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Best Practices for a Successful Ad

Making an ad successful is not a hit or miss gamble. If you follow the guidelines spelled out here, you will have more hits than misses. This is the criteria which the Copy Chasers from *Business Marketing* use when evaluating ads sent into them for review.

1. Have a High Degree of Visual Magnetism

Only a small number of ads in an issue of a magazine will capture attention. Some ads will be passed by because the subject matter is of no concern. But others, even though they may have something to offer, fail to stop the reader. An ad should be constructed so that a single component dominates.

2. Select the Right Audience

Something in the ad should, at first glancing, enable the reader to identify it as a source of information relating to their job interest, identifying a problem they have. The ad should say, "Hey, this is for you."

3. Invite the Reader into the Scene

Visually illuminate and dramatize the selling proposition.

4. Promise a Reward

Give the reader a reason to continue reading your ad... something of value they can learn. Promise something specific. The headline "Less maintenance cost" is not as effective as "You can cut maintenance costs 25%."

5. Back Up the Promise

To make the promise believable, the ad must provide hard evidence that the claim is valid. Sometimes, a description of the product's design will be enough to support the claim. Case histories make the reward appear attainable. Best of all are testimonials. "They-say" advertising carries more weight than "We-say" advertising.

6. Present the Selling Proposition in Logical Sequence

Organize the elements and guide the reader through the material in a logical sequence finishing with the selling proposition.

7. Talk “Person-to-Person”

Copy is more persuasive when it speaks to the reader as an individual, as if it were one friend telling another friend about a good thing.

8. Easy to Read

The most essential part of the advertising message is in the body copy. Avoid type that is too small, squeezed into a corner, printer over and illustration or reversed.

9. Emphasize the Service, Not the Source

Many industrial advertisers insist that the company name appear in the headline, that it be set in bold-face wherever it appears in the copy. That's too much. An ad should make readers want to buy, or at least consider buying, before telling them where to buy.

10. Reflect the Company's Character

A company's advertising represents the best opportunity to portray the company's personality. A brag-and-boast ad suggests the company is maker-oriented, not user-oriented. A dull-looking ad raises the possibility that the company is behind the times and is slowing down. Whatever your company's character is, it should be consistent over time.

11. Call to Action

Website
Phone
Listen
Think