



CREATING EFFECTIVE ADS 101 THE SKY'S THE LIMIT!

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Advertising is still one of the most effective means of getting your name out there. The right ad can bring in new clients and help grow your business at a faster rate. However, the wrong ad can be a total waste, especially when it's competing with all the other flyers, billboards, and cell phone ads out there. In order to be effective, your ad needs to set you apart from competitors, draw people in, AND convince them to call you. So how do you break the mold and create an ad that doesn't look like all the others? Read on!

Get to Know Your Target Audience

As with all marketing, you want to begin with your audience in mind. This will be the foundation of your ad and will help you determine basic information about tone, design, and placement. Start by gathering general information about your ideal customer:

- Age range
- Gender
- Education level
- Geographic Location
- Hobbies
- Professional or employment status
- Income

Next, dig a little deeper to find out who they are as people. How do they think? How will they decide whether or not to hire you? This will help you develop a detailed profile of your demographic that you can then use to figure out what might make them hire you over someone else.

Some of these questions can be detailed, so you may want to take the time to sit down and interview 2-5 people in your demographic.

Here are some questions you can consider asking:

- What services do you need?
- What business practices do you find attractive?
- Are you the primary decision maker or will someone else (like a spouse or business partner) be helping?
- What business practices turn you off?

Finally, go a step further to figure out where your target clients are getting their information and what media they are exposed to on a regular basis. This will help you decide where to place your ad so you are directly targeting your demographic rather than shooting in the dark. In other words, if your clients are going to major websites or even Google to search for service providers, you don't need to waste money on flyers!

Sample questions in this category include:

- Do you drive to work or take public transportation?
- Do you listen to the radio?
- What publications do you read most often?
- Do you read a print newspaper or surf the web to get news?
- Do you watch TV?

By answering the above questions, you should have a thorough understanding of who your customers are and how they think. Now that you have taken care of the leg work, it's time for some fun.

Brainstorm Your Angle

Before diving into design, take a minute to brainstorm. I know, we all hate that word because it generally refers to boring office meetings which really just kill productivity and waste time. This type of brainstorming, however, is different.

Start by spending a few minutes on Google--search for original ads; creative ads across all industries, and also ads that your competitors are placing. This will provide inspiration and get you started.

Next, write down as many ideas as you can for your ad. These may be plain and simple or outright wacky. It doesn't matter if the idea is good or bad, it's just important to get the creative juices flowing.

Even if you come up with a great idea from the start, it's important to come up with a few backups too. This will give you more options/ ads to vary across different channels. For example, something as hip as the ad to the right might not fly in AARP, but it would be compelling in Forbes magazine or even as a billboard. So, if you want to spread your marketing dollars across a few channels, it is always good to have a few options.

Get People's Attention

How do you get your target demographic to pay attention to your ad? It's time to be a bit more daring when it comes to advertising! After all, if you want to stand out, you have to, well, stand out.

This is where your customer research comes in handy. By knowing your customers' demographics, you will know exactly what you need to get their attention, from messaging to design. Take the ad below for example:



This ad appeals to companies trying to recruit young and enthusiastic college graduates. The subtle superhero reference lets others know that they have the expertise and tools needed to recruit strong, smart and capable candidates.

Be bold, be daring and try and stay away from the norm. Don't be afraid to reference pop culture to grab attention!

Get Specific with your Messaging

Great messaging (i.e. the text on your ad) is key for an effective ad. Go back to your demographics to figure out how exactly you should communicate with them. Let's say you are an attorney looking to target doctors. Ask yourself, what do doctors look for/why would they be calling you? Likely malpractice. You can cater to this angle by aiming right for the pain point. Don't show a picture of yourself with the words "Representing doctors for 35+ years" as the main header. Instead, try using wording that is specific to malpractice.



Design Considerations

The next step is to sketch out a rough concept for your ad. Use your demographic information to determine what the ad should look like. If you're targeting corporate executives, for example, you'll want the fonts, colors, and imagery to look professional and sophisticated. If you're targeting young entrepreneurs starting businesses, you'll want the design to be hip and techy.

What options do you have to refine your design? Play with the fonts and background colors for your ads. You don't want to look like everyone else! There are thousands of unique fonts that will add flavor to your ads. Gotham, Raleway and Lobster are popular fonts these days. Not sure what I'm talking about? Google it! The web is a great source of ideas and examples. Colors are just like fonts. Do not be afraid to take a risk and be bold.

Hire a Pro

Now that you have the idea and a rough sketch, what is next? Call a professional designer! A professional designer will make you look great and stand out from the crowd. He or she will also be able to help you tap into what design elements will most appeal to potential customers.

Conclusion

Creating a great ad has to start with your target customers. Gather information about their demographics, decision-making habits, and daily routines. This will help you figure out answers to key questions such as: Where should I place the ad? How do I grab people's attention? What messaging should I use? And what should the design look like?

Congratulations, you now have an ad that is original and stands out! Now you'll just have to figure out a way to stop your phone from ringing off the hook. #SuccessfulBusiness problems

About Sublime Designs Media

Sublime Designs Media is a complete branding and marketing agency based out of Los Angeles. We specialize in creating strong brands that are effectively communicated through the written word, creative design and beyond. We work in print and online media, tapping into the most appropriate channels for your message, whether an online blog, a printed book or a billboard ad. We offer cost-effective solutions that work with your budget and your timeline. Clients include the State Bar of California, Appirio, The University of New Mexico and more. For more information, visit us online at www.sublimesignsmedia.com.