An excellent risk reversal approach (just like the money-back guarantee) and I am going to take him up on it.

7. The "Call To Action" And Asking Them To Buy – Or Not!

Don't just tell your potential customers about what your company has to offer. Encourage them to take action. Tell them directly to click on your ad, order your product, pay for your service, etc.

For example, your "call to action" can encourage people to email you for more information, to fill out a form to find out more about your services, to join your weekly or monthly email newsletter or to purchase your product or service. It could even direct users to click on your ad to take them to your website rather than just looking at the advertisement.



You need to use exciting words and persuasive language to give that extra push.

Here is an excerpt from one of the most successful advertisements in history, a magazine ad that sold the famous book “How to Win Friends and Influence People” in 1937, showing both the risk reversal and call to action.

8. Make It Seem Urgent, Give Them A Reason To Buy NOW!

You don’t want to just plant the seed with your ads, you want people to move forward and do something about your offer NOW.

When people see an ad and think about giving a company a try later, they might actually mean to do so. But, people most often move on with their lives and forget all about the ad and the product that they might have been interested in. Therefore, you have to encourage people to act now rather than later.

You can create this urgency in any number of ways.

For example, you can make your irresistible offer time-limited. If people see that they only have a set amount of time, such as a few hours or days, to snag an unforgettable deal that they’re already pretty excited about, they will be more likely to make a move now than later. Many people assume that they’ll be able to get the same deal later on. But if they know that they can’t, they’ll be more likely to take the deal now.

That isn’t the only way of creating a sense of urgency. You can also bring in an upcoming season or event when your product will come in handy to make people buy now.

Regardless of how you might choose to do it, it’s important to let your potential clients know that NOW is the time to make a move.

9. Use Testimonials



Yes, it was a good salmon

One of the most important parts of creating an effective ad is building up trust and interest in your company.

Remember that people have a lot of concerns these days, particularly when they're online. It is important to build trust in your business, its products and services so they know that your company is the right choice. You can do this by showing that others in the past have been pleased with their decision to buy from or work with you.

A great way to do this is by adding a testimonial or two to your ads from those who are satisfied with your company and its products.

Today, countless people rely on online reviews when shopping for new businesses, products and services.

People trust other consumers and want to know what they have to say about a company. You can't make people look for online reviews about your business, but you can give them the same peace of mind by adding a testimonial from a current client who is pleased with what you have to offer. Seeing that other consumers who are just like them, are happy with your product can encourage potential clients to give you a try.

10. Use Exciting Graphics

People are visual.

Plain text on a plain background can be boring. People don't always want to read everything that has been written in an ad or an article.

You can appeal to the visual interest that your clients have by adding exciting graphics to your advertisements.

For example, you can post a picture of what you have to offer, or you can post something that is going to grab attention. You can take the pictures yourself, or you can look for royalty-free, no-cost images online. Regardless, adding something visual will help draw more attention and interest to your company.

11. Complete Contact Information

You would not believe how many times I've seen advertisements, often expensive magazine ads, posters, billboards, etc. without clear-cut company contact information.

Don't make this mistake.

You've told them what you're selling, now tell them where to buy it. Anything else is a waste of money.

You should use your ads to link people to your website for more information as part of the contact information. This is imperative for several reasons.

One, if people check out your site and are impressed with it, you have a better chance of turning them into real clients.

Secondly, you can track how your ads perform and what leads are generated on the website to get an idea of how well your campaign is working. So, if you are not achieving the results that you're looking for, you will know where you need to make changes.

Always DELIVER

Remember that you should always over-deliver when it comes to your customers.

Creating an effective ad is great, but your advertisements won't get you far if you aren't making your customers happy. Therefore, you should focus on providing all of your customers with the best experience that you can.

If you always deliver more than they expect, then you never have to worry about anyone being disappointed. Then, you will see your clients come back time and time again and they'll be more likely to tell their friends about your company.

Making Yourself Stand Out

These 11 tips for creating an effective ad can help your promotions stand head and shoulders over those of your competition. You will be able to make eye-catching ads that will get people excited about what you have to offer. That will help improve your conversion rate of making prospects into real customers.

Advertising is important and good advertising is what will help your company succeed.