

How to advertise

What you say and how you say it in words, sounds or pictures will be vital to your ad's success. You should always aim for the following 4 things:

- To be **noticed**.
- To be **understood**.
- To **stimulate action**, such as an enquiry or a visit to your store.
- A **sale**.

Setting your advertising goals

You need to look at your advertising and promotion in the same way that you look at other areas of your business - that is, you must set clear objectives and goals to achieve. You need to be happy with the objectives of the advertising and promotion campaign and then plan your strategy in such a way that this can be achieved. Advertising and promotion is an important part of your overall marketing strategy, so this area must be integrated with the business' marketing goals, strategies and overall business plan.

Promotional goals might include the following:

- Increase of sales to present customers.
- Generating new customers.
- Creating new markets.
- Increasing the business image and profile.
- Launching a new product or service.
- Publicising a new location or new premises.
- Moving into new areas of advertising and promotion such as the Internet.
- Tying in with your suppliers' promotions of brand name merchandise.
- Offering customers incentives to seek out your business.
- Promoting a special event such as a fund raising project.
- Advising customers about new services such as free credit or same day delivery etc.

The most critical elements of your advertising plan is to define your goals, purpose and budget. If you are going to be able to co-ordinate the production side of advertising, such as copyrighting, visuals and other elements of your campaign, then you need to be clear on your objectives. State clearly what you want to achieve, be precise and state the name of your product and the ideas. Set out a timeframe and define your target audience, so maximum advantage is gained from costs involved. For example, a men's' clothing store may have as its main objective "to create awareness of the latest imported suits for men in business from the age of 20 to 29 in the first three months of the year".

Be clear on how many people you are seeking to reach. If you plan to operate a campaign that is aimed at a certain location, then this will have a big impact on the type of media and the type of presentation that is used. Decide on whether you are going for numbers or whether you are trying to find quality. In other words, is it a scatter-gun type effect or are you targeting specific age groups or income groups with your campaign. The key is not to start until you are clear on the direction and your aims.

Tools to use

Once you have finalised your advertising and promotional goals and have settled on the budget available, you then need to look at the tools that are needed to achieve the goals that have been set. Some people call this combination of various promotion avenues the promotional mix, which can include the following:

1. Media advertising - which includes a variety of media such as newspapers, magazines, television, Yellow Pages, billboards, radio and your local community papers.
2. Direct mail advertising - which includes letters, newsletters, brochures, fliers and inserts into newspapers or magazines.

Develop an action plan

Once you have finalised the tools that you will be using for your promotion and are satisfied with the promotional mix, you must develop an action plan and a timetable. This plan is intended to set out the time schedule, as well as what you intend to do, how you wish to do it, when you want to do it and who will do it. You need to answer a number of questions, such as:

- Why you want to advertise and what you hope to achieve.
- Where your major competitors advertise and details of their types of ads.
- The budget that has been set for the period of the promotion.
- The profile of your target markets, including the demographics and buying habits.
- A contingency budget in case the markets change and information provided by prior research is not correct.
- Details of the projected sales that are being sought, as well as the projected costs that are going to be expended.
- Various media information which is supplied by the companies who will be carrying out the advertising for you - for example, television and radio will supply a full kit including rates, audience times, coverage etc.
- Do you have enough stock for supply?

Set promotional mix

Here is an example of a promotional mix checklist that some companies use:

- What are your promotional goals?
- What is your promotion budget for the next three years?
- How much of the budget can be used for certain areas of the promotion and would you achieve good results from those areas?
- What features of the business should be promoted?
- When should the promotion be concentrated - what month, what day etc?
- What other messages do you want to send to your markets that will give you the edge over your competitors?
- What is the current strategy for finding customers and how do these people find you right now?
- What training have you put in place for your sales staff?
- Are there any areas where your product could be improved before presentation?
- Have you planned on providing the type of service and support that will make customers come back?



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Special promotions

Most advertising budgets include provisions for special promotions throughout the year for occasions such as Christmas, Easter, Mother's Day, special sales, etc. These should all be included in your advertising planning.

Group advertising

A sensible method of stretching your budget is to pool advertising resources with a group of your neighbourhood traders. You then place an ad, which promotes all the business in the area where the stores are located. The most difficult part of such a scheme, of course, is obtaining agreement from everyone concerned, and the time involved in trying to list the help of other companies, such as press, radio, or television.

Further information

The following fact sheets provide further information on these issues:

- Advertising - introduction
- Marketing plan

