



How to Write an Ad That Adds to Your Bottom Line

By Gary Watson, GW CopyWriting Services

Whether your company is business-to-business or business-to-consumer, selling almost anything in today's economic climate is a challenging task. If your sales effort feels like you're pushing boulders up steep hills, it's time to take a close look at your media advertising, especially the advertising you do in newspapers and magazines. The kind called "print."

Print advertising, unlike broadcast and the Web, allows you to target your audience with a fair amount of accuracy. Plus, it gives you an environment in which you have the room and time to make your case with a prospect who's inclined to linger over words.

If you can capture attention with an intriguing, standout headline, there's a good chance your future customer or client will want to know more about your product or service. At this critical moment, your prospect should encounter readable, engaging, highly persuasive copy. And it helps enormously if the picture that goes with the words is eye-grabbing and relevant to your message.

Chances are, you're not going to be taking on this "simple" job yourself. You may have an ad agency working on your behalf. Or an in-house marketing communications group. Or maybe even a freelance copywriter. If money is tight, or you want to be meaningfully involved in the process, a good freelancer may be the way to go.

But whether you're the one who actually creates the ad, or you're overseeing someone else's effort, it's a critical enough component of your sales cycle to merit your closest attention.

So here's a brief list of ten guidelines that will help you ensure that your print messages work as hard for your company as you do. Read them, heed them, and keep them in mind as you write — or review — that all-

important ad.

1. Define exactly what you're selling before you sit down to create the ad.
2. Know who you're selling to. Keep that person in mind as you write your ad.
3. Come up with a clear statement of the benefits of what you're selling. Features are important, but it's the perceived value that prompts action by the reader.
4. Write as if you're one-on-one with the reader. Think of ads that drew you in. They spoke to you. And they assumed you possessed a certain level of intelligence.
5. Stay away from ego statements unless you're skilled enough to be humble or modest or humorous. Smuckers is an odd name for a line of jams and preserves, but they turned it to their advantage with the famous line, "With a name like Smuckers, it's got to be good."
6. Make sure there's a strong connection between your headline and main visual. You want each to amplify the other in order to make a dynamic statement of benefit. Fresh donuts need to be made early in the morning, which is why Dunkin' Donuts showed a sleepy guy named Fred crawling out of bed before sunup because it was "Time to make the donuts."
7. Choose your ad environment carefully. Your better mousetrap may not be appreciated in Gourmet magazine.
8. Study competitive ads and make sure that yours is different. Work hard to make it stand out.
9. Solicit comments. Track results. Change your approach if there seems to be a problem.
10. Be certain your product or service lives up to any claims. No matter how brilliantly conceived and executed your ad is, it's satisfied customers and clients who create your best advertising.



Employee Spotlight

Jeff Schmaltz is one of our pressman and also doubles as our primary delivery driver. Jeff started with the Klingstedt Brothers Company in 1995 and will celebrate his 15th anniversary with us this year! He grew up in Canton and graduated from McKinley High School. Before joining the Klingstedt team, he worked for Ohio Business Forms and PPI Graphics.

Jeff and his wife Jenny were married in 1990. They have five children; Jeffrey, Nicholas, Noah, Alexis and Jenna. Residing currently in North Canton, he enjoys doing yard work and collecting rare coins.

Next time you receive a delivery from us, be sure to say hello to Jeff!

How Much Should I Spend on Marketing?

If I categorized all of the questions that I would receive, I would have to say that the majority are concerning how much to budget and spend on marketing.

It's a tricky question. The important thing for new companies is testing marketing vehicles to see which performs and provides the best return on investment. Mature companies or businesses that have been in business for a considerable amount of time know which vehicles work for them; if they don't they are in trouble.

I typically recommend that companies invest 20% of their resources into marketing. This is 20% of your budget as well as your time. You continually reinvest 20% into marketing on an ongoing basis. As time goes on you may be able to decrease your time spent in marketing, but in return monetary resources may need to increase. The key is to find the vehicles that work best for your target market. Is it Internet, newspaper, audio commercials, or television commercials.

You will find that some people suggest as your business grows to decrease your amount in marketing. I firmly disagree with this tactic. You should always be marketing to new potential customers as well as marketing to the repeat consumer.

Review your marketing mix. There's no such thing as one specific activity but rather a cross-section of marketing strategies will bring the success you need. It's the small things that add up when put together. Determine what marketing works by asking your customers and disregard any marketing vehicles that are not working for you and reinvest in those that do.

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The Best Medicine...

Did you hear about the banker who was recently arrested for embezzling \$100,000 to pay for his daughter's college education?

As the policeman, who also had a daughter in college, was leading him away in handcuffs, he said to the banker, "I have just one question for you. Where were you going to get the rest of the money?"

Have You Sold Yourself?

by Mark Hunter, smallbusinessbrief.com

You will always be your number one customer. It's not the big account you service, nor is it the hot new prospect you just uncovered; it's you. The reason is simple. If you're not completely confident in what you're selling, you will never come close to maximizing your sales potential.

The current sales environment makes the need to sell yourself even more important. If you think you're the exception to this rule and you're not completely confident in the products or services you offer, ask yourself this simple question: Have you ever offered a discounted price to either keep a customer or attract a new one? Few salespeople can honestly say they have never done this. If you have, it means that you were not 100% sold on your product or service.

As a consumer, when we don't fully believe in what is being offered to us, we naturally expect a discount. We want something in return for not being completely confident about what we're buying. Since the salesperson hasn't communicated the level of confidence we need in order to buy the product at full price, we want some type of concession to make us feel better about the purchase.

To be completely sold on your product or service, not only do you need to use what you sell, but you also need to understand all of the benefits that your product or service provides. As a sales consultant who works with thousands of different professionals each year, I'm amazed at the number of salespeople who admit that they don't even use what they sell. How can anyone be totally committed to a product or service if they don't even use it? Furthermore, it's not uncommon for me to see salespeople shortchanging themselves because they are unable to identify and explain the value of what

they are selling. Although this sounds basic, many salespeople cannot name five benefits their customers receive from using their product or service. They can usually only list five features. Without understanding the full array of their product's benefits, there's little chance the customer will ever see them too.

A poor sales process is usually a good indicator of whether or not the salesperson is sold on the product or service they are offering. Nothing conveys a lack of confidence faster than a sales process that is not professional. Unfortunately, for many salespeople, a disorganized sales process is the norm and it only serves to destroy more sales and, ultimately, a huge amount of profit. Despite the customer's desire to buy, an unorganized sales process creates an air of skepticism that often can only be countered by offering some type of discount to close the deal.

With the current state of the economy, it is imperative that sales professionals be both confident and competent to achieve maximum success. In any sales call, you best communicate these qualities by being completely sold on your product or service. If you are not, find ways to better educate yourself so that you can become your number one customer. Remember, "No customer is ever sold until the salesperson is sold."



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