

A practical guide to advertising

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What is advertising?

The **Institute of Practitioners in Advertising** (IPA), the body which represents advertising agencies, defines advertising as:

"The means of providing the most persuasive possible selling message to the right prospects at the lowest possible cost".

In other words, having identified those customers whose needs and wants are best satisfied by your product or service, you evaluate the most cost-effective method of communicating these benefits to them, thereby encouraging them to purchase from you.

At this stage, it is important to appreciate that advertising does not simply mean television, radio or newspapers.

There is a wide range of techniques available, including:

- **Advertising in directories**
- **Advertising in magazines**
- **Advertising in national newspapers (display or classified)**
- **Advertising in regional or local newspapers**
- **Advertising on television or in the cinema**
- **Advertising on commercial radio**
- **Poster advertising**
- **Direct mail**
- **Exhibitions**
- **Merchandising and point of sale**
- **Sales promotion**
- **Sponsorship**
- **Advertising through the Internet**
- **Mobile Communications**

The most successful advertising is that which most effectively communicates with your customers. So, before beginning an advertising campaign, it is essential that you understand each of the above techniques in order that you can choose those most appropriate to your business needs.

What do you want to say?

The basic discipline behind all sales, advertising or promotional activity is **marketing**. For any business, large or small, marketing can be simply divided into what is known as the "Four Ps":

- **Product** - name, function, performance, packaging etc.
- **Price** - overheads, competitive influences, profit margin etc.
- **Place** - direct sales, wholesale distribution, franchising, retail etc.
- **Promotion** - sales activity, discounts, press and public relations, advertising etc.

Although the 'Four Ps' do not carry equal weight for every business, each has to be given careful consideration. When determining what emphasis to place upon each of these factors, always refer back to your overall **business plan**. Until you have your objectives and time scales set out, you cannot allocate resources to the 'Four Ps'. And, until these basic functions are determined, you cannot be confident that expenditure on advertising and promotion will be worthwhile.

The significance of service

A popular extension to the 'Four Ps' is "**Four Ps + One S**". Here, the "**S**" stands for Service.

The fate of any business often rests with its ability to provide quality service. Service begins before any sale is made, with good presentation, courtesy, efficiency and helpfulness. As customers yourselves, you know only too well how you take into account the treatment you receive before you buy. It is all about building up trust in your business and its products or services.

Should you advertise?

Everyone uses advertising, be it to look for a job, sell their house or find a car. We all also see hundreds of advertisements every day, so we are used to it being part of our lives. But how much do we remember? Ask someone to recall the ads they saw on television last night and they will struggle to remember more than a handful. Communication through advertising is by no means easy. However, because advertising is so familiar, people often think of themselves as experts.

The decision to advertise your products and services effectively is a very serious matter and requires careful planning and preparation.

You must begin by asking yourself **"what do I want my advertising to achieve?"**

The first step is to analyse the benefits to your business that could be gained by advertising. Only when the objectives of the business are clear can the objectives of the advertising be established.

For example, try to classify the goods or services you offer and set growth targets within each area over a fixed time period. Then categorise your audience within each of these areas into existing customers and potential new customers. By completing even this simple exercise, you will be in a better position to begin compiling a marketing and advertising plan.

By way of illustration, we suggest you try the simple exercise shown below. Simply tick those statements which best apply to your business today:

Who could use your products or services now?

1. People who always buy from a competitor and don't know us.
2. People who buy from a competitor, know us but have never bought from us.
3. People who mainly buy from a competitor, but know us and buy from us occasionally.
4. People who mainly buy from us, but occasionally from our competitors.
5. People who buy from us and never from our competitors.

The conclusion that can be drawn from the above exercise is that different types of advertising may be required. Advertising needs to be **tailored** to its precise audience because it is wasteful to try to communicate to all audiences with equal effort. No single advertising message will appeal to all targets, so hard decisions have to be taken as to which target offers most **potential**.

Examples of advertising messages:

1. An advertisement designed for non-users who don't know you or your products, stimulating an **initial interest**.
2. An advertisement designed to make existing customers buy more often from you and less from a competitor, in other words **developing loyalty**.
3. An advertisement designed to offer customers something better than your competitors can, **encouraging change**.
4. An advertisement designed to reassure existing loyal customers that they are making the right choice buying from you, encouraging them to **remain loyal**.

It is important to understand that even with careful analysis, advertising remains a matter of **judgement rather than science**. However, you can improve your judgement by increasing your knowledge of your industry, your business and, most importantly, **your customers**.

Knowing your customer

At the heart of many business decisions is the need to **know your customer**. However good your product or service, it will ultimately fail unless it is what your customer wants or needs.

Thousands of new products from large companies are launched every single year. Many of them have advertising budgets running into millions of pounds. Significantly, a number of these products fail because nobody wanted them or was persuaded to try them. The huge sums spent on their development, manufacture, distribution and, ultimately, advertising could have been saved if only the initial idea had been tested using careful **market research**.

The benefits of market research

Careful and accurate market research is essential to any business. It can provide vital information, all of which will help you:

- **Identify customers**
- **Increase sales**
- **Improve products and services in line with customer requirements**

The following Chart shows a sample research questionnaire, designed to target you and your colleagues. Hopefully, it will illustrate the importance of research. Before you can expect your potential customers to answer questions about your company and its products or services, you must understand the research process and be able to answer questions about yourself.

Can you answer these questions for your company?

Customers

1. Who and where are our existing customers?
2. How do we communicate with them now?
3. Why do they choose us in preference to our competitors?
4. Who and where are our potential customers?
5. How can we effectively reach them through our advertising?
6. What benefits, in addition to our products/services do we sell?
 (e.g. quality service, speed of delivery, expert advice etc.)

Competitors

7. How much do we know about our competitors?

8. Is our range of products/services different from theirs?

9. What are their strengths and weaknesses?

10. Do they advertise? How much do we think they spend?

11. What are their selling messages?

If you and your team can answer these questions, you may conclude that you understand your business. If you have difficulty answering, the research has highlighted that you need to know more. Either way, even this simple research exercise has **provided valuable information**.

Market research options

Desk research

Desk research is the study of existing information. There is a wealth of literature available, from a range of sources, much of which is either inexpensive or available free. Here are a few examples:

- **Trade and professional magazines**
These frequently publish surveys and reports on *the market or the consumer*.
- **Media owners**
Newspaper and magazine publishers produce data on their readers, circulations and advertising rates. This is available free of charge. Don't forget, their ultimate aim is to sell you advertising space, but if their figures are marked **ABC**, **NRS** or **VFD** it means they have been independently checked by the Audit Bureau of Circulation, National Readership Survey or Verified Free Distribution.
- **Specialist organisations**
Trade associations and organisations such as the **Advertising Association** or **BRAD** (British Rate and Data), publish useful information. BRAD's directory is often available for study in your local Business or Reference Library.
- **Government**
Statistics detailing the economic environment, e.g. regional employment levels and income trends, are normally available at business and reference libraries

Field research

Field research involves obtaining your own information, through direct contact with your chosen audience. This service is most effectively carried out by a market research consultancy for which fees would be charged. However, **there is no substitute for high quality information**. The **Market Research Society** will provide you with details of consultancies whose skills match your needs. The advantage of employing an external researcher is their independence. Your customers are more likely to be honest with a third party. They may not be comfortable criticising you to your face, in which case their contribution would be inaccurate and, therefore, misleading.

However, if you cannot afford specialists, you can easily carry out valuable field research yourself. For example:

- **Why do existing or new customers choose to buy from you?**
Ask telephone enquirers how they heard of your business.
or Telephone your customers and ask them for their opinions.
or Enclose a simple questionnaire and an s.a.e. with their bill.
or arrange a customer 'open evening' and use it to gather information.
- **Always ask direct questions**
People do not respond effectively to open-ended questions like 'do you have any comments?' Think of exactly what you want to know and ask it outright.
- **Consider offering incentives**
You want as many people to respond as possible, because the more information you have, the more accurate your conclusions will be. Consider prize draw entries or modest discounts for customers who return the information you request,
- **Involve your team**
Encourage your staff to let you know what customers say to them, good or bad. Arrange a regular meeting to do this or provide them with a book to log customer comments.

How advertising works

We all take in huge amounts of information every day. Before we leave home, we may talk with our families, receive mail, read a newspaper, watch television or listen to the radio. Advertising is just one element of this mass of information, so it has to work very hard to **compete for our attention**.

It is easy to overestimate the power of your advertisement and expect too much. Whilst there is no doubt that good and appropriate **advertising does work**, there are numerous factors to consider when investing in advertising:

- **Advertising is persuasive not coercive:** it cannot make people do what they do not want to do.
- **Advertising has to be seen by its intended audience:** so using the appropriate medium is essential.
- **The audience has to be receptive:** they must have an interest in your message.
- **The message has to be driven home:** a single advertisement may be missed or forgotten.
- **Competitors advertise too:** your offer must be better or different, otherwise why choose you?

The hardest fact to accept is that most people ignore most advertising. The key is to ensure that they take notice of yours. There are a number of reasons why people find certain advertising memorable, for example:

- **They recognise your company or its products/services:** People like what they know. Regular advertising builds awareness.
- **They have company or product loyalty:** Existing customers have a relationship and take notice of what you do.
- **They are actively seeking to purchase:** Your product or service is something they have already decided they need.
- **They are "in the market":** Your product or service is something they are considering purchasing.
- **The "offer" is attractive:** Your advertising contains a positive incentive to purchase (e.g. a free gift with the purchase or a price reduction).

Good advertising works because it puts the company, its products and its messages at the forefront of people's minds. It either stimulates an early purchase, or helps to ensure that people know where to go when they do decide to purchase.

The final point to consider is tell people what to do next. Nobody will buy from you unless they know how to, so always include contact information, e.g. **CALL FREE ON 0800 12345**.

Where to advertise

Once you have identified your target audiences, you need to communicate with them either directly (verbally or in writing) or indirectly through an **advertising medium**.

When choosing where to advertise, you must identify those publications, broadcast media or other methods which offer the best 'fit' with your target audiences. It may be appropriate to use different media and different messages. However, before you decide, you must understand what is available.

Direct marketing

Direct marketing is one of the most accountable forms of advertising media, since both costs and results can be measured precisely. It also assists with customer relations by building a two-way dialogue, thereby helping you to understand customer needs and expectations.

Direct marketing includes such disciplines as direct mail, mail order, direct response advertising i.e. television, radio and press advertising which invites an immediate telephone or written response and telemarketing, where existing or potential customers are contacted by telephone.

Of these, currently the most widespread is **direct mail**.

Research provides us with statistics which show that direct mail is both *appreciated* and *effective*:

- **The average householder responds to direct mail THREE to FOUR times every year.**
- **43% of business people consider the direct mail they receive to be 'very useful' or 'quite useful'.**
- **58% expect companies who trade with them to mail them when they have a special offer available.**
- **50% would like to be mailed whenever a company they already do business with has a new product or service available.**
- **55% would like to be mailed whenever a company they already do business with has new literature available.**

What are the ingredients for success?

There are three main aspects to a direct mail campaign that will affect its success.

1. The mailing list

The best mailing list is the one that contains the most potential purchasers. This would normally include existing or previous customers. The difficult part is including potential new customers.

List Brokers specialise in sourcing the most appropriate lists for businesses. Rental charges are typically between £80 and £150 per thousand names for one use only. If you know what you want, you can also choose to go to a **list owner** or have your own unique list compiled by a list builder.

2. The proposition

The proposition is the offer that you can make that will encourage recipients to respond. It must answer the question '*what's in it for me?*'

Accuracy of your information will influence how people react. Make sure all names and facts are correct. **Information** about your company, its products and its reputation will build confidence. **Simplify the response mechanism**, ideally by enclosing a post-paid, self-addressed envelope. **Make them an offer**, it is important you make clear the real reason why you are writing.

Suggestions for success...

'A system demonstration in your office, using your data', 'a fact-filled 24-page Guide to Increasing Your Productivity'.

... And a couple to avoid

'Ask for a visit from our representative', 'the new KBS800 Pressure Gauge from the makers of the GS 14-9'.

3. Creativity of the mailing

Creativity in direct mail is a means to an end. The use of stylish graphics, professional copywriting or photography should be used to achieve that pre-determined objective. Just as job candidates are expected to be well presented, so a "*well-dressed*" mailing is more likely to be read and appreciated than one that looks 'cobbled together'.

Stylish, relevant design grabs and holds the attention.

Literate, well structured copy increases readership and response.

Finally, direct mail does not end when you receive a response. Monitor all replies, fulfil orders promptly, update your database for re-use, notify suppliers and staff of any action required from them, spot check respondents to make sure they are satisfied with the follow-up service and finally and most importantly, maintain contact in the future.

Direct mail in action - a case study

Franc's restaurant in Chester wanted to increase its number of diners and decided to target existing diners.

They launched a frequent diners club and left invitations to join on all tables. In just one month, more than 2,000 diners applied. Using this database, Franc's sent out a club members' mailer. This first effort achieved just over 20% response rate. This dramatically increased the numbers dining.

Practical direct mail help is available from Royal Mail. Visit their website at www.royalmail.com and look under mail marketing.

For mailing list information contact the Direct Marketing Association www.dma.org.uk or Lists & Data Sources www.ladsonhouse.co.uk.

Ensure that your direct mail complies with the **Data Protection Act** by contacting the Information Commissioner on 01625 545700.

The press

In the UK and Europe the press, by which we mean newspapers, magazines and periodicals, is the most widely used advertising medium, accounting for around *50% of all advertising expenditure*. One of the reasons for this volume is that the press is so diverse, including all the following and more:

- **National daily newspapers**
- **National Sunday newspapers**
- **Regional daily newspapers**
- **Regional weekly newspapers**
- **Local free distribution newspapers**
- **General interest magazines**
- **Special interest magazines**
- **Trade, technical and professional magazines**
- **House magazines**
- **Yearbooks and reference journals**

In total there are well over 11,000 publications to choose from in the UK alone. The great advantage of such a selection is that it is possible to target specific audiences with particular interest in your business. The BRAD directory mentioned on [page 9](#) is an excellent source. In simple terms, national newspapers offer extremely high circulation (in total over 12 million a day), wide coverage and the ability to target demographically and by region. They are ideal for advertising general consumer goods. On the other hand, if your audience is professional electricians, the monthly edition of *The Electrician* is a far more defined and specific publication for you.

As mentioned earlier, all publications will provide information on circulation and readership, but only an **ABC** (*Audit Bureau of Circulations*) rating guarantees that circulation figures are independently audited. For readership figures in the national press and some other titles, the **NRS** (*National Readership Survey*) is the source, and for free newspapers it is **VFD** (*Verified Free Distribution*).

Why use press advertising?

1. Flexibility

The press offers such variety and scope that it is possible to target specific groups of readers on a national, local or special interest basis. You can segment your audience by sex, age, income group, business or hobby.

Advertisements can be purchased and designed at very short notice. It is possible to use colour, illustrations or photographs to enhance your message and reply coupons can usually be incorporated within the design. In the daily press you can even relate an advertisement to a current news story.

Also advertisements can be booked to appear in a given issue, in a given place within the title, such as opposite the television page or within the new products section.

These options naturally all have different prices. **Special positions** and **full colour** or **spot colour** insertions all carry premium charges.

If you don't mind where your advertisement appears, it will be placed run of paper, which means anywhere available. This costs less but you have no control over where it appears.

2. The Power of the written word

A press advertisement can be used to convey a broad message or to contain very precise and detailed information. The space is available to tell a story, build up an image and present your case to your customer. Once you have booked your space, you have complete control over what is said, how it is said and, if you choose a **special position**, where it is said.

3. **Cost-effectiveness**

If you identify the right titles for your business, with the lowest levels of 'wastage' in the readership (readers who would not be interested in your product/service), press advertising will prove to be a highly efficient method of reaching your audience at what is a comparatively low cost per prospect.

One key consideration when using press, which may influence your advertising decisions, is the measurement of **readership**, as well as **circulation**. Readership figures are higher than circulation figures, as they relate to the number of people who see the publication, rather than the number of copies bought (circulation). These figures need to be identified when possible. The National Readership Survey can help.

4. **Measurable Response**

Because, as mentioned earlier, you can include response coupons and/or telephone hotlines within your advertisement designs, it is possible to judge accurately the success of each publication. This not only helps you process today's responses, it also enables you to plan your future advertising based upon proven performance data.

Radio

Commercial radio is available to advertisers on a local and national basis either through the national sales houses or your local station. It is a source of information, entertainment and companionship to millions of people and typically provides a backdrop to other activities for lengthy periods, e.g. driving or domestic tasks.

In any four-week period, *over 80% of 15 to 44 year olds listen to Commercial Radio*. The majority of these listeners have their radio permanently tuned into their favourite station, which they listen to at the same times each day. Radio listeners are loyal and people relate to their favourite programmes and presenters.

Radio is most popular *outside peak television viewing hours*, with breakfast time (6am to 9am) and evening drive time (5pm to 6pm) being the periods of heaviest listening.

The use of Radio depends very much upon the overall objectives of the advertising campaign. Radio is an excellent medium for those wishing to build familiarity, accessibility and involvement with the product or service. The loyalty with the medium is subconsciously transferred to the advertiser. There is also the option of *sponsorship* of programmes.

Why use radio advertising?

1. The Impact of sound

The human voice is a *powerful selling aid*. It can convey emotion and authority and, when backed by music, can attract attention or create atmosphere. The one-to-one nature of the medium, reinforced by its local content, makes it intensely personal for the listener. A good radio station mirrors its audience and the moods conveyed by sound can *prove very memorable*.

Local radio stations are part of the community and, as such, benefit from being extremely close to their listeners

2. Flexibility

A radio is portable and can be listened to anywhere and whilst doing other things.

Programming is designed to target distinct audiences. Pop music shows appeal to a high proportion of younger people, whilst chat shows may reach a slightly older, more predominantly female audience and sports coverage tends to increase the male listening figures. Your advertising can be broadcast to coincide with, and capitalise upon, these variations.

Radio advertising is usually *quick and easy to produce*. This, coupled with the fact that radio is live, immediate and topical, allows you to add urgency and importance to your message.

3. Low cost

Radio advertising space, known in the business as **air time**, can be purchased in packages which offer a relatively inexpensive option. The cost of writing and recording of advertisements can also be attractive and stations will often incorporate this within their *package deals*.

Commercial messages can benefit from this intimacy and trust. However, **creativity is essential**. Radio advertisements are short and the listener's attention is immediately drawn to the next item. Likewise, there is no visual support for your message. The script must therefore be catchy, strong and, above all, memorable. If all these factors are addressed, the radio can be a highly successful advertising medium.

For more information on radio advertising visit www.rab.co.uk.

Television

Television is regarded by many as the single most powerful advertising medium available. This is partly because, **over 80% of the UK population watch television every day.**

According to the 2002 Marketing Pocket Book, commercial television viewing accounts for over 50% of this total. It now includes cable and satellite options.

Why use television advertising?

The benefits of television advertising are clear from these figures. **The audience is massive and captive.** By repeating advertisements many times, known in the business as frequency, it is possible further to increase this audience and secure more effective total coverage.

Television can be used *tactically*, e.g. locally, regionally or nationally, and effectively targeted. Sophisticated data on the habits of viewers is available, enabling the advertiser to identify the particular audience *profile*. The same groups of people do not watch **The Big Breakfast, Channel 4 Racing, Baywatch and Equinox!**

In production terms, the medium offers moving pictures and high quality sound, enabling **exceptional creativity** to be brought into play by advertisers. Messages can be presented extremely powerfully.

Television advertising is extremely *cost-effective* for the right type of advertisers, but this does not mean it is inexpensive. Thirty seconds of prime time, e.g. during **Coronation Street**, costs many thousands of pounds. However, given the millions of people watching, the *relative* cost of reaching each one of them is low. In addition, production costs can be substantial. The most effective method of securing value for money is to produce an advertisement of such quality and longevity that it is used many times over many months or years.

Smaller advertisers, who believe that television advertising is out of reach should contact the local stations and ask for details on budget packages. These are generally transmitted outside peak times, but may be appropriate for those wishing to target certain distinct categories of viewer.

Cinema

There are over **3000 cinema screens in the UK**. Approximately 7% of the population visit the cinema at least twice a month and 30% go at least once every two to three months. Since 1985, there has been a steady growth in cinema admissions and this trend is continuing.

Why use cinema advertising?

Cinema audiences are captive, **attentive** and usually **appreciative**. The cinema is an experience, consisting of many elements from '*previews to popcorn*' and the advertising is very much part of this **total entertainment package**.

Cinemas do not offer distractions. The auditoriums are dark and the audience is largely silent. Attention levels are *unrivalled* and advertising messages are usually **watched, listened to** and **absorbed** within the cinema environment.

Advertising that uses sound and vision is displayed to its best possible *effect* through the use of the big screen and sophisticated sound technology.

Cinema advertising time can be purchased locally, regionally or nationally. It may also be linked to certain categories of film, e.g. 18 certificate or children's, or even to specific film titles. All this allows the smaller, local advertisers to appear on the big screen at very *affordable* rates.

Production costs, using the facilities offered by the major cinema advertising contractors, are *surprisingly low*. Again, this opens the door on cinema to the smaller advertiser.

When considering cinema advertising, it is important to obtain as much audience data as possible, in order to ensure that your products/services and messages are consistent with the particular sector of the cinema-going public you will reach when you purchase advertising.

Directories

Directories are a useful advertising medium because they are so *highly focused*. There are over 4000 directories in the UK, approximately 50% of which are **industrial** and **commercial** titles, aimed at specific sectors and well used by them.

Consumer titles, such as Thomson's Local Directories, are also highly defined but in a geographical sense, making it easy to target customers within given localities.

Industrial and **commercial directories** are almost totally used by those who are *pre-disposed to purchase*. They invariably have a long shelf-life, typically a full year and are almost always seen by potential buyers only when they are ready to buy. Directories are specific reference publications and not reading matter for the casual browser

Directory advertising is not seen as an overt sales pitch. The publication provides information, not promotion, and is vital to the customer who is *actively seeking the advertiser*. For this reason, they are an ideal *support medium*, providing relevant details to an already captive audience.

Outdoor advertising

Outdoor advertising is a *diverse* medium, appearing in many shapes and sizes. Some of the more popular forms are listed below:

- **Poster advertising**
Such as the massive *48-sheet* sites on roadsides, to small, wallmounted *4-sheet* sites and the ends of bus shelters.
- **Station advertising**
Posters appearing in airports, train stations and bus termini.
- **Onboard advertising**
Smaller posters appearing on trains, underground trains, buses and in taxis.
- **Sides and supersides**
Posters and even individual paintwork appearing on buses and taxis.
- **Mobile advertising**
Lorries and trucks which are specifically built to carry mobile poster sites.

Why use outdoor advertising?

Posters (are normally sited in *high traffic* areas, which can be mobile or pedestrian. Therefore, each individual poster has a high **opportunity to see** (OTS) rating.

Poster sites can be *cost-effectively purchased* locally, regionally or nationally.

Poster advertising provides an excellent *trigger* at or near the point of purchase, e.g. in a busy shopping centre or high street. It can therefore be used to make very specific announcements, such as **OPENING SOON ON THIS SITE.**

By its nature, **Poster advertising** cannot be acted upon immediately. People see posters as they pass by. This means the messages have to be very short and easy to digest. Their most effective use is therefore as a reminder, keeping a product or service in the mind. For this reason, **Poster advertising** is universally accepted as being a highly effective support *medium*, reminding the audience of other forms of advertising for the same product/service, e.g. press or television campaigns.

Creative advertising

The quality of each advertising message obviously plays a key role in its success. **Creative advertising** offers many benefits and helps you to meet your overall objectives, by:

- **Gaining the attention of the audience**
- **Capturing their imagination**
- **Opening their minds to your sales messages**
- **Differentiating your products and services from all others**
- **Giving them a reason to choose you**
- **Adding value to your products and services**
- **Helping the audience to remember**

Being **creative** is one of the most difficult areas of advertising. You must accept that *one man's meat is another man's poison*, which brings us back to **knowing your customers**.

Fortunately, the preparation of **creative** and effective **advertising** is an area where you can get lots of help. These experts have developed some tips which you can use when compiling your own ads:

1. **Match your medium to your audience:**
People who see your advertising must be interested in what you have to sell.
2. **Play for position:**
When advertising in the press, convention has it that early pages are best (with the exception of outside covers and specific special positions). It is also believed that right hand pages receive more attention. The point is, think about *where you want to be and make sure you're there*.
3. **Size does matter:**
People are more likely to see your advertisements if they are *large*.
4. **All things bright and beautiful:**
Research shows that people not only *notice* colour advertising, they are also more likely to read something that is bright and eye-catching.
5. **Every picture tells a story:**
Psychologists have proved that people have an almost *unlimited* capacity for remembering visual images. Pictures show things as they truly are.
6. **Hit the headlines:**
Take your key statement and turn it into a concise *headline*. It doesn't have to be witty, but it must never be clumsy or unclear.
7. **Watch your words:**
Make one or two strong claims and support them with evidence. Give your audience a reason to buy, visit, call or try.
8. **Sign off with style:**
Summarise your philosophy and your offer in one, concise line. '*We care because you do*' says it all for Boots.
9. **Make yourself easy to choose:**
Always include your name, address, telephone number, email, web site and, if appropriate, brief directions and hours of business.

ABOVE ALL, MAKE SURE YOUR ADVERTISING STANDS OUT FROM THE CROWD!

Testing your advertising

It is always desirable to test the *effectiveness* of your advertising. In order to develop ideas or campaigns that work for you, you need to evaluate the reactions of your audience and, possibly, alter your advertising accordingly.

Testing methods and ideas

Ideally, several different approaches should be tried to measure relative success.

Advertisements should be placed in *different areas* of your chosen medium, in order that the most effective timings, editions or positions can be established.

Coupons and telephone hotlines will enable you accurately to *monitor response*. If you advertise widely, give each individual advertisement a code number relating to the date and place it appears. You can also run different advertisements to test cost effectiveness.

Key elements in testing:

1. **Time**
Give each test long enough to produce *worthwhile results*.
2. **Organisation**
Plan your testing schedules and methods and *stick to them*.
3. **Investment**
Some advertising techniques will prove unsuccessful. *Don't give up: an effective advertising campaign is worth every penny*.
4. **Thought**
Know your customers. When, where and why do they want your products or services. If you're not sure, **keep testing**.

The advertising agency

Advertising agencies specialise in the *planning, design, production and media buying* of campaigns on behalf of client companies who advertise. They provide in-depth knowledge of the disciplines involved in marketing and advertising, together with the creative inspiration required to develop *effective* ideas

As with all business services, such as legal advice or accountancy, their expertise costs money. Fees vary depending upon type and volume of work and the calibre of personnel involved. However, if they achieve measurable results, their fees will be outweighed by the additional income they generate.

How to find an advertising agency

Yellow Pages and *Thomson Directories* will contain the advertising agencies based in your area.

The *Advertisers Annual* also gives comprehensive information. Contact their new business directors and ask them to send you details of how they work (**agency profile**) and some examples of their recent work. They will do this *freely* and *without obligation*.

The **Institute of Practitioners in Advertising** (IPA) is the professional body representing advertising agencies. Members have to satisfy a number of criteria relating to business practice prior to acceptance, so you may wish to seek their advice. Visit www.ipa.co.uk.

Trade magazines such as *Campaign*, *Marketing*, *Marketing Week*, *The Drum* and *Adline* provide independent comment and review on agencies. Consider studying these before going further.

Finally, the **AAR Group** (www.aargroup.co.uk) provides a *confidential* service to potential advertisers. They have a library of agency presentations and specialise in matching client and agency needs.

Choosing an advertising agency

As in most areas of business, initial meetings are *free*. Agencies will gladly provide a **credentials' presentation**, during which they will guide you through work carried out for existing clients. At this stage, you should ask about costs and whether the agency works on a *fixed fee*, an *ad hoc fee*, or a *commission basis*.

Having met them, how impressed you are with what you see and hear will help you decide how impressed your audience might be with the work they do for you.

If you cannot decide on this basis, you should invite a selection of agencies (usually no more than three) to compete for your business. This is known as a **pitch**.

You must prepare and issue a brief, specifying what you wish to achieve and inviting them to present a strategy and creative ideas for your business. Remember to insist that each agency outlines how they plan to monitor advertising effectiveness. Once appointed, they have to be prepared to be judged on the basis of results. Finally, you should specify a *budget*, as this has a major impact upon the approaches recommended.

Some agencies will not present ideas without receiving a **pitching fee**. You should not discriminate against them because of this basis, as it means they are unwilling to increase their overheads to existing clients by seeking new work for themselves. If you become their client, you will appreciate this loyal approach.

When the agencies present their proposals, you will then be in a position to choose your agency based upon work they have prepared for you.

Further and more detailed information is available from ISBA (the association for advertisers) and the Institute of Practitioners in Advertising (IPA).

An advertising case study

Project Telecom: Showing how integrated advertising can work

This simple case study clearly illustrates how advertising can contribute to the solving of business problems. Although the case involves a fairly substantial budget (£15,000+), the principles are sound, as are the lessons to be understood.

Project Telecom was a relatively young company selling mobile telephones. The overall advertising objective was to mount a campaign to ensure that *all* potential customers were made aware of new retail premises that had been opened by the company.

Having sold directly to the trade for several years, **Project Telecom** had ventured into retail sales with the opening of two shops, located in Lincoln and Newark.

The advertising brief

1. To encourage the maximum number of potential customers to visit the **Lincoln shop**.
2. To gain maximum publicity and exposure within the confines of a limited budget, controlling expenditure by producing a cost-effective campaign

The advertising strategy

1. They contacted *Vodafone* for co-operative support funding. *Vodafone* responded by including **Project Telecom** in a national competition scheme, offering customers of *Vodafone* dealers the chance to win a Mini Cooper car.
2. **Project Telecom** booked a regular *run of paper* (ROP) advertisement in local press, with the aim of keeping awareness amongst potential customers high.
3. Further awareness was built up by supporting this advertising with quarterly **direct mail** initiatives within their catchment area.
4. All creative work was *professionally* produced, with the aim of ensuring maximum quality and *impact*.
5. They added further support through **sponsorship** of an editorial feature.
6. The Lincolnshire Echo produced a **business profile**, funded by support advertising from **Project Telecom** and their suppliers. This provided an insight into the company and *further exposure* to their audience.
7. A *contingency* budget was set aside for seasonal adjustments. This gave the campaign *flexibility* and allowed **Project Telecom** to seize one-off opportunities as they arose.

Budget analysis	
Expenditure	(£)
10cm x 2 column ROP advertising - 10 insertions	752
8cm x 7 column ROP advertising - 48 insertions	10,106
Business profile 39cm x 4 column	200
Sponsored editorial supplement	1,000
Quarterly direct mail initiatives	2,100
Contingency allowance	1,200
Total campaign cost	15,358

The result

Project Telecom's Lincoln shop achieved its annual turnover target in its first month.

Conclusions

Project Telecom and the Lincolnshire Echo monitored and analysed the campaign with the aim of establishing the reasons for its success. These were concluded as being:

1. **Commitment** from the managing director of **Project Telecom**.
2. **Targeting** of creative advertising.
3. **Integrated** marketing and advertising methods.
4. **Flexibility** within the budget to respond to changes and opportunities.
5. **Planning** by both the advertiser and the media.
6. **Professionalism** and dedication from everyone involved.

Some final reminders...

Before you think about advertising, make sure you **know your customers**.

Don't rush into any advertising expenditure without **planning your strategy**.

Consider using an advertising agency to produce **cost-effective advertising**.

Don't be afraid to ask for help from the media, it's in their interest that you succeed.

And remember, good advertising will work for you, provided you give it your best!

Useful Contacts

For a full listing of members of The Advertising Association, and other recommended sites, click [here](#).

