

How to Write the Perfect Classified Ad

By Alvin Apple

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Classified Ads are a very effective and inexpensive marketing tool. Just a few simple sentences placed on AOL or in the bigger business ezines can let millions of readers and web-surfers know about your business. Classifieds are so short and simple that most people can crank one out in a matter of minutes. Sounds like a piece of cake, right? Well, almost.

The danger in writing classified ads lies in letting that simplicity fool you. A poorly written or unimaginative classified ad will just be ignored, and your time and money will have been wasted. To avoid that hassle, follow these simple steps.

First. Write a catchy and unique headline:

There are a lot of businesses advertising on line these days. You've got to make yours stand out. Avoid generic headlines like "DOUBLE YOUR INCOME!" Phrases like this sound canned, and probably too good to be true. Try to say something that gives information about your business, like, "INCREASE YOUR INCOME SELLING LIST MANAGEMENT SOFTWARE ONLINE!"

Second. Cover all the details:

Make sure you give all the pertinent information about your business. What exactly are you offering? How much does it cost? If it's a business opportunity, what exactly does it involve? Make sure someone who's interested can get in touch with you. Include a phone number, an email address, or preferably your url.

Third. Use a simple structure:

Classified ads usually have a length limit. You can save space by eliminating unnecessary words. No one is expecting poetry when they browse the classifieds. You don't even need to use complete sentences. Simple phrases like, "Offices across U.S. and

Canada," or, "48 hour turnaround on all jobs," work just as well as wordier prose.

Fourth. Make sure it makes sense:

This can not be stressed enough. After you've written the ad, put it down and walk away from it for a few minutes. When you come back to it, read it slowly from start to finish. Does it make sense? If you knew nothing about your business would the ad be clear?

Have someone else read the ad as well. Don't tell them anything about what you're trying to do, just have them read it. If they get it, you're probably fine.

Fifth. Place the ad appropriately:

Even the best ads are useless in the wrong market. When you place your perfect classified ad, make sure you're hitting the market you want. Read a few issues of an ezine before you advertise. Are the articles and ads in the same ball park as your business? When placing ads on big classified sites such as AOL Classifieds Plus, make sure you're placing your ad under the proper heading. Read a lot of ads under each heading to make sure you're putting yourself in the proper forum.

If you follow these steps you will have a perfect classified ad. Now, this is not a guarantee of sales. As we all know, the advertising world is pretty unpredictable. You can really improve your chances, though, if you start out with something great. There's money to be made out there if you just know how to do it.

Alvin Apple helps everyday people start businesses they will enjoy. Then he teaches them how to succeed. Read all his helpful strategies, including his latest article, "Four Important Tips for Working Effectively at Home" at <http://AlvinApple.com>
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