



Differentiate your company.

12 ways to strengthen your print ad

In today's marketplace, print advertising remains a strong marketing tool, even with the growing importance of the Internet. But to be effective, an ad running in a newspaper or magazine must meet certain criteria. Here are a dozen tips to help make your print ad work harder for you:

- 1.** First and foremost, the ad must be compelling and creative. **Creative is still king**, according to a recent study by Starch Communications. "Ads, like individual human beings, vary widely in 'talent' and it is that talent — their creative makeup — that is the most important factor in determining whether they are seen and read...," according to Philip W. Sawyer, senior vice president of Starch Communications Research.
- 2.** Your ad must clearly convey your product's or company's **USP** (unique selling proposition, or strongest benefit). Don't try to squeeze too much into one ad. An ad will be more effective if you focus on a single benefit, rather than trying to explain everything that your product can do.
- 3.** Your ad must have a **strong headline**, and it must inspire action. Without a strong headline, your ad simply won't be read. The headline draws the reader into the ad. No strong headline and the prospect will simply turn the page.
- 4. Keep the copy concise, clear, and benefit-oriented.** Avoid jargon. And make sure it is abundantly clear what the benefit of your product, service, or company is. Chances are, readers will be skimming your ad, not reading it word for word. When appropriate, use bullet points or other graphic treatments to make your ad scannable.
- 5.** Use **high-impact visuals** to grab attention. Just be sure that the images you choose work to reinforce brand image.

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- 6. Don't crowd too much into your ad.** White space is a good thing!
- 7.** Your ad must be **targeted**. If your prospects and clients do not read the publication where your ad appears, you'll be throwing away advertising dollars.
- 8.** Your ad must **differentiate** your company or product from its competitors. Why is your product better than theirs?
- 9.** Be **consistent** to establish brand recognition. Your message and the "look" of your ads should be similar from one to another. You want the reader to be able to associate the ads with your brand or company.
- 10.** Your ad must run **frequently**. Advertising has a cumulative effect. Running an ad once is not likely to generate strong response.
- 11.** If you can use **color**, do so.
- 12.** Include a prominent and compelling **call to action**. It might be a phone number, response form, or URL. But make sure it's clear to the reader what his next step should be.

Although some of these points might seem like common sense, a review of any B2B or B2C periodical will show that many marketers are missing the boat by not implementing them. Chances are good that your ads can be improved so they work harder for you. If you'd like a complimentary review of one of your ads, we'd be happy to help. Simply call Chris Duval at (800) 603-6069, or email us at consultation@mccabe-duval.com.