

# Advertising The \*S.M.A.R.T.\* Way! Expense vs Investment

By MaLea Caver

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Every business owner realizes that in order to optimize their profits, they must advertise at sometime and in some manner.

But how?

There is seemingly an endless sea of avenues by which one may choose to accomplish this goal, but which one is best for you? There are two rules when it comes to advertising; (1) No One Can Guarantee Results, (2) Is the money you are letting go of an expenditure or an investment?

The trick to advertising is really no trick at all, it is a simple formula of: Keeping your business in front of as many potential customers as possible for as long as possible for the most reasonable cost available. Your objective, easy; the highest return on your dollar possible. Advertising without measurable positive results is an expense, not an investment.

Most successful business people are goal setters, and they are \*S.M.A.R.T.\* when it comes to reaching their goals. They in other words are Specific in their Goal, it is Measurable, it is in fact Attainable, Realistic and they keep a Timetable on it.

Yet, when it comes to advertising, it seems these rules don't apply. Yes, they do, just more often than not, they are not applied. Herein lies one of the biggest reasons so many business owners have many more expenditures versus investments when it comes to advertising. No one should know your customer better than you, so ask yourself some simple questions before signing that contract.

Be \*S.M.A.R.T.\* when it comes to your money, lay it out and then shop for your best avenue.

**Be Specific:** What is it you want to accomplish? A larger customer base, higher retention rate of existing customers, a higher percent of the market, growth percent over last year?

**Measurable:** Is this form of advertising something I can actually track without encumbering my customer with some type of survey. How can I keep a "yardstick" on my progress?

**Attainable:** Is this form of advertising geared for my needs and will it assist me in obtaining my goals? If so, how and can I afford it?

**Realistic:** Can I honestly expect to accomplish the goals I have set and is this form of advertisement directed at my customer or simply a general audience.

**Timetable:** How long will this form of advertising keep my name in front of my customer, how often will it be seen or heard by my customer and at what price for enough exposure in relation to how long I have to wait?

When looking for YOUR best avenue of advertising, ask questions related to your specific goals.

Example:

1. Can I keep track of my progress?
2. Explain how your company plans to help me reach my goal and hit my customer base. Is my target area where you are really aiming and how do you propose to hit it consistently?
3. How often does your company intend to showcase my business in my customer area and for how long?
4. Do you advertise for businesses such as mine in other areas and may I contact the owner for input.

Given that you are reasonably satisfied with the answers to these questions, it is time to ask yourself one.

Is this form of advertising an expense or an investment? If you can visualize a greater return on your money by the realistic percentage you had aimed for or better, then it should in fact be an investment and worth pursuing.

Most mediums of advertisement are honest attempts to get your business noticed. Unfortunately there are some which can not spell ethics, so keep your business sense about you.

Remember two things; rule number one: **NO ONE CAN GUARANTEE RESULTS** and, rule number two: if it sounds too good to be true,

it probably is.

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