

Time to tap into the power of the press

Marketing: Advertising in print should not be overlooked as a highly effective way of promoting your business

TO BE a Prudent Marketer, you need to effectively use the multiple streams of the marketing mix.

In a modern world, where social media and e-marketing are used so prolifically, we seem to have forgotten about the importance of highly effective advertising.

Marketing such as mail-outs by post, newspaper and magazine advertising, use of press releases, editorials, radio coverage, events, leaflet and poster campaigns are often overlooked.

But as part of an effective marketing mix, using a range of options and measuring what generates the most response is preferable to purely focussing on e-marketing options.

Newspaper and magazine advertising is still an excellent way to promote your business.

However, it is important that you adhere to the following top tips, to ensure the advert grabs the attention of the reader:

■ **The Headline is the advert for the advert** – Without a great headline, great adverts often don't even get read. So, one of the keys to effective advertising is to test different headlines to improve the number of leads that the advert produces.

■ **The words** – The words you write are of course essential to your advert's success and hiring

a professional copy writer is often worth its weight in gold.

Having said that, you can write your own text, but the secret to your success might be to write three different adverts. Ask your customers what they think and then, if your advert is going to run for, let's say six weeks, test three different adverts over the first three weeks. Measure their performance and run the one that creates the most leads for the last three weeks.

■ **Include your product's positioning, key features, and benefits to end users** – these are key elements you may want to include in an advert.

Positioning is something that can be conveyed succinctly in a company representative quote or in the first or second paragraph of the text.

It's good to use incentives such as 50 per cent off, or a 'call to action' like 'book a place by May 21'.

■ **Include a customer quote if possible** – this helps raise its level of social proofing and chance of being believed. You will need to obtain permission from the customer.

■ **Pictures** – a picture paints a thousand words and while it may not be totally true in today's

Newspaper and magazine advertising is still a viable option, says **Steve Mills, The Prudent Marketer**. Here he explains why the fundamental role of print advertising should not be forgotten in today's digital world and the techniques for getting the most out of it.



world, it certainly is an important factor. More and more marketing and advertising is featuring the owner of the business.

You just need to look at Virgin and 'Bet Fred' to see they are using the owner of the business to advertise and market the company.

One of the big reasons for this is people buy from people they know, like and trust and we trust businesses and people we see often and in multiple locations.

■ **Call to action** – a very old, but useful 'mnemonic' is the AIDA

formula. The 'A' stands for attention – You must have an attention grabbing headline; the 'I' stands for interest – now you have their attention, you must keep it; the 'D' stands for desire – once you have got their attention, built their interest, then you must get them to desire your product, or services; and lastly, but be no means least, comes the final 'A' and that is action – you must have a strong call to action.

■ **Give them a headache, then offer an aspirin** – people do not

buy until they have a reason to do so. In other words until they have an 'headache'.

What do I mean? Let's say you sell lawn mowers. If your advert says 'come and buy our great lawn mowers' – they might well be the best, or the cheapest, or the most reliable. However, I am not going to buy one unless your advert can get me focusing on the problem I have first, then you may focus on how you can solve that problem.

For example 'Tired of your small old and heavy lawn mower? Try our clean light and environmentally friendly machines'.

■ **Maximisation** – when you decide to spend money on newspaper, or magazine advertising you must make the most of it. You must tell people on Twitter you are in XYZ magazine. You must tell your

LinkedIn contacts you are in ABC newspaper and you must take the advert or article and add it to your website, or blog, or both.

You must also maximise your on-line advert. When you advertise most publications will have a website, as well as a print publication. Your job is to drive traffic to your advert from your social media platforms and e-mail

marketing systems and ensure there is a link between what you are doing on and off-line.

■ **Last, but by no means least** – I wish I had a pound for every time I have been told 'advertising does not work'.

The truth is advertising is a multi-billion pound industry and that would not be the case if it did not work. Advertising could work for your business, you just need to be good and it and you need to do it consistently. Like most marketing, it can be done well or badly.

The secret is to test, test, and test again? Test what? Test your headlines, copy, use of pictures, location, offer, use of colour, type face, the special offer you make, the size of your advert and even the location of your telephone number.

I hope my article helps you to improve the effectiveness of your advertising and you improve the number of adverts you place and the leads you generate from each advert in a controlled and measured way.

■ **Steve Mills, known as the Prudent Marketer, is a marketing consultant with more than 25 years experience of helping new and small businesses to grow. To download a free copy of his book – The 10 biggest lead generation mistakes most small businesses make – go to www.stevemillsmarketing.com**

