

Developing Your Creative Plan

**THE COMPLETE GUIDE
TO EFFECTIVE MARKETING**

CREATIVE IS KEY TO SUCCESS

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Creating a Compelling Message

Each campaign must be creative and compelling to capture the attention of the reader, viewer or listener. Most people scan each page of a newspaper, magazine or website approximately three to ten seconds to review articles and ads that interest them and to determine what they want to read. Viewers or listeners only allow a few seconds before they determine if they will engage with a promotional message or change the channel. Only well-designed campaigns have a chance of being reviewed in detail. Do not attempt to be too clever. It is not creative if it doesn't sell!

Determining What to Advertise

Advertising's true strength is its ability to entice or encourage buyers to select one business over another. It cannot work magic ~ but it does guide people in the market to buy from you and not your competitors. To encourage purchasing behavior, advertise what people want ~ "hot" selling items or services ~ and not what you have a hard time selling. Promotions or sales will not compel people to buy unwanted items or services. For example, while a few might be enticed to purchase items off-season at highly discounted prices, the majority will wait until they have a need. Therefore, to maximize a return on your investment, showcase merchandise in its peak season. This is proven in grocery ads each week ~ they interest shoppers with products they need such as eggs, bread, or paper goods, and not unusual or unique items.



CREATIVE IS KEY

- ▶ Attract Attention
- ▶ Create Desire
- ▶ Invoke Action

Incorporate Benefits ~ People purchase emotionally, yet they rely on logic to justify and support that they are making sound purchasing decisions. It is vital to include both features, advantages and supporting benefits in all advertisements.

Most Important Benefits to Customers

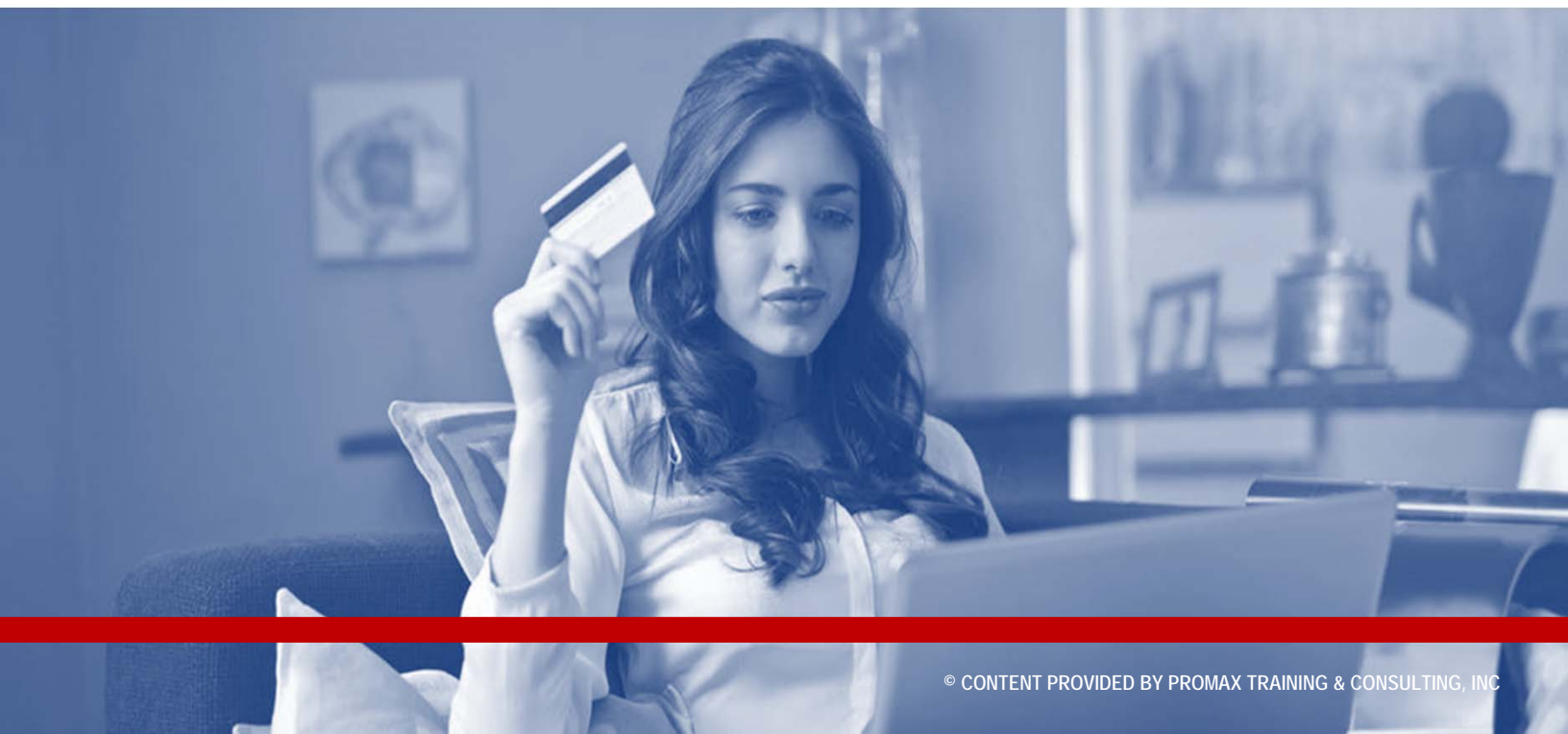
- Achieving career and financial success
- Intellectual accomplishment
- Being fashionable and trendy
- Improving sexual attractiveness
- Improving physical appearance and beauty
- Being "in the know" technically and intellectually
- Having pride in family and its accomplishments
- Establishing uniqueness of personality
- Being exclusive and elite

Incorporate Loss Where Appropriate ~ Fear appeal is a strategy that seeks to instill some degree of anxiety in consumers, then offer a means of alleviating that worry with a specific good or service. For example, an insurance company might show a tornado or flood to create fear and create buying behavior. A heating and air company might attempt to make people worry that if they do not purchase an annual agreement, additional maintenance may be expensive, or they could be extremely uncomfortable if the system fails.

You may wish to incorporate what a person might lose or miss out on by not buying the product or service, such as the fear of missing out on a great deal. **Fear of loss is an extremely compelling emotion; therefore, incorporate it discriminately, so the message does not alienate customers.**

Incorporate Testimonials ~ Use customer quotes, letters and case studies to help reduce the uncertainty. Testimonials:

- Build trust and help overcome buyer skepticism.
- Stand out as candid and unbiased accounts of how well the product or service performs.
- Have the power to convince even distrustful customers that your product or service can make a difference in their lives.
- Explain why the product or service is better than competitors' offerings in a non-combative manner.



CONSISTENCY IS VITAL

Branding Message

- The brand's differential advantage should be communicated in every ad.

Theme

- The concept can change for each campaign; however, the theme should remain consistent, as it is helping to develop an image in the consumer's mind.

Visual and Auditory Elements

- Each ad in the campaign should have the same style and theme. Remain consistent with the headline or message type, as well as visual and/or auditory elements.
- Visual elements, headlines, subheads, copy and logos should appear in the same place each ad. Slight variations may be necessary to fit the content.
- Ads in a campaign can be different sizes or lengths. However, it is important to keep the visual and/or auditory elements similar.
- If using color, make sure the same techniques are applied in each ad. For example, if color is used in the headline on one ad, use it in the headline on all ads in the campaign.

Fonts and Headline or Message Type

- Remain consistent with fonts and styles in headlines, subheads and body copy.
- Use no more than two (maximum three) fonts in each ad. It is acceptable to underline, use boldface, italicize, CAPITALIZE important words or put them in color. Use these techniques sparingly, or the impact will be lost.
- Choose a font that matches the tone, style and emotion of the offer.

Repetition is key to getting your message heard and your brand known. Consumers trust and buy from businesses they are familiar with and those that are reputable in the market.

The average consumer is exposed to 3,000-5,000 marketing messages each day.

People should be able to quickly identify your business by the overall feel and theme of each ad.

Each campaign should include a call to action, create excitement or evoke emotions. Service businesses should include a reminder that reinforces the brand, such as: "The next time you need a plumber in a hurry, think of ABC Plumbers for fast, reliable and affordable repairs."



EFFECTIVE HEADLINES OR MESSAGES

TYPE	EXPLANATION	EXAMPLES
BENEFIT	Simply states the benefit in a straightforward manner. To incorporate this headline technique, identify the one key statement that can be made about the products or services to attract the desired attention.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ A (thick head of hair) in 6 easy sessions. ▪ Painless, permanent hair removal. ▪ Big (homes), small payments. ▪ Cut your (credit cards) bills by (60%). ▪ End your struggles with (weight loss) forever
LOSS	Promotes people to act because they fear losing what they have, or not gaining what the offer presents.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ You may be endangering your family's lives with the bald tires on your car. ▪ Don't miss the chance to win a free (car)! ▪ Don't make a (\$4,000) mistake!
TESTIMONIAL	Features a quote from a satisfied customer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ "Advantage Realty sold our house in 2 days!" ▪ "The seafood at Pirates melts in your mouth." ▪ "Oil Changers Plus is the fastest shop in town."
PRICE INCENTIVE OR FREE OFFER	Includes a sale, price reduction or competitive comparison. When a business has a highly economical price that is easily recognized as a superior value, feature it in the headline.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Awesome (\$1,000) (computer system)! ▪ Right now, get (\$2,000) in additional savings. ▪ Coffee sale ~ only (\$5) per pound. ▪ The (house of your dreams) only (\$1,000) per month. ▪ Was (\$100). Now is only (\$50)! a...only/as low as (\$50) per month! ▪ Buy a brand new (car) and pay next year.
CALL TO ACTION	Urges customers to act with a limited offer. If using this technique, make sure you include the product or service in the headline. Action headlines often make great subheads.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ (Shirt) sale ends (Saturday). ▪ FREE (sheets) while supplies last. ▪ Shop early and save (50%) on over (100) items. ▪ Hurry in for the best selection on (sofas).
NEWS	Focuses on a change, development or announcement. News headlines can be used to introduce a new product or a new feature on an existing product.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amazing / Finally / Today's / Just Discovered... ▪ New / Now a Remarkable... ▪ Presenting / Announcing / Introducing... ▪ Good-bye old (air conditioner), hello new cool. ▪ Just off the presses...
QUESTION	Intrigues people to learn the answer to the question. Use this technique to attract a specific audience and increase interest. The product or service should provide a solution to the question.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Are you sick of (high gas bills)? ▪ Would you spend (\$100) to improve the value of your (house) by (\$1,000)? ▪ Just diagnosed with (diabetes)? ▪ What's the best way to get relief from (back) pain?
HOW-TO OR INFORM	Explains ways to do something that people want to know. Provide the information in a numbered list, which will increase engagement. An option is to share one tip or secret in each ad. Tip #1 is... / Tip #2 is...	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How to / (three) ways to sell your (house) fast. ▪ Introducing (three) ways to instantly save money on your (insurance). ▪ (Five) warning signs that your (loan officer) isn't giving you the full scoop. ▪ (Four) secrets that most (fitness instructors) won't tell you ▪ Here's the biggest mistake (car buyers) make...
COMPARISON	Directly compares the product to competitors by describing the advantages and strengths and highlighting the competitors' weaknesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ When selecting a (realtor), know the facts, such as... ▪ Don't hire a (termite) company until you know these facts... ▪ Did you know that...?
CURIOSITY	Creates interest and forces people to read the copy to understand the real message. Use this headline type sparingly and include visuals and subheads to help communicate the message. Plus, use for products, services or companies that already have a brand or identity established.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ever wonder why ...? ▪ It's not nice to fool Mother Nature. ▪ Rock and roll on over! ▪ This offer is to dye for! ▪ Let your true colors shine through! ▪ Our killer happy hour just got more dangerous!

QUESTIONS TO ASSIST YOU IN PREPARING YOUR STRATEGY

RETAIL-ORIENTED CAMPAIGNS

Creative Questions

1. Why am I selecting this merchandise/service to include in my campaign?
2. Why do I think it will sell now, with this offer?
3. Why do I think this offer will entice people to shop my business instead of my competitors?

Tracking Questions

4. How will I determine the success of this campaign?
5. How will I track the results of this campaign?

Questions to Maximize Success

6. How will I communicate my promotion to my internal sales team?
7. How will I display my advertised merchandise and encourage add-on sales?
8. How will I encourage customers to purchase from my business again in the future?
9. How will I adjust my online presence to mirror my traditional ad campaign?
10. How will I encourage customers to post online reviews?

Promote hot-selling products and services in each ad to increase traffic and calls. If appropriate, encourage in-store purchases of items you wish to move quickly with point-of-purchase displays and incentives.

SERVICE-ORIENTED OR BRANDING CAMPAIGNS

Creative Questions

1. Why am I selecting this message to include in my campaign?
2. Why do I believe this message will resonate with my customers?
3. Why do I think this message is powerful in differentiating my company from my competitors?

Tracking Questions

4. How will I determine the success of this campaign?
5. How will I track the results of this campaign?

Questions to Maximize Success

6. How will I communicate my advertising message to my internal sales team so they can reinforce it when communicating with customers?
7. How will I promote the advertising message internally in the business and encourage add-on sales? (signage, bags, email tag, invoices, etc.)
8. How will I encourage customers to purchase from my business in the future?
9. How will I adjust my online presence to mirror my traditional ad campaign?
10. How will I encourage customers to post online reviews?

EMPLOY THE RIGHT ADVERTISING

AT THE RIGHT TIME

TYPE	EXPLANATION	TIME OF YEAR TO EMPLOY
IMAGE / BRANDING	Reminding about offerings and advantages, plus maintaining or adjusting company perception.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate the entire year. ▪ For businesses with limited budgets, effective during slower times of the year.
DIRECT RESPONSE	Encouraging trial, purchase or repurchase with a promotion, sale or incentive.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Most effective slightly before and during busy times of the year.
EDUCATIONAL	Creating interest through information.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective for launching a new business, product or service ~ especially for sharing complex or innovative solutions.
AWARENESS	Creating excitement for an event, promotion, new product, service or business. Awareness advertising is often difficult to avoid or ignore.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Effective in combination with direct response advertising before and during busy seasons.
LOYALTY	Building long-term brand affinity, plus establishing open, direct and ongoing communication. Loyalty advertising is one-on-one-communication directly to consumers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Appropriate the entire year.



OUR GOAL IS YOUR SUCCESS

Contact us for more information about
developing a customized strategy
to achieve your business goals.

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