
The Mathis Group's Messenger

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Effective Advertising

By Dr. Keith Mathis

Advertising is vitally important to any business. Effective communication is key to maintain your current customers and to gain new prospects. This month we will be focusing on how to create a successful marketing campaign, yellow page ad, and trade show.

Success In Your Marketing Campaign

Customers build up a strong resistance to all of the marketing over time. When it comes to marketing, you must be able to grab their attention in a matter of moments. As we examined different markets, we noticed the best results come from focusing on five different marketing indicators. Each indicator, when used properly, can have a powerful impact on the outcome of your marketing campaign.

The copy must be correct.

Copy can be defined as the content of the marketing piece. It can consist of a headline, photo, or any other information which will emphasize what your organization has to offer. Together, the copy content and terminology reflect the image of the company and the message you wish to convey. By looking at your copy, the prospect will know the benefits of choosing your company over another.

Copy is often determined by the media means in which the information is conveyed. Media examples include brochure, billboard, television advertisement, newspaper ad, etc.

The target group or niche must be right.

Who are your real customers? Unless you're able to answer this question, you probably are marketing to the wrong people. Many mistaken organizations think everyone is their customer. For example, in the case of residential care, the assumption may be that people who are between the ages of 57 and 100 are the prospects. This might or might not be true based on the skills, accreditation, license, and target of the particular facility. So, should you market to every senior adult between those ages? Or would it make more sense to break that population up into smaller target groups who may have a higher priority in moving. Remember your target audience, and write a marketing

piece addressing their needs and communicating the benefits you have to offer.

The customer must have the ability to pay for the service.

Paying for the services you offer is very important when examining the marketing mix. This consideration seems to be forgotten when designing the marketing tools. It also is often overlooked when targeting potential customers. You must take steps, based on your research, to be able to target those prospects who have the ability to pay. It is a waste of your organization's money to send out materials to individuals who cannot afford your services.

The sales process must be quality.

The sales people of each organization must go the extra mile to make sure they are ready to deal with prospects as quickly and as professionally as possible. Organizations can successfully surface numerous prospects; however, they often miss the opportunity to sell when the prospects finally begin talking to the sales department. In some organizations, the sales staff feels they are basically just a tour guide for their organization. Sometimes all they do is run various tours of people through the building. To be successful, however, all sales professionals must be able to answer questions about the benefits as well as determine the buying signals of the prospects. Training in consultative selling or relationship selling is very beneficial for your marketing professionals. We have discovered that these skills enhance the marketing professional's ability to close the deals without gaining much hesitancy from the prospects.

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*The man who stops advertising to
save money is like the man who
stops the clock to save time.*
E.C. McKenzie

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The sales professional should have closing skills.

When prospects examine your organization, you must make sure you look for the signs that they are interested in making a decision. When a prospect is ready to make a decision, the sales professional must know the proper approach in helping them finalize his/her arrangements. It is not uncommon to have sales professionals forget the basics of asking prospects if they're ready to do the paperwork. Every sales person should create a series of closings to use in his/her type of selling experience. Even if the prospect is not ready to make a decision, the sales professional should at least obtain their name, phone number, and address. This will allow you to follow up with additional marketing information later.

Creating A Yellow Page Ad

Yellow Page advertisements all seem to look alike. Just thumb through one in any city. Why do they look so similar? In many cases, these advertisements have been created by the local yellow page representatives. They place all the information in the advertisement, and they make sure the information is correct. Obviously, this is lacking in effective marketing technique. You want the yellow page ad to inform people and generate interest in your services. You do not want to look like all the other phone book advertisements. There are four main components in creating a successful yellow page advertisement which will gain the attention of potential prospects.

Create a headline which focuses on a benefit.

Examine any yellow page book, and you will notice the top portion of the advertisement will normally contain the business's name in big bold letters. This is a huge mistake! Most likely, the prospects will not be searching for a particular name in the yellow pages. Instead, they are looking for a topic heading. They have a problem or need, and they are looking for someone to provide a solution. So, rather than use your name as the headline, think of the main benefit your organization provides, and use that as the focus of the headline.

Create a headline with a unique selling proposition at the top of the page.

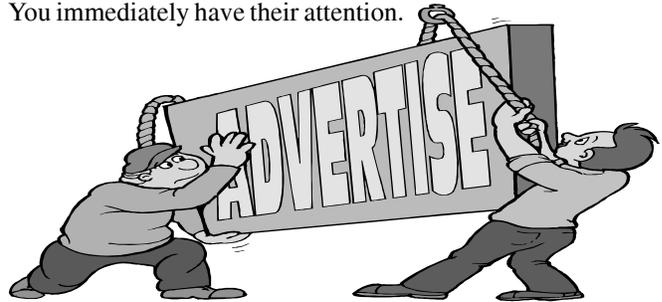
One clear way to gain your customer's attention while using the yellow pages is to create a unique selling proposition as your header. This can be something as simple as a specialty service. The point is to cause your customer to notice your advertisement and make a decision to contact you prior to any of the other competitors in the section. Your unique proposition headline should be something that allows your organization to demonstrate its specialty or point out what is unique about it.

Create a headline that differentiates your organization from the others.

Create a headline that differentiates your organization; how are you different from the others? For example, examine the attorney section of your yellow pages. You will see a good sampling of how differentiation can work. Notice how the lawyers separate themselves based on their specialty. Some headlines might read "Call us for tax problems" or "We are the injury lawyers." They are not trying to secure every type of legal business imaginable, only business which falls within their niche.

Create a headline that specifies which customers you want.

Creating a headline which states the group you desire is very effective for targeting your niche. This type of advertisement weeds out those people who are outside of your target group, but it reinforces the drawing power of those within the niche. This type of headline will many times say "Attention" or "Warning" and then identify to whom the advertisement is addressed. Sometimes it is appropriate to identify a large group of people. For example, "Suffering from Alzheimer's and don't know where to turn" identifies people with Alzheimer's. You immediately have their attention.



Strategies For Trade Show Success

Are trade shows a part of your marketing mix? If so, are you picking the shows which target your specific demographics? There are several trade shows which target niche groups in a particular age bracket. These may be potential placements for you. Why spend an average of several thousand dollars to be at a show and receive little or no response from those in attendance? If you research and plan ahead, your marketing dollars can be used in the most effective way. There are many little things to consider as well. For example, do you know the best place for your booth? Are you aware of prospects' behavior when they attend a trade show? Yes, there are several strategies for trade show success.

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Which trade shows should you attend?

Determining which trade show you want to be involved in is very important. These events cost a great deal of marketing money and time. You want to make sure you are attending the proper show. Trade show executives have demographics of attendees, and this can be sent to you prior to booking your booth. This means you have the opportunity to see if the demographics of the show match the services and the population you're trying to target. You should not just randomly pick a trade show to exhibit your services. At most local libraries, as well as on the internet, you can find listings of trade shows throughout the United States.

Where do participants register for the trade show?

Most participants who attend a trade show will stop at the registration table first and then proceed to the booths. Usually human nature steers them to walk down aisles to the right. If you have a choice on choosing the location of your booth, this might be something to consider. You want to gain the prospects' attention quickly. By having your booth strategically placed, you will gain higher visibility.

• *Where is the main flow of traffic at the convention?*

The main flow of traffic at any convention can be very different based on its design. To help you in making preparations, you need to know the layout of the convention. Where are the main hallways located? Which doors will the majority of the attendees enter? This information provides you the advantage in picking a booth that is going to be in a high traffic area. Trade show success is always enhanced if you are in a high visibility, high traffic location.

Where are the restrooms located?

Being located close to the restrooms can be very positive for your booth. People will take restroom breaks while they are there. This constant flow of traffic allows you an opportunity to talk with your prospects.

How will you attract qualified prospects to your booth?

Gathering qualified prospects can be a challenge. Your purpose in participating in the trade show is to showcase your facility. People need to visit your booth in order for you to do this. You will want to make sure your booth is neat, attractive and eye catching. Of course, you will want to have informational materials which you can give the prospects. You may even consider having a drawing of some kind; perhaps give away a DVD player or a VCR. These prizes always attract attention!

By requiring the prospects to register for the prize, you have made it easy to obtain their name, address, and phone number. You will be able to visit with them and pre qualify their need for your services.

How much are booth rental and setup fees?

Booth rental fees can range from a few hundred dollars to several thousand. You initially are renting a space; location and size of the space determine this initial cost. Then, depending on your needs, you can add rental of power, drapes, tables, message boards, etc. The informational packet for the trade show will provide a listing of items available for rent as well as pricing for these items.

What guidelines need to be in place for working the booth?

When working the booth, some basic guidelines need to be in place to maximize your time with prospects. Most prospects will only come by your booth once so you have a limited amount of time to be able to gain their attention. Be friendly and courteous as you greet the people. Showcase your facility and your services with confidence and enthusiasm. Be prepared with informational handouts or brochures which detail your expertise and provide answers to frequently asked questions. Dress appropriately for the image you want to portray to the prospects.



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