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**Yellow Page Advertising For Lawyers – Where Have All The Calls Gone?**

**By Philip L. Franckel, Esq.**

I get calls every week from lawyers saying they're not getting calls anymore from yellow page

advertising. Having done quite well in the past, they're afraid to discontinue the advertising. They want to know what's going on and what to do.

Apparently, lawyers are not the only ones. In his article "Quit wasting money on Yellow Page advertising" by Peter Fernandez, D.C., a yellow page, print advertising and practice management consultant for chiropractors, Dr. Fernandez answers the question, "Why has advertising in the Yellow Pages changed from one of the best ways to advertise to one of the worst in just a few years?" (See 1, below)

This article will attempt to explain where all the calls went. I believe lawyers began advertising in the Yellow Pages much earlier than on TV because of the cost; most lawyers were reluctant to become pioneers of TV advertising; and lawyers were pursued by yellow page salespeople, but not by TV salespeople. Since 1976 through the mid-1980s, the Yellow Pages and classified newspaper ads were virtually the only place a potential client could find a lawyer advertising. Consequently, lawyers advertising in the Yellow Pages did not have much competition and had very good results.

Many more lawyers flocked to the Yellow Pages which then became very crowded. In the last few years, and after a few pioneers, many of the lawyers advertising in the Yellow Pages discovered what every other business has long known, that TV is by far both the most effective and cost-effective media. According to TNS Media Intelligence/CMR, from January 2004 through September 2004 lawyers have spent \$287.3 million on TV compared with only \$71.3 million on print media, \$11.4 million on radio and \$4.1 million on Internet advertising. According to research done by the Television Bureau of Advertising, the public's perception of television gets the votes for Most Authoritative and Most Exciting. Both influential and persuasive, TV wins over other media, in both categories, by a wide margin among Adults 18+. TV scores 81.8% in the Most Influential category, with newspapers a distant second at 8.5%. TV scores 66.8% Most Persuasive with newspapers, again a distant second at 14.2%.

Just as buying something wholesale or in large quantities, your cost per person reached from advertising is reduced when you buy media that reaches more people. Broadcast TV reaches many

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times more people than a county-wide yellow page book and therefore costs much less per person reached. In the New York DMA (broadcast TV market), there are 29 counties reached by TV. If there was only one yellow page book in each county, you would have to advertise in 29 yellow page books to reach the same geographic area as TV. Unfortunately, there are several yellow page books in each county. Smaller community yellow page books produce even less of a return on investment because they reach even fewer people. Many lawyers have found out that for the cost of a full-page advertisement in just two county-wide yellow page books, you can advertise on TV with a respectable budget and reach the population of an entire DMA.

Today, due to the large number of lawyers advertising on TV, potential clients are being diverted away from yellow page books. Additionally, in the field of personal injury, the problem is compounded. Seriously injured people are usually in bed in a hospital or at home watching TV. Lawyers advertising on TV reach potential accident clients long before they can even get to yellow page books.

When lawyers first began advertising, there was only one yellow page book. Now there are commonly three, four or even five county-wide yellow page books and several village, community or neighborhood yellow page books as well. Some advertisers have even lost their position in the Yellow Pages because they signed a contract with another yellow page book not realizing it was a different book and they couldn't afford two books. Because a consumer will typically keep one yellow page book and throw out the others, the question an advertiser faces is which yellow page book to advertise in or to advertise in all of them. Will your advertisement be in a yellow page book that's thrown in the garbage? I keep only one book and it stays in the closet, rarely used. Today, I use the Internet instead of a yellow page book.

While there was once only one Yellow Page book in town receiving 100% of yellow page advertising revenue, they are now losing a large share of that revenue to several competing yellow page books, but their operating costs remain fixed. All of the yellow page book companies must print and distribute the same number of books. Unless all advertisers advertise in all three yellow page books, the publishing companies have to increase advertising fees thereby increasing the cost of reaching a yellow page consumer. In an effort to increase revenue, yellow page books have even begun creating new real estate to sell including advertising on the covers, spine, tabbed pages and even Post-it Notes style ads. These high visibility advertisements also divert yellow page consumers from regular full-page advertisements.

Simply put, there was once only one yellow page book in town; it was cheaper to advertise in; there were fewer lawyers advertising in the book; there were few lawyers advertising on TV; the Internet was not what it is today; and there were far more people using the Yellow Pages than there are today.

So what's a lawyer to do with yellow page advertising? If you're one of the three or four largest advertisers in your market with an advertising budget large enough for a substantial TV advertising campaign including billboards and radio, you may want to consider advertising in all of the yellow page books. If you're not one of the largest advertisers in your market, my suggestion is to discontinue advertising in yellow page books and to spend your money on TV. If you have a 1-800 vanity telephone number available and extra money in the budget, you should also advertise on billboards and radio.

1

<http://www.worldchiropracticalliance.org/tcj/1997/feb/feb1997fernandez.htm>

Philip L. Franckel, Esq., publishes articles on Lawyer Advertising at

<http://www.Lawyer-Advertising-Blog.com>

and manages

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. Mr. Franckel is an

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

**By Dr. Lynella Grant**

Yellow Page Advertisers: Your Calls are Going to Decrease –Here's the Remedy by Dr. Lynella Grant

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

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- 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 – 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>

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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>



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