

How To Avoid The 6 Biggest Advertising Mistakes

1. No Accountability

The absolutely positively biggest mistake you can ever make in advertising is not to subject all of your advertising to the utmost in scrutiny. “Half my advertising is wasted, I just don’t know which half.” This, one of the most famous quotes about advertising, has been attributed to turn of the century Philadelphia retailer John Wanamaker.

Cast a cold eye on all of your advertising and make sure it works. Ask your advertising agency if they will work for PBR (Pay by Results). If your agency truly has faith in their ability to increase sales for you they will jump at the chance to work on a contingency basis. You will see them give an incredible effort if you make the upside worthwhile. If they won’t work under a PBR arrangement you better find out why not.

Don’t be an advertising victim. If you can’t directly measure it, don’t do it. You can’t afford to accept unaccountable advertising.

2. Image Building Advertising

Running a very close second to the above is the deadly mistake of thinking that image based advertising will do anything for your business. This mistake happens all of the time, in all forms of advertising. You can recognize these ads instantly. They tend to make a very large and nebulous statement. The statement is “I know how to draw a perfect butterfly and just the right colours to use.”

Letting the “creatives” in advertising agencies run amok is a recipe for disaster. The reality is that these ads say nothing, cost you a fortune, and will not help your company sell anything. These advertisements are generally produced by advertising agencies that exist to win awards for themselves, and you’re the one paying the freight.

There have been many studies that cast grave doubt on the efficacy of this type of advertising. If you want to really get brand awareness quickly you’d do better handing out free samples of your product. If, however, sales are really rolling and you need to get your expenses up then, and only then, burn up some of your money on image based advertising.

3. You’ve Got To Get Your Name Out There

Always be aware of the major conflict of interest in the advertising world. Most agencies make the bulk of their money on commissions from advertising they book in the media, not from the sales results generated for you by their advertising.

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The argument for repetition in advertising is a very persuasive and subtle one and will only enrich the agency or the publisher. The fact is that if your advertisement doesn't get response the first time it's highly unlikely running it again in the same medium will make a bad thing better. If you're getting good response from your ad by all means repeat it but don't get cajoled into buying multiple ads until you know the first ad is working

4. Weak Message

Be sure that your unique selling proposition is masterfully incorporated in all of your advertising. If you don't differentiate yourself your advertising won't be seen, noticed, or acted upon.

If you'd like to see an astonishing assortment of sameness open your local yellow pages directory and look at the ads. Everyone is saying the same thing and nothing is really being offered. If you are looking under the roof repair category should the ad's headline really be wasted saying something like "Roof Leaking?" You probably aren't in that section looking for a refrigerator.

If you aren't making an offer in all of your advertising what are you really doing? The answer is nothing. If your marketing position is that you're as good as your competitor, why would anyone call you? Actually, they won't.

5. Wrong Audience

If you are trying to reach the chairman of the left-handed bagpipe tuners club in Wawa you can do it. Like your mother told you, "Waste not, want not." There is no sense in paying out big advertising dollars when so much of the big circulation you are paying for is wasted. How many left handed bagpipe tuners are reading the Toronto Star on any given day?

How many lassies and laddies do you think are reading the latest issue of Modern Bagpipes while munching on their lunchtime haggis? All kidding aside, target your advertising. Pay for specific and relevant readership, not just readers. Don't waste your money on general interest publications.

6. They've Got Your Number

One of the big lies told by some media sales people is the circulation lie. Certain independent publications are absolutely notorious for exaggerating their print run. What they are counting on is that the advertiser won't look into the circulation claim that they are offering you.

Another favourite trick is to discuss the mythical concept of readership, and it goes something like this, "I know our print run is only 5,000, but we average 100 readers per

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copy. This means that 500,000 people read every issue.” If you believe that then I have some land for sale for you in Florida.

The answer to this particular problem is to only buy advertising in publications that have had their circulation audited. If the publication in question isn't audited ask to see proof of their claims. If they can't prove their claims you should rightly be suspicious. You can also go to your local library and ask to see the latest copy of the CARD (Canadian Advertising Rates and Data) directory.

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I hope you have enjoyed this short report on advertising and can now see there is a better way to advertise. Whatever choice you make in your advertising follow these tips and you'll get better results and save money.

I personally wish you the best of success in all your marketing ventures.

Sincerely,

Andrew Shedden
President

What's Next?

Marketing 101

If your business sells to other businesses and you're interested in taking the first step to increasing your sales then contact us to set up an appointment for your free Marketing 101 telephone consultation.

During your Marketing 101 telephone consultation we'll spend some time getting to know more about you and your specific situation. Once we've spent some time learning about your challenges and goals we'll suggest marketing and communicating techniques you can quickly adapt to increase sales in your business.

Your consultation is completely confidential and you are under no obligation to commit to any of our recommendations. Nor will we pressure you in any way. You may choose to continue the relationship and if you choose not to that's okay too.

Book your free Marketing 101 telephone consultation today by calling us toll free at 1-800-353-4447 or fill in our contact form at:

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