

[Dissecting the Formula for Effective Print Ads](#)

By [Nikolas Allen](#), Published October 18, 2011

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/dissecting-the-formula-for-effective-print-ads-067732#ar7xPzK0Sozjk01i.99>

Despite the rapid growth and popularity of internet marketing techniques, print advertising is still a popular, affordable and effective medium favored by many small businesses. The multitude of available options includes newspapers, weekly periodicals, local magazines, directories, catalogs, and various other forms of consumer-targeted printed matter.

Personally, I enjoy collecting various regional print media, in order to peruse the local business climate, and to see what small business owners are doing right – and wrong – when it comes to marketing their companies with printed advertisements.

I just spent the weekend in Ashland, Oregon, home of the world-famous Shakespeare Theater Festival, where I collected several local rags and mags along the way. Glancing through these papers, it seems that most business owners think a quarter-page print ad is a chance to finally write that novel they've been pondering since college!

In paper after paper, tiny ads are jam-packed with more information than the reader could possibly digest in the split second their eye scans the page. From multiple bullet-point product lists to overly-detailed service descriptions, these advertisers presume the only way to make an impression is to over-inform. One restaurant printed their ENTIRE MENU in 6pt. type!

Apparently, most small business owners have yet to realize that, when it comes to advertisements, especially small ones, less truly is more.

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/dissecting-the-formula-for-effective-print-ads-067732#ar7xPzK0Sozjk01i.99>

Examples, of bad ad

Fall Fitness Special
3 months membership (minimum)
40% savings
\$225 discounted to \$135

The Hidden Springs Community Fitness Center is more than a gym, it's a healing sanctuary for mind/body/spirit wellness.

- ☑ Open for members 24/7
- ☑ No TV's, no crowds
- ☑ Kettlebells, Bosu balls, medicine balls, free weights, & machines.
- ☑ Enriched oxygen supplied
- ☑ Far Infrared sauna and plunge
- ☑ Pilates machine
- ☑ K1 Vibrational plate exercisers
- ☑ Free functional training classes
- ☑ Discounted Yoga therapy classes
- ☑ 6 guest passes a year
- ☑ Put membership on hold when you travel
- ☑ Lots of parking

FREE FOR THE FIRST 30 WHO JOIN

- * No joining fee
- * Free personal training with your orientation.

"This feels like my own personal spa and gym. I love that I can come any time I want, there's never a crowd and it's always quiet!" T.W.

I invite you to check ou the best kept fitness secret in the Valley—a healthy environment to develop Total Wellness."
—John Hacker, Fitness Director

Offer expires Sept 30, 2011

Call 541 488-8858 www.hidden-spring-wellness.com

HIDDEN SPRINGS

The Problem: Too Many Elements

You need some pretty strong brain muscles to lift all the elements packed into this fitness center advertisement. With its Fall Special promotion, oddly-cropped photo of an unidentified muscle man, mini mission statement, checklist of features, testimonial, employee quote, plus logo and contact info, there are way too many messages competing for attention. In cases like this, the reader ends up taking nothing from the ad.

The Solution: Focus On One Main Message

Let the ad be about the Fall Fitness Special. Keep the info related to the special, and let that take up most of the room. Keep the descriptive text that's in the green oval (*just the text, ditch that amateur oval graphic*), because it speaks to the company's point of difference.

Create a strong call to action to drive readers into the facility to sign up, and play up the expiration date in order to create urgency. Obviously, keep the contact info.

Move everything else to the website. If the reader is not ready to come into the facility to sign up, they will visit the website, where they can discover the features, quotes, testimonials, and quite possibly, the identity of that mysterious muscle man.



The Problem: Not Enough Info

While the fitness ad suffered from too much information, this one has the opposite problem. It doesn't answer the most important question at the forefront of every consumer's mind, "What's in it for me?" Readers need to know why they should care, how they're going to benefit, and what's unique about your company's offering.

This ad answers none of those questions, and assumes that people will be interested in meeting at Munchies for the sole reason that they presumably serve food. Well, so do a million other restaurants, and at least the rest of them have the decency to tell us what type of food they specialize in. Heck, this ad doesn't even bother to include a city in their address, nor do they list a website.


The Solution: Give Us A Reason To Meet You At Munchies

One of the more effective restaurant ads I saw touted themselves as "Ashland's meat-centric restaurant." Another one specialized in "Casual, contemporary Italian cuisine." Create a unique tagline that lets people know what your specialty is, and why they should try your offering over everybody else's. Also, include your city in all of your marketing materials because you never know where they may end up. And, it's 2011 for goodness sake, get a website!

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/dissecting-the-formula-for-effective-print-ads-067732#ar7xPzK0Sozjk01i.99>

Examples of good ads

Let Siskiyou Eye Center
do for you what
carrots couldn't.




SISKIYOU
EYE
CENTER

Too bad all those carrots didn't work.
Lucky for you, Siskiyou Eye Center is
dedicated to your complete vision health.
Whatever your need for eye care, we
diagnose and treat you with kindness, care
and competency.

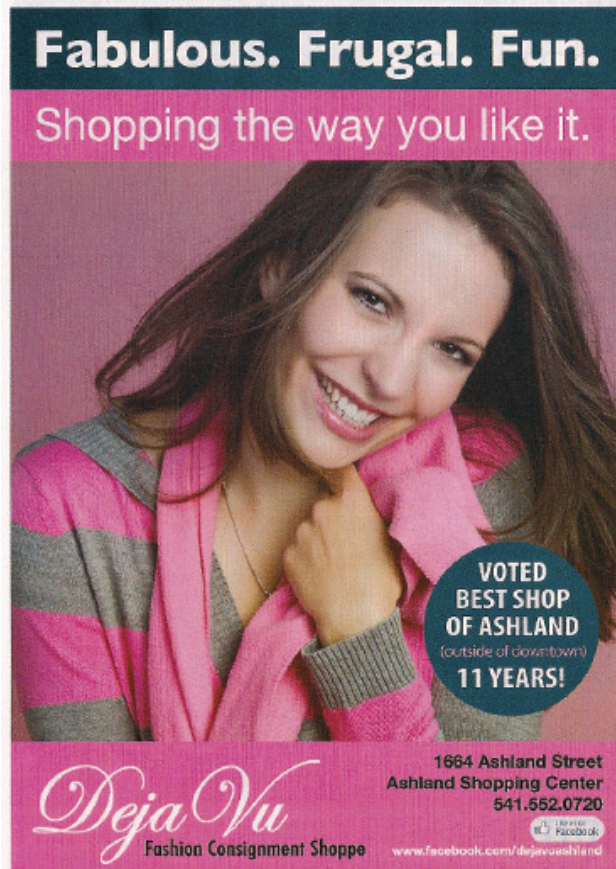
We Welcome New Patients!

SiskiyouEye.com | 648 North Main St. Ashland | 541.201.8163

This ad has a quintessential “agency” feel to it. I was an Art Director in Minneapolis for many years, and this was the type of work being created by my colleagues and me. Snappy headline, related image, concise body copy, logo, contact info and lots of white space. Truthfully, that’s all you need.

Of course, clients always wanted less white space and bigger logos, but the eye appreciates a little breathing room. As for logos, they should be used like a signature on a work of art, not a main focal point.

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/dissecting-the-formula-for-effective-print-ads-067732#ar7xPzK0Sozjk01i.99>



Here's another good one that manages to include all the right elements. The main focal point is an attractive, fun lifestyle photo that speaks to their target audience, with a vivid color scheme that begs to be noticed.

I also like the 'three adjective' headline. When I'm helping clients define their brand, it's always helpful to have them choose three adjectives that describe their company. In this case, Deja Vu has chosen to use their adjectives as a headline, followed up with a catchy tagline. They tout their "Best Of" credentials, include their logo, contact and Facebook address, and that's it. Nothing else needed.

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/dissecting-the-formula-for-effective-print-ads-067732#ar7xPzK0Sozjk01i.99>

As you can see from this case study, the secret to effective advertising is to achieve the following objectives:

1. Catch their attention
2. Describe your offering
3. Peak their interest
4. Drive them to action

Anything else is simply extraneous information that will muddle your main message and create more obstacles on the road towards gaining a customer.

Read more at <http://www.business2community.com/marketing/dissecting-the-formula-for-effective-print-ads->

What Is Direct Response Marketing?



Allan Dib

There are two major types of marketing strategies. The first is known as mass marketing or “branding”.

The goal of this type of advertising is to remind customers and prospects about your brand as well as the products and services you offer.

The idea is that the more times you run ads from your brand, the more likely people are to have this brand at the top of their consciousness when they go to make a purchasing decision.

If you’ve seen the ads from major brands such as Coca Cola, Nike and Apple you’ll have experienced “image” marketing.

The vast majority of advertising falls into this category.

There’s no doubt that this type of marketing is effective, however it is very expensive to successfully pull off and takes a lot of time.

It requires you to saturate various types of advertising media e.g. TV, print, radio, Internet etc. on a very regular basis and over an extended period of time.

The expense and time involved are not a problem for the major brands as they have massive advertising budgets and product lines are planned years in advance.

However, a problem arises when small businesses try to imitate the big brands at this type of marketing.

The few times they run their ads is like a drop in the ocean. It's nowhere near enough to reach the consciousness of their target market who are bombarded with thousands of marketing messages each day.

So they get drowned out and see little or no return for their investment.

Another advertising victim bites the dust.

It's not that the small businesses aren't good "branding" or mass media ads. It's that they simply don't have the budget to run their ads in sufficient volume to make them effective.

Unless you have millions of dollars in your marketing budget, you have a very high probability of failure with this type of marketing.

Direct Response Marketing

The second type of marketing strategy is called "direct response".

Direct response marketing, is designed to evoke an immediate response and compel prospects to take some specific action, such as opting in to your email list, picking up the phone and calling for more information, placing an order or being directed to a web page.

So what makes a direct response ad? Here are some of the main characteristics:

It's trackable. That is, when someone responds, you know which ad and which media was responsible for generating the response. This is in direct contrast to mass media or "brand" marketing – no one will ever know what ad compelled you to buy that can of Coke, heck you may not even know yourself.

It's measurable. Since you know which ads are being responded to and how many sales you've received from each one, you can measure exactly how effective each ad is. You then drop or change ads that are not giving you a return on investment.

It uses compelling headlines and sales copy. Direct response marketing has a compelling message of strong interest to your chosen prospects. It uses attention grabbing headlines with strong sales copy that is "salesmanship in print". Often the ad looks more like editorial than an ad (hence making it at least three times more likely to get read).

It targets a specific audience or niche. Prospects within specific verticals, geographic zones or niche markets are targeted. The ad aims to appeal to a narrow target market.

It makes a specific offer. Usually the ad makes a specific value-packed offer. Often the aim is not necessarily to sell anything from the ad but to simply get the prospect to take the next action, such as requesting a free report.

The offer focuses on the prospect rather than on the advertiser and talks about the prospect's interests, desires, fears and frustrations.

By contrast mass media or “brand” marketing has a broad, one size fits all marketing message and is focused on the advertiser.

It demands a response. Direct response advertising has a “call to action”, compelling the prospect to do something specific. It also includes a means of response and “capture” of these responses.

Interested, high probability prospects have easy ways to respond such as a regular phone number, a free recorded message line, a web site, a fax back form, a reply card or coupons.

When the prospect responds, as much of the person’s contact information as possible is captured so that they can be contacted beyond the initial response.

Multi-step, short term follow-up. In exchange for capturing the prospect’s details, valuable education and information on the prospect’s problem is offered. The information should carry with it a second “irresistible offer” – tied to whatever next step you want to prospect to take, such as calling to schedule an appointment or coming into the showroom or store. Then a series of follow-up “touches” via different media such as mail, e-mail, fax, phone are made. Often there is a time or quantity limit on the offer.

Maintenance follow-up of unconverted leads. People who do not respond within the short term follow-up period may have many reasons for not “maturing” into buyers immediately. There is value in this bank of slow-to-mature prospects. They should continue hearing from you once to several times a month.

Money At A Discount

Direct response marketing is a highly ethical way of selling. It’s focused on the specific problems of the prospect and aims to solve these problems with education and specific solutions.

It is also the only real way for a small business to affordably reach the consciousness of a prospect.

Your marketing system must deliver profitable results.

You have to know what a customer is worth to you, and then decide what you are reasonably willing to invest to acquire one, and then build systems that work within that limit.

Direct response is an accountable way to run marketing for a small business, as it is highly focused on return on investment.

If \$10 bills were being sold for \$2 each, how many would you buy?

The name of the game with direct response marketing is ‘money at a discount’ e.g. \$2 into advertising to get \$10 out in the way of profits from sales.

When you turn your ads into direct response ads, they become lead generating tools rather than just name recognition tools.

Three Keys To Crafting Successful Print Ads

By Michele Pariza Wacek

Want to create print ads that get results? Below are three keys to get you started.

Print ads should have one message and one message only.

Want to create print ads that get results? Below are three keys to get you started.

1. **Write for the eye.** Print ads are visual. Therefore, craft ads with the eye in mind. Eyes are kind of picky, though. So, here's a checklist of what eyes like and don't like:

- A catchy headline that encourages them read more.
- Art, such as photos, illustrations, clip art, shapes, etc. Eyes like art. When you create the ad, create words AND the visual at the same time. Words and visuals should work together.
- Designed in an interesting, intriguing, attention-getting manner. Eyes like that. Remember, graphic designers are your friends. If you don't have training in graphic design, I strongly urge you to hire a graphic designer to create your ad. The results will be well worth it.
- White space (blank space in the ad). Eyes like white space. Eyes don't like print ads stuffed with words and/or art. Those ads look way too difficult to read and comprehend. So eyes will skip over those ads and find other open, clean ads to look at. (And if they do, you might as well have never bought the ad in the first place.)

2. **Write for the busy eye.** Nobody is reading a newspaper because they want to see your ad. (Okay, your mother is the exception.) People are reading the paper because they want information. Reading your ad is an afterthought. So, they aren't going to spend a whole heck of a lot of time on it.

A common mistake is asking print ads to do too much. To be successful, print ads must:

1. Capture the attention of your potential customers.
2. Encourage those potential customers to remember your message.
3. Persuade them to actually do it.

That's a lot to ask for one little print ad.

Print ads should have one message and one message only. The more "extras" about your business you start throwing into the ad, the more convoluted the ad is going to become, and the less likely your potential customers will act upon your ad.

Now at this point you may be thinking "Okay. We need one message. That message should be to get my potential customers to buy something, hire my services, donate money, become a volunteer, etc. Right?"

Well?

For one thing, that's a pretty big leap for your potential customers. Getting potential customers to buy without first developing a relationship with them is, again, asking an awful lot for one little print ad. You might be better off inviting potential customers to take one small step in the buying process. For

instance, stopping in the store for a free gift, logging on to your Web site to enter a contest, putting their names on your mailing list, trying a demo version of your product, etc. Let them get to know you.

3. Keep your target market in mind. Your message should be focused on your customers' needs, not your own. Getting customers to buy your products and services is YOUR need. How your products or services solve your customers' problems is THEIR needs. See the difference?

That's why so many retail stores have sales. They're effective because they're solving a need (saving customers money). But saving money is not the only need. There are many others.

You should also think about ways to add value without bargaining on price (this position can backfire). Contests, free gifts, free reports, free food -- stuff like that. Think outside the box. And use that value as a way to set yourself apart.

Creativity Exercises -- Learn by example

One of the best ways to learn how to craft successful print ads is to study what's out there.

Get out a newspaper or a magazine and open it. See where your eyes go. What ads attract your eyes? What ads drive them away?

Which ads have headlines that intrigue you? Graphics that capture your attention? Copy that encourages you to find out more? Why?

Now look at ads that do nothing for you. Why don't you like them? Are they too cluttered? Too difficult to understand? Have a headline that makes you yawn?

Sometimes you can learn as much, if not more, from bad examples as you can from good ones.

Michele Pariza Wacek owns Creative Concepts and Copywriting, a writing, marketing and creativity agency. She offers two free e-newsletters that help subscribers combine their creativity with hard-hitting marketing and copywriting principles to become more successful at attracting new clients, selling products and services and boosting business.

She can be reached at <http://www.writingusa.com>. Copyright 2004 Michele Pariza Wacek.

Article Source: <http://EzineArticles.com/>