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Three Keys to Crafting Successful Print Ads

By Michele Pariza Wacek

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Want to create print ads that get results? Below are three keys to get you started.

1. Write for the eye. Print ads are visual. Therefore, craft ads with the eye in mind.

Eyes are kind of picky, though. So, here's a checklist of what eyes like and don't like:

- * A catchy headline that encourages them read more.
- * Art, such as photos, illustrations, clip art, shapes, etc. Eyes like art. When you create the ad, create words AND the visual at the same time. Words and visuals should work together.
- * Designed in an interesting, intriguing, attention-getting manner. Eyes like that. Remember, graphic designers are your friends. If you don't have training in graphic design, I strongly urge you to hire a graphic designer to create your ad. The results will be well worth it.
- * White space (blank space in the ad). Eyes like white space. Eyes don't like print ads stuffed with words and/or art. Those ads look way too difficult to read and comprehend. So eyes will skip over those ads and find other open, clean ads to look at. (And if they do, you might as well have never bought the ad in the first place.)

2. Write for the busy eye. Nobody is reading a newspaper because they want to see your ad. (Okay, your mother is the exception.) People are reading the paper because they want information. Reading your ad is an afterthought. So, they aren't going to spend a whole heck of a lot of time on it.

A common mistake is asking print ads to do too much. To be successful, print ads must:

- * Capture the attention of your potential customers,
- * Encourage those potential customers to remember what you want them to do,
- * Then persuade them to actually do it.

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That's a lot to ask for one little print ad.

Print ads should have one message and one message only. The more "extras" about your business you start throwing into the ad, the more convoluted the ad is going to become, and the less likely your potential customers will act upon your ad.

Now at this point you may be thinking "Okay. We need one message. That message should be to get my potential customers to buy something, hire my services, donate money, become a volunteer, etc. Right?"

Well...

For one thing, that's a pretty big leap for your potential customers. Getting potential customers to buy without first developing a relationship with them is, again, asking an awful lot for one little print ad. You might be better off inviting potential customers to take one small step in the buying process. For instance, stopping in the store for a free gift, logging on to your Web site to enter a contest, putting their names on your mailing list, trying a demo version of your product, etc. Let them get to know you.

3. Keep your target market in mind. Your message should be focused on your customers' needs, not your own. Getting customers to buy your products and services is YOUR need. How your products or services solve your customers' problems is THEIR needs. See the difference?

That's why so many retail stores have sales. They're effective because they're solving a need (saving customers money). But saving money is not the only need. There are many others.

You should also think about ways to add value without bargaining on price (this position can backfire). Contests, free gifts, free reports, free food — stuff like that. Think outside the box. And use that value as a way to set yourself apart.

Creativity Exercises — Learn by example

One of the best ways to learn how to craft successful print ads is to study what's out there.

Get out a newspaper or a magazine and open it. See where your eyes go. What ads attract your eyes? What ads drive them away?

Which ads have headlines that intrigue you? Graphics that capture your attention? Copy that encourages you to find out more? Why?

Now look at ads that do nothing for you. Why don't you like them? Are they too cluttered? Too difficult to understand? Have a headline that makes you yawn?

Sometimes you can learn as much, if not more, from bad examples as you can from good ones.

Michele Pariza Wacek owns Creative Concepts and Copywriting, a writing, marketing and creativity

agency. She offers two free e-newsletters that help subscribers combine their creativity with hard-hitting marketing and copywriting principles to become more successful at attracting new clients, selling products and services and boosting business. She can be reached at www.writingusa.com.
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Try Crafting For Your Next Hobby

By Brent Shields

Why should I or anyone for that matter get involved in crafting? Well...first things first, have you noticed how prices just keep getting higher and higher? Who can afford to give a decent gift to anyone nowadays? But...if you make the gift yourself it can be done for a fraction of the cost, not to mention the fact that everyone admires and wishes they could do the crafting themselves.

Well you can! All you have to do is try. Crafting is one area that creativity itself is often inspired by necessity. And amazingly enough new crafters usually find that they fall in love with crafting. Many people start out crafting because they have no choice, they needed something to give to someone or they could not afford to buy ready made things for their own home. In the process of learning how to save money they discover this amazing person inside of themselves, this creative and talented person that they never would have believed they could be.

You too can become more creative. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder and each and every one of us has our own concepts of what is beautiful. Each of us has hidden talents just waiting to be accessed. Once you get started you will be amazed at how quickly your mind will become flooded with ideas for things you can make. Anything you see was crafted by someone. Why not you?

Where do I start?

Well, what do you need? Once you know why you need a gift then you can look for something to fit the person you want to make the gift for.

I needed a gift for my friend who had just bought her first home and I wanted it to be something special as a housewarming gift. She has always used tons of candles in her home so I found a log that had an interesting shape and cut it so that it was about six inches high by ten or twelve inches around. I cleaned the wood and sanded it top and bottom then carved out an area in the middle to pour the wax, that I had colored in green to match her new living room. The wax was a green apple scent and I poured it into the area I had carved out of the center of the log. A little polish on the top and I had a gift that I was proud of and she really enjoyed it also.

Crafting is anything you make yourself! And there are all kinds of crafts that you can choose to do. There's needle work such as embroidery both hand embroidery and machine embroidery, crochet, cross stitching, smocking and knitting just to name a few.

There's jewelry making such as beading, wire twisting and silver smiting (silver smiting is not as hard as some people think).

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There's wreath making for all kinds of holidays.

Candle making can be even more creative than you think.

Painting both with oils and water colors.

Then there's the junk art that has become so popular and is made from things you find in and around your own home.

There are many more forms of crafting that have not been mentioned here and I'm sure even more are being created as we speak, so have a great day and happy crafting!

About the author, Brent is a regular writer for

<http://www.home-n-family.com>

– for more home and

family related information please visit our website.



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