

'Why Most Advertising Does Not Work - 10 Essential Strategies to ensure that your Advertising is a Success'

1. If your Advertising isn't working – STOP IT!

Let's start with the simple stuff. If you are running advertising that is not working, please stop it!

This applies to you whether you're running ads in newspapers, magazines, or on radio, television, billboards, posters, taxis or buses.

I know it sounds obvious but here's what often happens: People run advertising because they feel they ought to. They're not really sure if it's working but they are hesitant to stop it because it may be one of their main forms of marketing.

By the end of this report you will have enough information to ensure that you are never in that position again. You will either be running great ads that produce great results, or you will be spending your marketing money elsewhere.

2. Only use Direct Response Advertising

There are two types of advertising – direct response advertising and brand advertising.

Understanding the distinction between the two will immediately save you a fortune.

Brand advertising is used by companies like Coca Cola and the large car manufacturers to build and increase awareness of their brand. Unless you have huge amounts of money which you are happy to lose, you should avoid brand advertising at all costs. For a small business it is a complete waste of money.

The only type of advertising you ever want to consider is direct response advertising. The only purpose of direct response advertising is to produce a clear response.

The type of response may vary depending on the type of business you are in and your overall marketing strategy. You may want the response to be an immediate purchase. You may want the response to be for someone to contact you to ask for a brochure.

The great thing about direct response advertising is that you can instantly tell whether it is working (see the next point) It either produces a response or it doesn't. One of the reasons that most small business advertising does not work is that it's a combination of half hearted direct response and highly ineffective brand advertising.

Fortunately, you now know the difference. In the land of the small or medium business, direct response is King!

3. **Testing and Measuring**

It is absolutely essential that you test and measure all of your advertising.

If we are going to engage in direct response advertising we obviously need to be able to measure that response, otherwise we are not going to know if the ad is working.

At the very least we need to know how many people responded, how many of them were converted to a sale and what that is worth to you. Then you need to compare that figure to the cost of the ad and you can immediately work out how profitable the ad was, or whether you should stop running it.

So many businesses just allocate a certain amount of money to an advertising budget, spend the money every year...and they've only got a vague sense of whether the ads are working or not. This is crazy. If your ads are working, you want to roll them out on a larger scale. If they're not, STOP and use the money on one of the dozens of other marketing strategies that can bring you a 100 or 200 or 300% return on your investments.

You will obviously need some sort of system for asking people who contact you for the first time where they heard about you. If you have a larger business, you may even want to set up a separate phone line with a number that only appears in your ad. If you're directing people to a website, you may want to set up a special web page that also only appears in your ad. This will ensure that you can clearly identify when people are responding to your advertising.

One of the reasons that Radio and TV Advertising can be so high risk, is that it's very difficult to test it on a small scale. You should never invest in Radio and TV Advertising unless it's money you can afford to lose.

4. **Your Headline is the most important part of your Ad**

In the ad itself the most important element is the headline. The headline is either the heading that goes at the top of the ad or if there's no heading it's the first words of the ad. If you're on the radio it's the first thing people hear. If it's TV it's the first thing they see and hear. The headline needs to grab people's attention. One change in a headline can produce a 50-100% increase in response.

One of the biggest challenges that any print advertiser faces is getting people to read their ad – let alone for the ad to produce a result. So the main purpose of the headline is not to sell your product – it's just to get people to read your ad.

The headline should be about your readers – not about you. If your headline has the name of your business in it, you are probably losing out. Imagine you owned a company selling £10 fire alarms. Which of these headlines do you think would be most likely to get the reader's attention:

Simpson Fire Alarms - Your Guarantee of Safety

OR

Is your Family's Life worth the price of a round of Drinks?

Be adventurous with your headlines. Test different versions to see what works best. There are no rules – except what works.

5. Remember AIDA

There's a classic formula used by advertisers and it's well worth remembering. The formula is AIDA. This stands for

Attention
Interest
Desire
Action

If you follow this formula in every ad that you write or produce, you will greatly increase your chances of success.

Attention – the first thing your ad needs to do is grab the reader's attention. You achieve this with your headline.

Interest – once you've got their attention, you need to create an interest in your product or service.

Desire – There is a big difference between being interested in a product or service and desiring it. You need to convert the reader's interest into a strong desire for what you are offering.

Action - Even if someone desires what you have, it is not enough until they take action. At the end of the ad you need a call to action. Tell people exactly what they need to do to follow through and make it easy for them to do so. This is where many people go wrong. Even if you have a good ad, you still need to tell people precisely what to do - how to take action.

6. Benefits, Benefits, Benefits

One of the principles that should drive all of your marketing is communicating the BENEFITS of your product or service.

Your ad needs to be a personal communication to the individual reading, hearing or seeing it. And it needs to be about them. It needs to address their needs, desires and fears and it needs to constantly communicate the benefits of what you are offering.

Nobody will buy anything from you until they have explicitly understood how they will benefit from what you have to offer. So here's a useful tip. When you've written your ad, imagine stepping into the shoes of your prospective customer. From this perspective does the ad fully convey what those benefits are? If not go back and fine tune the ad until it feels right.

7. Don't Advertise on a Left Hand Page

If you're doing newspaper or magazine advertising, this one piece of knowledge can turn an unsuccessful ad campaign into a successful one. This has been tested again and again. When you read a publication, your

eyes are drawn to the right hand page as you flick through, so statistically, more people will see your ad if it's on the right hand page.

If you look at the big national magazines and newspapers, you will see that most of the large advertisers are on the right hand pages. The few that appear on a left hand page will be paying less because their advertising agencies know that less people will see the ad.

When you book your ad space, tell them you want it on a right hand page. Very few people in your position ask for this, so the publication will normally oblige. If they tell you they can't guarantee it – tell them you'll advertise in a future edition when they can guarantee it. You'll soon discover how obliging they can be!

8. **Never pay the full rate for advertising**

The person selling you the advertising needs to know very early on that you have absolutely no intention of paying the full rate.

Most advertising rate cards are far too high and you can always negotiate. If you're a small business remember that large companies who use ad agencies are buying based on the readership or audience levels rather than the rate card - so haggle and negotiate. If you can pay 20 or 30% less for your ads it can turn an unprofitable ad into a successful one.

Here's another handy little trick to pay less for your advertising. The closer to the deadline you can book your ad, the better. Sales teams work towards targets and as the deadline approaches they get more desperate to fill the ad space. They become far more open to negotiation.

This applies to all forms of advertising. If your local radio or TV station does not sell all its ad space that they have available for tomorrow - it's gone forever. If you come along and offer them a deal at what seems a ridiculously low price, you might be surprised at how low they're willing to go.

9. **Don't Follow the Competition**

One of the biggest mistakes people make is advertising in publications or on various forms of media (taxis, billboards, buses etc) just because their competitors are doing so. Don't for a minute think that all your competitors are there because their ads are producing great results. They're more likely to be there because everyone else is and most of them won't have a clue whether their advertising is working.

In fact, this is a well known sales trick used by the people selling ad space. If they can get one or two of your competitors to advertise, they can call you up and tell you how you'll lose out if you don't advertise too. What they fail to mention is that your competitors probably never test their advertising, often haven't got a clue how to market and are only advertising there because they think you will. This is a highly effective way to sustain the advertising industry. It's not a great way for you to run your business.

10. **Don't buy into the myth that Advertising is essential for your Business Success**

Now that I've shared some of the strategies for making your advertising work for you – I'll let you into a secret. I'm not a huge fan of advertising

for small businesses. If you can get it right it works brilliantly – but generally, advertising is one of the least effective ways to grow a business.

There seems to be a cultural myth that to run a successful business, you must advertise. Whoever came up with that one is the same person who said that if you get a university degree you're guaranteed a great, fulfilling career.

Advertising is just one of many marketing options that you have. But you really shouldn't be dependent on it. In fact, here's a strategy I use with my clients which is really powerful:

When I work with a client, one of my goals is to get them to the point where they have so much great marketing going on it makes little difference to their business if they stop advertising.

Why do I do this? Because quite honestly I've seen more business owners pull their hair out through advertising problems than anything else. Ultimately, my work isn't about marketing. It's about Freedom. It's about giving business owners the freedom that comes from having a successful and profitable business which is supported by multiple pillars of marketing.

It's hard to be free when the future of your business involves trying to get a couple of ads to work in a crappy local newspaper.

So start to think out of the box. Ideally, you should be using a combination of up to at least ten other marketing strategies to grow your business. They include (but are not limited to).

- Telephone Marketing
- Direct Mail
- Internet
- Email marketing
- Direct Sales
- PR (Why spend money on advertising when PR gives you coverage for free)
- Strategic Alliances
- Lead Response Marketing

A multi level Referral system

Have a look at this list. How many of these are you implementing in your business? More importantly, what would happen to your business if you could start to combine some of these extra marketing approaches? How would that effect your profits? What would that do to your financial freedom?

Here's another thought. At least four of the items on this list will cost you either nothing or very little to implement. Why throw money at advertising when some of the best marketing is Free?

Seven Secrets to Getting Free PR Coverage for your Business in Newspapers, Magazines and on Radio and TV.

Why spend a fortune on Advertising that doesn't work when you can get Free Advertising using great PR!

I love PR because it's **FREE** and it lets you reach thousands or millions of people. It can also make you famous and people will start recognizing you in the supermarket!

Here I want to share with you the seven fundamentals for getting you and your business famous using the power of PR.

1. Most Press Releases are a disaster

First, the bad news. 99% of Press Releases get thrown in the bin. Yes 99% - and most of them are written by PR Agencies who are charging their clients a fortune. This is a waste of money. It's also a waste of perfectly good trees.

The good news - The 1% of Press Releases that lead to a story or interview have certain qualities in common. The following are a few of them.

2. Step into the Shoes of the Journalist/Producer reading your Press Release

The best Press Releases step into the shoes of the journalist or producer reading it and meet their needs. If there's one secret to great PR it's meeting the needs of the journalists. Everyone thinks PR is hard work. What they fail to understand is that every day, these journalists are pulling their hair out trying to fill their newspaper, magazine, radio or TV shows with useful, entertaining information. If you can show them how to do that, you're virtually guaranteed some coverage.

How do you meet their needs? Think about it like this. All of these journalists are under pressure from their editors to find stories that are of interest to the readers/listeners/viewers. So you meet the needs of the journalist by meeting the needs of their audience. If you're targeting a woman's magazine you need to think of a story that's of interest to their readers. If you're targeting a late afternoon radio show you need to think of a story that's of interest to people driving home from work, listening to the radio.

If you were reading the publication or listening to the radio show, what would jump out and appeal to you? Answer that question and you've got the subject for your press release.

The Press couldn't care less about You and your Business – but they LOVE a Good Story.

The harsh truth is, these journalists are not particularly interested in your company, your history or your product or service. Which is why Press Releases with headlines such as:

'Local Company celebrates 30 years in Business'

OR

'FJ Widget and Son appoints New Chairman'

go straight in the bin. They're boring. So just get over the fact that the press don't care about your business and come up with a story (journalists call it an 'angle') that is of interest.

For example, if the new Chairman of FJ Widget and Son celebrated his appointment by painting the building pink, or giving his top performing sales person some free plastic surgery or whatever - that would gain instant coverage. As with most marketing, it's all a matter of being creative and thinking differently.

3. **The Headline is the most important part of your Press Release**

The first thing the journalist sees is the headline and if that doesn't grab their attention, your Press Release is heading for the dustbin.

Your headline needs to be bold and interesting - and above all it needs to stand out from all the other press releases. Your best option is to write it in the style of the headlines of the publication you're targeting. For example, if you were selling a new supplement to help indigestion, which of these Press Releases do you think would get the best response:

New Supplement helps Ease Indigestion

or

Why Some Foods Explode in Your Stomach!

The reason that newspapers use bold, attention-grabbing headlines is that they work. You can deploy the same strategy to grab the attention of the journalists you are trying to reach.

4. **Format your Press Release Correctly**

Here are my Golden Rules for formatting Press Releases.

- * Make sure the headline is big and bold
- * Aim to fit the Press Release on one page.
- * Use short paragraphs
- * Use language that will appeal to the type of media that you are targeting. You may want to write different press releases for different media, eg use different wording for targeting a tabloid than you would for a technical business publication
- * Insert the words 'For Immediate Release' in bold in the top left hand corner
- * Include a call to action at the end of the release, eg 'Our CE John Smith is available for interview. He has appeared frequently on local/national media and is an excellent speaker. If you would like to arrange an interview or require any further information, please call on etc.'

5. **Follow up your Press Release with a Telephone Call**

Public Relations is just like all other forms of marketing – you have to be persistent.

Journalists tend to be very busy people (when they're not in the pub) so the fact that they've missed your Press Release or not contacted you, doesn't mean they're not interested in what you have to offer.

If you don't hear from the media outlet in two or three days, give them a call. Say you're just checking that they got the press release about XYZ. Of course, at this point it doesn't matter whether they've seen the release or not. Use the conversation to sell your story. Concentrate on the benefits and what's in it for the journalist/producer's audience.

6. **Become a World Class Expert – Overnight!**

Most people think that the only way to get good PR is to come up with a story. But there is another way. This involves positioning yourself as an expert in your industry.

Whatever your profession, there's an area that you're an expert in. If you're a dentist contact the media during the next national smile week. If you're an accountant, contact the local press before the next budget and tell them you're an expert on tax and available for commenting on how the budget will impact local business. Get the picture? PR starts to be easy - when you know how.

These are the three Golden Rules of Marketing – the foundations of your business success.

If your answer to any of these questions is 'no' – don't worry – you're not alone. But experience tells us that if you are willing to apply these principles to your business, you will see your profits increase significantly.

1. **Do you Test and Measure every aspect of your Marketing?**

Being outstanding at marketing is fairly straightforward – but so few businesses do it. You just need to continually test new marketing strategies on a small scale. It may be a new direct mail campaign, a new ad, a letter to your customers, an email, a new headline on your website, a two week telephone campaign. You test small, then you measure the results. What did it cost? What revenue did it generate? If it was not profitable, you've learnt an important lesson and move on. If it was profitable, you roll it out and make it an integral part of your marketing mix.

If you tested five new things every month and just one out of the five was successful then at the end of a year you would have twelve new proven marketing strategies to add to your mix. So testing and measuring all of your marketing is the first golden rule of Marketing.

Of course, before you test *new* marketing approaches, you need to be testing and measuring what you are already doing. For example, the number of businesses who advertise and have never accurately measured the response and therefore don't know if the ads work - is scary.

If you're going to be great at Marketing, you must, must test and measure everything.

2. **Are you clear what the purpose of your business is?**

Outstanding business performers share a similar way of thinking about business. The highest purpose of their business is not to just make money or increase profits. The highest purpose of their business is to *add real value* to the lives of their customers or clients.

We're not talking about some vague concept of adding value. We're talking about a deep commitment to enhance the lives of those you interact with. Why is this so important? It is the single most effective sales tool any business can employ. If you call a company and they just want to make money from you, you can tell instantly can't you? But if you call a company and they're willing to do whatever it takes to make your life easier, solve your problems, meet your needs and answer your questions – don't you just love it?

When we stop obsessing about how great our product or service is, and start obsessing about adding enormous value to the lives of our customers and clients – our profits soar - and as an added bonus, doing business becomes much more pleasurable.

3. **Is your marketing continually focused on explaining the BENEFITS of your product or service?**

One of the biggest marketing mistakes that businesses make is focusing on the details of their product or service, rather than the benefits it offers customers.

People will only buy from you when they, either consciously or subconsciously understand how they are going to benefit from what you are offering them.

Every conversation you have and every paragraph of your brochures, letters and website should convey the benefits of what you have to offer. Of course, for this to happen **YOU** have to be clear on what these benefits are. Sometimes, we're so close to our business that's not such an easy question to answer. Ask some of your colleagues what the top three benefits of your product are. If they hesitate – you've identified the first area where you can make a significant difference to your marketing.

The rewards that await you if you're willing to put a little time and effort into understanding Internet and E-marketing are enormous.

This is a vast area – but we want to give you 10 strategies that you can begin using immediately. Our one aim is to give you what you need to grow your business and increase your profits. These are very good starting points:

1. **Get clear on what the purpose of your website is**

Otherwise it can just end up a confusing mess. Is the purpose of your website to sell something, give information, nurture relationships??? It's up to you – but get clear from the start. For example, the purpose of this website is to give leading edge information to our clients that can help them significantly grow their business and increase their profits. Simple as that. So get clear on what you want your website to be and focus on it.

2. **Remember that your website should not be about you**

OK it sounds weird but the truth is your prospective clients and customers aren't that interested in you. They're interested in what you can do for them. There's a fundamental difference. Sure, you can have an 'About us' section and your website certainly needs to convey your pre-eminence in your field. But beyond that it should all be about your prospective clients. Step into their shoes. Meet their needs. Address their fears and concerns. Above all, give them solutions and solve some of their problems. Then you'll have a website that people will want to visit.

3. **Give People Free Stuff.**

Don't hold back. If the purpose of your business is to add real value to peoples' lives – start now. Give visitors to your site information they can use that will make a real difference to them.

4. Email Addresses

You've heard this a thousand times before, but would you believe that most businesses still do not collect the email addresses of everyone who contacts them. You may as well take a huge bucket of cash, go to the top of your building and throw it out of the window. Every time a business fails to capture someone's email address they're turning down the opportunity to contact them for FREE, for weeks, months and years ahead. This is insanity. It's also insane not to offer visitors to your website an easy way of submitting their email address, so they can see if you're as good as you say you are. Your web designers should be able to set up a simple way of doing this.

5. Once you have Email Addresses – use them!

Of the businesses that are good at collecting email addresses, hardly any of them follow up by communicating regularly with their customers and clients in an effective way. You don't just have to use email to sell stuff. You can use email to thank people for their business, make them a special offer, give them a free article or report, send a newsletter, recommend a product or service they may be interested in, ask for referrals, share some news that may be interested in, ask why they've not done business with you...the list is only limited by your imagination. The point is this. You could grow your business by 10, 20 or 30% *just* by adopting an effective e-marketing strategy.

6. Automate your Emails with Autoresponders

One of the reasons that Email Marketing is so powerful is because if you set it up properly, your entire email operation can be automated. Using autoresponders you can decide who gets which emails and when they get them. You can even create a system where people who purchase a particular product or service receive a series of emails leading them to further purchases. And the entire process is automated – which means that you can lie on the beach while the profits roll in.

7. Test Pay Per Click Advertising

How would you like your business to be at the very top of all the search engines without spending months on search engine optimization that probably won't work anyway. You can do this simply and rapidly with pay per click advertising. This enables you to get to the top of the search engines but you only pay when someone clicks to go to your website. So unlike most internet advertising, you only pay when someone visits your site. How much you pay will depend on how much competition there is amongst other advertisers in your category.

As with all marketing, the golden rule is to TEST and measure the results.

8. Use Audio and Video on your website

The internet now offers the opportunity for you (or a professional voice over) to speak directly to your customers and clients. Adding audio and video to your website can be very powerful and is not expensive. If you want to stand out from the crowd, aim to get audio on your site within the next month.

9. Consider Testing Internet Advertising

The collapse of internet advertising after the dot com boom, gave advertising on the web a bad name. But for many businesses, it's become a key part of their marketing mix. Consider testing internet advertising on a small scale – if it's successful and you are able to roll it out, it can be a superb way to reach large numbers of potential customers and clients very rapidly.

Why Most Advertising Does not Work

It's the best kept secret in the advertising world – most advertising simply does not work!

The people who are employed to sell you ad space are some of the most highly trained sales people in the world. They use powerful influencing techniques to get you to part with your cash to advertise in publications just because your competitors are all there too.

Well guess what.... Most of your competitors' advertising doesn't work either. But they know so little about marketing, most of them *don't even know* it doesn't work. Why? Because they break the first golden rule of marketing. They don't test and measure it.

Fortunately, you're smart enough to know that from now on, every penny that you spend on advertising needs to be measured. You need to know precisely what the ad cost, what the response was, how many of those who responded converted and what that is worth to you. Then you'll know if your advertising worked.

Here are Mike Weed's five top tips for Brochure and copy writing: This applies to brochures, letters, advertising, internet copy and emails.

1. **Step into the mind and the shoes of the person reading your copy.** Everything you write should be designed to meet their needs, wishes, desires, hopes, fears and dreams.
2. **Keep it simple.** Don't use language or sentence structure any more complicated than you would use in conversation with someone over dinner.
3. **Benefits, benefits, benefits.** You must focus on the benefits of what you are offering, rather than the product or service. When you buy a new hi-fi, you're probably not interested in how it was made or how many wires it has (the product) You're interested in how it will sound (the benefit) If you buy a new chair, you don't really care if it took three years for a man in China to make it (the product) You're interested in how comfortable it's going to be (the benefit) So all of your copy should focus on the benefits.
4. **Remember the magic word – YOU.** By continuing to use the word 'you' in your copy, you are forcing yourself to have a personal conversation with the person reading it.

5. **AIDA** Follow this classic rule of copy writing and you can't go too wrong.
AIDA stands for
Attention
Interest
Desire
Action

All of your copy, whether it's a letter, brochure or email, should follow this simple process. First you need to get their attention – this normally happens in a headline. Then create some interest. You then need to turn the interest into a real desire for your product or service. All of which is useless if the reader does not take action. So make it very clear what action people need to take to begin a relationship with you. For more Free Copy Writing tips from Chris Cardell, join our Free VIP Newsletter below.

Direct Mail is a powerful tool when used properly because it gives you direct access to your target customers and clients. But Direct Mail has to be handled with care and precision.

Here are some essential do's and don'ts for making your direct mail produce results.

- The Golden Rule of Direct Mail is to test and measure everything. This is the only way to determine with precision whether your campaigns are successful and should be rolled out on a larger scale.
- You should start testing a new Direct Mail campaign with a small number. Depending on the size of your business this may be a few hundred or a couple of thousand.
- By far the best place to start increasing your Direct Mail is with your existing customers and clients. How often do you mail them now and what would happen if you increased the frequency of mailing?
- Always include a letter with a brochure - statistically, it will improve the response.
- The first thing people will read in your letter is the headline (or the first line of the letter if there is no headline) and the PS. So make sure these convey your message in a concise way.
- Make sure that your mailings focus on the benefits that your customers/clients are going to receive.
- If you get a good response from a mailing – and repeat that mailing two or three weeks later – you are likely to get another significant response – around 50% of the first mailing.
- Consider the break-even concept. This involves using Direct Mail to target new customers and clients – even if the mailings only break even. Providing a percentage of them do repeat business with you - it can be a very effective way to rapidly grow your customer base.