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"Out of Focus" Ads Can Cost You Customers

By Karon Thackston

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As I was riding down the road last week, I noticed a billboard. As I sat waiting on a stoplight I kept staring at it. I couldn't help wondering what those people were thinking when they created that thing. It made no sense to me whatsoever. The focus was completely off. They were spending all that money on a billboard that was practically useless.

That happens quite a bit with all types of advertising. Well-meaning people design and/or write ads that just don't make good sense. For all their time and all their money they will likely get nothing in return. So, what did they do that was all wrong?

This particular billboard was for a realtor. Half of it was taken up with his photo. I understand photos... they help to create relationships and give people a face to put with an otherwise arbitrary name. But half the billboard? The photo should have definitely been much smaller.

The next biggest thing on the billboard was the realtor's tag line. To be honest, I don't remember what the tag line was... something pretty generic like "Serving your real estate needs for 15 years." Nothing worth taking up all that space for.

Next... in about the same size font (type) as the tag line were the name of the real estate company and the realtor's name.

Last – and in the smallest type – was the contact phone number. Hmmm... does something seem wrong to you?

Now let's think about this. What is the purpose of putting up a billboard – or any other piece of advertising? To get people to respond. And how do people respond? In this case by contacting you. If I had a shot at redesigning this billboard, I would do a lot of things differently.

“Out of Focus” Ads Can Cost You Customers

The biggest two things on the billboard would be the realtor's name and his contact phone number. If a person driving by only got two pieces of information from this ad, I'd want it to be the name of who to contact and how.

Next, I'd want to see a tell-all tag line (USP - unique selling position). Something that sets this realtor apart from others. Something that tells me – as a prospect – that I need *this* guy to sell my house... not any of the other 6,000 realtors in my area.

Lastly, I'd work in the smaller photo, and the name of the realty company. Both are needed, but they don't need to be as large as they were.

When you create any piece of advertising, you have to keep the end results in mind. What do you want to happen once a prospect sees your ad? In this case, the realtor wanted people to call him. Therefore, the contact information simply has to be prominent.

People driving past a billboard *may* have a total of 3 seconds of viewing time. Since this billboard was near a stoplight (great choice of location by the way), those who were stopped had a few more seconds, maybe even a minute, of viewing time, IF they noticed the billboard. (They may have been looking in the rearview mirror and yelling at their kids!) That means the focus has to be crystal clear.

When you create advertising pieces, be sure to keep your focus in mind. What do you want to accomplish with this ad? If every aspect does not lend itself in some way to getting the prospects to respond the way you need them to, consider reworking your ad.

Whether it's billboards, postcards, Web sites, newspapers, magazines, or brochures — keep your focus in check. Making it easy for the customer to buy will bring you maximum results.

Copy not getting results? Let Karon write targeted, persuasive copy for you. Visit her site at <http://www.ktamarketing.com>, or learn to write your own copy at <http://www.copywritingcourse.com>. Don't forget to subscribe to Karon's free ezine at <http://www.ktamarketing.com/ezine.html>.

Get Affordable—Even Free—Targeted Advertising In Magazines

By John Frazier

By now most of us have tried just about every advertising method available. From ads on Google to website banners. And even though you may have found an advertising method that works, you're probably still looking for more.

I'm often surprised by how many home-based business owners and opportunity seekers have never thought of advertising in magazines. Magazines are the original targeted media. While TV shows and newspapers may try to appeal to a very wide audience featuring many different kinds of people, magazines have always focused their efforts on a tightly defined audience.

“Out of Focus” Ads Can Cost You Customers

For example, look through the magazine rack the next time you're at the grocery store and you will see dozens of different magazines focusing on everything from cars, fishing, crafts, home decorating, relationships, and business. All these magazines cater to a different audience with different tastes and buying habits.

By choosing magazines that focus on your best potential customers, you almost guarantee your ads will be successful. It's an old rule in marketing that getting your ad in a magazine that intensely appeals to your best customers will get you ten times the results than advertising in a famous mass appeal publication like Business Week, Time, or Newsweek.

That's right, advertising your home-based business in Home Business Magazine will most likely get you far more response than getting your name in Newsweek.

And this is REALLY good news for those of us working from home. Smaller, more tightly-focused magazines almost always offer very affordable ads, usually in the back of the magazine. While full and half-page ads can cost hundreds or thousands, you can advertise in the back for about the same cost as putting a classified ad in your local paper. Then, as very few people know, there are also ways to get FREE ads in big magazines. Either way, it's cheap, targeted, and it could be your best path to new profits.

And don't let that "back of the magazine" position discourage you. More than half of people read magazines from back to front. Businesses advertising in the back actually have the most visible spot in the magazine.

The weeks ahead are traditionally a time when magazines drop their advertising rates. Place your ads NOW to take advantage of low rates early in the year which, incidentally, is the time of year when the most people are interested in joining a business opportunity.

John Frazier is the author of the industry's highly acclaimed mail order marketing course 'Magazine Millionaire' and an internationally known speaker and consultant. For a limited time, get a special FREE Report on how to create lifetime wealth using 100% FREE-to-run magazine advertising:

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