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## How to Advertise Properly

By Christopher

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Marketing combines lots of activities which are mostly costly, but if you want results then you will need to pay for it at some point. Companies like Google and Hotmail had money to burn before, and had arrangements in place that provided them with free advertising - unfortunately, most don't have that luxury.

### Can You Afford to Advertise at All?

If you're marketing a small business, start by deciding where your prospect might look for your company. What are you selling, how will people find you and why would they look for you in the first place. Next look for contact information in targeted publications, sites etc that identifies the ad campaign manager, ring them and ask for a rate sheet (this details the prices of ads, discounts per ads etc), if it's a magazine always ask for the schedule, which tells you when the ads need to be placed by, alternatively, you can get this info from each publication's website. WARNING:

If the site just has a email asking you to contact them to discuss advertising - chances are it's going to cost you in the region of at least £2000 and anything up to £30000, so be prepared for that, and make sure you check the `reach' (readership level of your ad) by asking for readership levels. Once you have your rate sheets, look at the pricing and throw away any that are near or over 5% of your yearly ad budget - and forget about advertising in those ones. You need tons of little ads running at minimum to make a good print advert campaign, and too expensive ads will eat into your budget, and you won't be able to keep it going. If you operate on too small a scale to afford advertising, try putting a good flier together (use good quality paper) and mail that to 300 people/companies instead. That's a lot cheaper and less risky than spending £20'000 on some campaign aimed at 200'000 - which could easily fail.

Even advertising for as little as a month, can and does cost as much as £1500 per month, and most portal type sites will cost £10'000 for a weeks campaign. I recently checked the ad rates for a black cab service, and they started at £14'000 per month for a lightweight campaign for 200 panels (excluding production costs) - so it's an expensive business. Big companies don't worry about losing £14'000 or even £200,000 on a campaign, as they are experts, and hire the best market researchers, PR staff and

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sales people in the world to look after this for them.

But you guys can't afford to do this, and even with the introduction of the web, finance does pose a problem.

Planning is the Key! If you have a plan, then you can keep track of what you're buying, time period paid for each advert and results from each campaign. For those who don't know what an ad campaign is - it's "a series of adverts in different, but targeted media that communicate a single or multiple message" And those ads need to be targeted exactly.

To plan a campaign, an advertiser usually consults an ad agency. Such agencies will create, design, develop, plan and implement an ad campaign for a client.. Some agencies offer all manner of services and some specialise, in creative work or copyrighting etc. Your ads must be in the right place, at the right time and targeted at the right people - otherwise the campaign will fail. In this article, we will

review certain publications, and list why they work and why they fail and include some less common tips on how to reduce that ad spend. You will like this, we will have some fun!!!

Most advertising actually fails - did you know that? Well it does, and I'm going to prove it to you.

Advertising fails because it's ineffective, because either ads are badly written, not advertised in the right media – or the ad is okay, but you're paying way too much for the ad space. And people copy others as well. Do you remember copying someone's homework at school because you couldn't be bothered to work on it yourself, and you got caught out, I do! Well, advertising is exactly like that, with businesses advertising in the same damn publication all the time. You wouldn't see 2 pubs sitting right next to each other would you - and why do you think that is.....

(Pretty obvious why)

See where I'm taking you with this.

Your business is unique, and a general medium may not be the best place to advertise - even if the price is attractive. Let's take a look at some advert media:

### NEWSPAPERS

Newspapers, local and national are used for 2 different reasons:

National press is larger and will have a wider circulation compared to local rags. Yet local papers can provide a more highly targeted readership - it depends on your needs. They use `display' ad spaces, which can be up to a full page in size - guaranteeing attention of some sort, although the paper cannot guarantee the target readership exactly (anyone can buy a paper)

Either way, newspapers are a medium to large expense, and most web companies/sites can't afford to use them. Try using news web sites as a cheaper option.

Local press is distributed locally, by town, county, or specialism! And is a more affordable option, but

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still expensive compared to other methods.

### MAGAZINES

These are highly specialised, can be online and offline, target by age, group or niche area - and are medium to high cost. An added advantage of the a Magazine is colour - colour does attract, and will sell more than just a plain old black and white advert.

Space is usually bought in `issues' and a price will be quoted for the number of issues wanted, and charges decrease with the higher number. Still very pricey though, don't expect much change from £80'000 for several issues. But choose wisely, and the results are truly fantastic! Ok, these are print ads, and most marketers go for printed adverts, as they are less expensive to create, set up, modify etc etc. Print advertising also integrates well with other media, and is the backbone of most marketing programs in this world.

When designing anything in print, Your ad's purpose is to generate a sale. That's called ROI (return on investment) and is the goal for most. Only big companies can afford brand campaigns.

Now lets discuss the underperforming media and the tactics involved - both should reveal why this fails for most website ad campaigns.

**DIRECTORIES** (offline/paper versions) – When they first arrived, were new, interesting and highly used. They had high usage, good distribution rates, could be targeted and were considered good value for the money, as there was little else being offered in that price bracket at the time. Kellys started it all off really, with their massive 100'000 category monster, aimed at the Industrial market and companies. Then along came Yellow Pages followed by Thomson Local and a few smaller competitors.

Yellow Pages took over the market and everyone went for them, as it was marketed with perfection and it seemed like a good idea at the time. Hmmmm, everyone followed suit, I seem to recall mentioning that before. I browsed through a copy the other day and infact noticed 35 companies, on the same page, advertising the exact same services as each other, and under the same category too. Not good, and potentially profit suicide if you ask me. Yet they all do it. Hmmmmm, silly.

So if I followed suit and became no 36, that means I have only a 1 in 36 chance of being selected, viewed or phoned up by a customer - and I paid how much for that £335, eeeeeek. £400 is quite a bit to spend on advertising for the average start up, and in my opinion, it takes the biscuit, it really does insult. Fact is, there are good and bad publications out there, some famous brands and some not so famous - but a lot of it is pot luck - and what you have to avoid, if you wish to be successful. Pot luck advertising methods are no good, as it's a crap shoot, a roll of the dice etc. What you need is to reach the people who are interested in your product/service - do that and it increases the chance of a sale.

### **DIRECTORIES 2** (online versions)

These are FAR superior than their paper brothers, and there are many:

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Vortals (niche or vertical), County, Region or they can cover the entire UK or even World. Space? Er, lets not be silly now. But they are better - much better, as lots can be done web design wise. Some have really quite good services, that can even rival search engine advert specs, but some just don't have the reach.

Personally, I feel that the money is in directories, and it seems that with Google PR, this means that a link in a good directory, means your site gets picked up by the engines, thus making you visible on whatever engine. Which is good right.....

A link is a link my friends. Directories are also very accurate - if not perfect!

My Top 10 directories to list your sites:

1. Microsoft small business <http://sbd.bcentral.com/addsite.aspx>

2. Gympsy <http://www.gimpsy.com/>

3. Google (if you can get in)

<http://www.google.co.uk/dirhp?hl=en&tab=wn&ie=UTF-8&oe=UTF-8>

4. Yell.com (Pricey, but well known)

<http://www.yell.com/>

5. JoeAnt <http://www.joeant.com> (An up and coming new boy)

6. KellySearch <http://www.kellysearch.com> (Established, but serves industrial needs only)

7. AnyWho <http://www.anywho.com>

8. Thomson <http://www.thomweb.co.uk> (Local UK reach)

9. Abrexa <http://www.abrexa.co.uk> (Dependable & Likely to stay around for a long time)

10. CountyWeb <http://www.countyweb.co.uk> (Nice PR image, but lacks originality - could be okay for reach)

But just beware that whoever you decide to use, just don't engage in unnecessary overspending - think it through before signing a contract or writing that cheque.

Many companies you will deal with are existing or former salespeople themselves, and their goal is to get you to spend, and will use various techniques (some welcome, and some not) to do this. They don't care as much if you waste your ad cash for the year, not getting the ROI - it's not their business they are playing games with.

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Remember that always!

Medium Cost Advertising:

Search Engine and PPC advertising

Sponsored listings are many and varied and can mean different things and results are very dependent on 'design' and whether people actually notice them. One engine will do it differently to another – and price rarely determines quality or exposure or even reach, in fact each engine will stamp their authority, brand on it's own creation and tell you it's the best. But basically what you need to consider is:

- o Most are expensive and never deliver what you think you will get

- o Most 'sponsored' anything is a rip-off of somebody else's idea!

- o When you have 50 to 100 similar companies, products or services using these upgraded entries/promotions – the effect of them is reduced considerably, but they are better than the basic line entry styles which the publication is built from. It's just there is nothing else to compete with the bog standard PPC, at the moment.

It really depends on who you use, and a lot of testing, analysing the benefits of various campaigns will reveal what works for you, and what doesn't! And never ever use just one type of ad company or campaign - success will be in the ad space management, negotiation and reducing those costs.

Does advertising work?

Give you an example now. I was searching for imdb (internet movie database) and used Yahoo.co.uk to find it. Do you know, I ignored every single ad in front of me, as I was more interested in finding info on my film/video/dvd, than viewing some advert. In fact, I even ignored the 'movie' PPC ads everywhere.

And I bet, I wasn't the only one either. How many more targeted movie surfers ignored those movie ads that day? Makes you wonder doesn't it. But then again I wasn't looking (did not want movie ads) for PPC adverts at that time. So that proves that even PPC text adverts failed that day, and it also proves that advertising can't force someone to even view something, if they don't want to! Can anybody force me to buy something? Nope. But you can make something attractive, so that it catches my attention. That is what advertising is about. And that's what you need to do to win (in a sense).

Advertising only works if someone is looking for that thing at that time. A movie advert campaign won't work on everyone - so it's pointless placing it in a General Site. You are placing the image of a product, service etc into the mind of someone else, who you have never met before - a stranger, and yet you expect them to trust you.

Difficult huh. So you need to invite them (invite), to come and see what you have, and that's before they even think about buying from you. And the advert has to take care of that. The ad itself doesn't

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have to be expensively produced (write it yourself, and you can use PPC, to test it, and when you are happy - then sink more cash into the campaign. I won't give a lecture on the use of PPC ads, as that's available everywhere), but if you have no copywriting skills whatsoever, then you are looking at £150ish for a decent ad copywriter fee. But it's probably worth it for a good ad.

Once you have the ad, and your rate cards - you need to choose your advertiser/s. And the cheaper the better..... But you must put it in the correct publication for it to be noticed by the right people.

One excellent method is to use Newsletters. You can buy ad space in 40 or so newsletters for far less cash than buying 1 ad in a major magazine or paper - but you will have to be patient and persistent, because electronic newsletters aren't as obvious as medium than large newspapers or websites. And the fact that it's easier to buy a newspaper or something, than to advertise on the web, could be a factor as well.

But there are some very good ones:

MSN

Hotmail etc both have high readership levels.

Christopher is owner of ad company

### **Marketing Tips – Advertising**

#### **By Sue and Chuck DeFiore**

Typical methods of advertising—newspapers, radio and television are effective if used properly, but there are other, less expensive ways to get your company's name out.

Local or cable television is an inexpensive alternative to the traditional forms of advertising. Even if you have no experience advertising in this medium, there are companies who specialize in lending a helping hand. Even if finances are a concern (as they are for most of us), you'll be surprised to discover a 30 second spot television ad can cost as little as a few hundred dollars.

Many areas have public auctions on local stations that will advertise your product, if you donate up to a certain dollar amount. The number of advertising spots will depend on how much you donate.

Remember also to send press releases to your local television and radio stations. Many times they will come out and do a story on you, if it is of interest to the public.

We volunteered to do resumes for people out of work and sent releases to all the radio and television stations. One of the three major networks in our area, sent someone out to interview us, and we were on the 6 and 11 o'clock news.

As for radio advertising, check your local stations for rates. You'll be surprised at how low some of them are. Again, if you send press releases to the stations, sometimes they will call you as an expert in

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your area, or for an interview. We sent releases to all the stations in our area when we started our support group, and this generated three times the number of people we expected for our first meeting.

Since most major newspapers are expensive to advertise in, check with the smaller local papers. You can advertise in many of these for as little as \$25 a month. You could also offer to write a column for these publications, as an expert in the area, if appropriate.

We all need to advertise in one way or another. Which medium you choose will depend on your particular business.

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