

Yellow Page Advertisers: Your Calls are Going to Decrease –Here's the Remedy

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By Dr. Lynella Grant

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Response rates to Yellow Page advertising are declining

There's no getting around it, traditional Yellow Pages are in trouble. Fewer people use them every year. Even the best–pulling ad in the section isn't getting the number of callers or sales it used to. At the same time, the monthly cost to maintain your same–size directory ad keeps going up.

Simply tinkering with ad size (or options like color) can't compensate for the adverse developments. Declining usage impacts each directory category differently. Some (like contractors and lawyers) are declining more steeply than others. Emergency service providers (tow trucks, plumbers) are holding their own. While categories like cell phones and lawn furniture are growing rapidly, with increased consumer demand.

Advertising only in the Yellow Pages is no longer a safe bet

- Over half of all customers go to the Internet first to find product information and sources – even if they intend to spend their money locally
- People increasingly trust the Internet as a source of information about major purchases (and has overtaken the newspaper for used car sales)
- Internet Yellow Pages (IYP) are kept up to date (unlike print directories) and can be searched from anywhere –

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their usage is growing 25% a year

– Local Search lets search engines (like Google) include small, local businesses in their search results (even without them having a website) – over 25% of all search queries request Local Search results

– A large percentage of young adults or business buyers never consult the Yellow Page directory at all – and they control an expanding chunk of dollars spent

Rethink the role Yellow Page advertising plays for your enterprise

Take a serious look at how much you rely on the Yellow Page directory to bring new business. Are most or all of your promotional dollars spent there? Do your expectations match the number and kinds of customers your ad actually brings you?

Your strategy needs to consider all the ways you attract new customers. Recognize changed customer preferences and buying habits for your specific type of operation. The issue isn't whether or not to advertise in the Yellow Pages. If you've been there you should continue. But switch some of those dollars into marketing methods that connect with buyers who won't look for you there.

Follow these steps, with them all sending a clear, consistent message

1. Get listed in Internet Yellow Pages (IYP); there are many of them; some are free
2. Make sure your website provides the information search engines require for Local Search. Learn how to do that at <http://www.yellowpagesage.com/localsearch.html>
3. Beef up your website with the information customers look for (or join a portal of local businesses)
4. Submit articles about your enterprise online; find extensive assistance at <http://www.promotewitharticles.com>

Keep track of what's delivering new business. Commit to asking every new customer and caller how they found you. That's the only way to know which method is winning; or where to shift emphasis and money for the next year.

Pursue ways to increase business from your existing

customers

The value of Yellow Page advertising is mainly to attract new customers. People who know you already are more likely to find your number in the business white (alphabetical) listings. Start working harder to strengthen those relationships so they stay loyal. Efforts spent to serve them better (or to get referrals from them) does more for profits than constantly chasing new customers can.

Get started well BEFORE the directory deadline

Some day soon it's time to renew your directory listing for another year. Let this be the year that you've figured out your strategy well in advance. Make your new strategy a front–burner, squeaky–wheel priority. Yellow Page Smarts,

<http://www.yellowpagesage.com/smarts.html> explains how to make your Yellow Page ad and Internet marketing support each other effectively.

If your next directory deadline hasn't come yet, there's still time to change your ad for next year (like add your website address – a study found 60% of directory users only call Yellow Page ads with a website!). If you're already committed, spend the next year getting the rest of your strategy in place. Your timely efforts can compensate for the decline in Yellow Page advertising's effectiveness. And you won't be caught off guard.

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--Dr. Lynella Grant Author, Yellow Page Smarts, Make more money from your Directory ad in tandem with your Web site. Get a YP ad critique. 719–395–9450 <mailto:grant@yellowpagesage.com> Free YP resources at <http://www.yellowpagesage.com>

One Well–Placed Article Nets 616 Mentions in Google

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Evaluation of a Home–Run Article

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I've been writing articles and posting them online for several years. But it took a while before I learned writing well and developing a long list of places to post them weren't enough. Articles that deliver fresh, specific, how-to are a solid plus for readers. But writing each around carefully-defined keywords is a must for the search engines.

Other factors influence how successful your article marketing efforts will be – like the Page Rank of the posting site, whether they provide a LIVE LINK back, and how specific their niche or readership is. Some of that is beyond my control. But as a writer, it's up to me to craft each article to cover as many of those bases as possible.

Take the time to think through your article marketing strategy, rather than sending them out willy nilly

<http://www.promotewitharticles.com/strategy100.html>

There's more pay-off to write a number of

articles, each adding greater depth, around a recurring theme.

My articles raised my name from 100 Google mentions to over 3,000 in a relatively short time. They established my expertise in several niches – article marketing and Yellow Page ads. These abilities come together in this example.

You don't Know the Winner until After the Horse Race

One never knows when sending out an article, which ones will get the most play. So write each one like your reputation depends on it (because it does). The article described below got widespread attention because it's timely. And there's considerable interest (and pain) on the topic.

It addresses a serious problem that no one is talking about – the declining response rates to Yellow Page ads. Advertisers feel they're paying too much for the amount of business their ads bring, but didn't know about their choices. Since this article went out, there have been so many additional changes working against Yellow Page advertisers that an updated article needs to be written. This level of online visibility indicates there's considerable interest.

Keep track of how widely each article you write is received. That's one of the ways to stay on the pulse of your readership – so you deliver more of what they want.

Your Title is the Hook for the Article

Most readers (skimmers, actually) won't get past the title. So make it a grabber. Give them the reason to keep reading. In this case, it's long (which I'm convinced works best). This title has three sections – which track with the body of the article.

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A. Tells who the information is for – Yellow Page Advertisers People can tell whether or not it applies to them. I increasingly write audience–specific articles and address them (consultants, speakers) in the title, rather than writing for the less–focused "everyone in business."

B. States the problem – Your Calls are Going to Decrease It backs up the claim with a bulleted list stating why

C. Tells there's a remedy for the problem – if they just keep reading The article provides a 4–step list stating how to get ready and protected

That's a lot to accomplish in 750 words – read it yourself at:

<http://www.yellowpagesage.com/article253.html>

Since the website itself provides visitors helpful free

resources, it needn't all be included in the article itself. Interested readers can explore further at

<http://www.yellowpagesage.com>

Besides, I've sent a barrage of related articles, which further build on

each other.

Build Your Professional Reputation

616 mentions in Google is an impressive yield for a single article. Admittedly, not all cites provide live links or appear on high Page Rank sites – but some do. (And there are duplicates in that number.) But given the amount of my effort involved, I'm well repaid.

Now, think past any single article, to the impact that niche–specific articles can have on your professional standing. Let me prove it. Search Google for "Yellow Page ads" (in quotes). When the query results show 38 million pages, enter "Lynella Grant" in the Search within Results box. The outcome: 5,000 pages related to Yellow Page ads refer to me. That's a ripple in the Internet universe, but certainly positions me for other activities in that arena.

Don't you think you or your website can profit from similar online visibility? Writing articles is the way to go.

Dr. Lynella Grant Consultant and Author – Promote yourself, business, website, or book with online articles

<http://www.promotewitharticles.com>

Free how–to. Or let me write and submit your articles

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