

## Say It. Mean It. Then Shut Up.

It's that time of year again.

As the calendar year winds down, countries across the country are evaluating (and re-evaluating) their projected ad expenditures for the new year. And in light of an anything-goes economic climate, those budgets will be under more scrutiny than ever.

So, what can you do to make sure your ads are being all they can be [pardon the shameless appropriation from the U.S. Army]?

First, keep in mind the Golden Rule of advertising: **the goal of any ad campaign — whether on radio or TV, or in print — is not to sell a product or service.**

You heard it right. Rather, the more immediate goal for your ad is simpler: you want it to be remembered. And more specifically, you want the ad to be remembered long enough for your prospect to engage in a desired action.

"So," you ask, "how do we do that? How do we communicate enough information so that our prospects know who we are and what we do, and still be memorable enough that they call us?"

That, as they say, is the \$64,000 question. (Maybe more, maybe less, depending on your ad spend.) Rest assured that there are literally dozens (or hundreds) of ways to find data about what audiences respond to, how they act, what motivates them to change behavior, and even what words do or don't work for them. You can engage in a custom market research initiative, use online for-fee services or even survey your current client base.

Regardless of what tack you use, learning who your target is and how they like to receive information can inform how you choose to apportion your advertising resources.

Once you've decided how you want to use your ad spend, the next step is to develop the creative. Here's where your agency can help.

And of course, there are some simple rules to keep in mind:

- 1) Refrain from poly syllabating.** Or to be more succinct, use short words. There's a whole science around how people learn and retain information. The important thing for you to keep in mind when marketing your company is that if the audience doesn't understand what you're saying, they won't remember it.
- 2) 100% Guaranteed.** Sound familiar? These words can be the death knell to a fledgling client relationship because if you fail to live up to your promise — even once — you've lost valuable credibility that you may never recover. The moral of our story? Make sure you can deliver on your promises — every time.
- 3) And then, this one time, at band camp...** Ever had a conversation with someone who loved the sound of their own voice? (If not, you may actually be that person. Sorry.)



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Now is not the time to love yourself. Your advertising should be focused on your prospect's needs. Let me say that again: *your advertising should be focused on your prospect's needs*. Forget about what you want to say; think instead about what they want to hear.

Don't worry if this sounds like a more daunting task than you expected. As you move forward developing your ad campaign, it's important that you're working with an experienced agency. So, before you sign on the dotted line, check out their portfolio to be sure they know how to design radio, TV and print ads.

Next month, we'll wrap up our series by reviewing the importance of networking and creating a buzz to promote your brand.

*Note: Due to a scheduling change, this month's article addresses both October's topic (radio and TV advertising), as well as November's topic (print media).*



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