

Understanding the Different Methods of Offline Promotion

By Stone Evans

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Stone Evans
webmaster@home-business.com

The Home Biz Guy <http://Home-Business.com>

No business can survive the long run without some form of consistent advertising. As a result, most business owners will eventually consider using advertising to promote their business.

The toughest part of the advertising equation is in determining where and how to spend your advertising dollars. If you do it wrong, you could plunk down your entire advertising budget and receive absolutely no return on your investment. But, if you do it right, your advertising could continue to bring a nice return for years to come.

HOW DO I MAKE THE RIGHT ADVERTISING DECISIONS

In order to make good decisions concerning how to spend your advertising budget, you must first have a good understanding of the different types of advertising and promotion available and what can be expected to be achieved by each.

- You must understand which markets the different media's can reach.
- You must understand the demographics of the media's consumers.
- You must understand the buying habits of the consumers reached through the media.

WHAT OFFLINE ADVERTISING & PROMOTION MEDIA'S SHOULD BE CONSIDERED

The media's that people think of most often are television, radio, newspaper and magazine advertising. Of course, these are the big boys that big businesses use regularly.

Other methods of promotion include trade shows, press releases, direct sales, telemarketing, word of mouth, branding and billboard advertising.

CONSIDERING THE BIG MEDIA OUTLETS

The big boys of advertising media's generally cost big bucks. Given certain circumstances, the big media's can be bought for very little money.

Take for example, television, radio and newspapers cost big bucks during their prime times, but can be bought for pennies on the dollar during non-primetime hours.

Television primetime is between 7pm and 10pm. Radio primetime is between 7am and 6pm. With newspapers, the primetime is Wednesdays and Sundays.

If you intend to hit a media during prime time, get ready to drop some bucks. Primetime means that you will be able to hit more consumers during these times. So, in most cases, a primetime buy will enable you to reach more people with your advertising.

Non-primetime hours can still deliver a lot of eyes and ears to your message, and sometimes, these off-hours can be bought for a bargain basement price.

GETTING MILEAGE FROM EVENTS

Trade shows and press releases are more event-driven. The trade show is the event, while the press release generally exploits an event.

Trade shows are an exceptional tool when you deal directly with potential sellers of your products or services. Other shows are directed at the consumer, and those can be very valuable avenues for sales as well.

The press release is aimed towards gaining attention for a business by distributing newsworthy information about the business.

Sometimes the appearance of a business at a trade show or other show can provide the necessary angle for a press release. But most often, a successful press release will actually require more noteworthy information than the appearance of a business at a show.

Yet, even the most mundane of information could be spiced up to give the real air of importance necessary to get your press release read and printed.

The great thing about a press release is that might permit you

to get relatively inexpensive promotion on television, radio, newspapers and magazines; for far less than what it would cost you to buy advertising in those same outlets.

UTILIZING A SALES TEAM

Depending on what type of business you run and the consumers you are trying to reach, you might find direct sales and telemarketing to be very lucrative ways to drive sales to your business.

Both are very similar in nature. Direct sales can be very expensive, as it requires a great investment of time to accommodate. Telemarketing seeks to minimize the time expenditure, but it often leads to a smaller degree of respect and attention.

Depending on your product or service --- and always depending upon the people you employ to the task --- each method will be more suited to each business on an individual basis.

BRANDING YOUR BUSINESS

I grouped branding and billboard advertising together in my original list for a reason. I did this because billboard advertising serves most businesses best by helping to support the process of branding.

Branding is the process of establishing your business as the supplier of a certain product or service, or in emphasizing a certain USP (Unique Selling Proposition) as it pertains to your business.

If branding and USP seems to be a confusing concept, think about Wal-Mart and their tag line:

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