

# Advertising - Yes or No

By Bob Brolhorst

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Bob Brolhorst  
bbrolhorst@wave5marketing.com

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There are a lot of "directories" people can advertise in. Salesmen are calling all the time, especially to new businesses, offering "national" exposure or, if you're more concerned with local exposure, they have a "special deal just for you." A few "rules" before you decide to advertise with a company, organization, or website that sounds just too good to be true:

- 1) If they won't give you a copy of the distribution statistics, don't do it. You need to know exactly who will see your ad. Ask for the demographics and distribution statistics of the last directory. If this is their first year, what's their "introductory" rate. If there is none, tell them to call you next year after they send you a copy of the directory that is now in the works.
- 2) If they won't give you a copy of the publication, don't do it.
- 3) If they won't give you a phone number to call back, don't do it.
- 4) If they absolutely, positively have to have an answer right away, don't do it.
- 5) Ask for references you can call. Wait a few days, then call. Once you ask for references, they put these people on "alert." By waiting a few days, they've relaxed and may tell you information you would not have gotten earlier. Of course, if they don't have references you can call, you have your answer.
- 6) You will see a lot of websites with testimonials, be wary of the testimonials that have a first name and last initial. Most of the time the names are fictitious, but to be sure email the company and ask for phone numbers or email addresses of the people that have written these testimonials. If they are legitimate the company will be more than happy to give you the contact information.
- 7) There are so many scams out there, especially for new businesses. For example, when I received my Dun and Bradstreet number, I was immediately

on the "HOT" list for every telemarketer in the country. Stick with trade journals, Yellow Pages, and a website that's well placed on search engines.

8) I suggest that you start your own mailing list and send the ads yourself if possible. One of the best ways to get a mailing list started is to publish your own newsletter. Get your clients to refer others. Over 60 percent of my clients are referrals -- those are the ones you want!

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<http://www.wave5marketing.com>

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