

# 10 Courageous Steps to Successful Advertising

INCREASE YOUR SALES PROFITABLY



## Cows and Advertising?

If you look up the word 'brand' in the dictionary, you will discover that a brand is, '*a mark or symbol to differentiate one's cattle from another's*'.

The key word in that definition, as it relates to your business is, 'differentiate', but it takes courage to be different.

In today's highly competitive world, developing and promoting your difference or brand is increasingly difficult.

A full 76% of all purchases are made at the first place we think of in a given category, that might be McDonald's for burgers, Campbell's for soup, etc. If you are to earn a position in the minds of your prospects and customers, you must firmly and consistently establish your difference.

Here is the good news. Marketing is a world of perceptions, perceptions that become reality in the minds of your prospects and customers. Every business can develop a unique selling proposition regardless how fragmented or competitive your category might be in your market.

Many marketers tend to copy their competitors rather than establishing their own unique identity. Regardless how big or how small your business is, there is always a unique position you can own and a share of mind you can capture with courageous advertising.

If you are ready to differentiate your business, consider these ten steps:

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by Wayne Ens

Are you willing to advertise courageously? If you are, you can net the same results that the most courageous leaders achieve in any field...you can win.

To understand how important it is to advertise courageously, you must first understand how advertising works.

Because only a small portion of your target market is in the market for what you are advertising today, you must make certain your advertising creates a brand identity for you with the 95% of the market that is not going to buy this week.

Your ads cost the same whether they influence 100% of the people who see or hear them or only influence that 5% of the people who are in the market for your product or service today.

In addition to selling today, your advertising investment must build your brand for tomorrow's customers if you do not want to waste a significant portion of your advertising investment. The dictionary definition of 'brand' is a mark or symbol used to *differentiate* one's cattle from another's.

Do you have the courage to differentiate your business? Most of us do not. Most of us do exactly what our competitors do, making our ads sound and look like everyone else's.

If you do have the courage to take your market by storm, here are 10 tips on how you can break away from the pack:

- 1- Tell the truth! How many times can you claim to have your 'Biggest Sale Ever' and have it believed? In the movie, *Crazy People*, Dudley Moore gets people in a Psychiatric Hospital to write ads for fun, and when the ads hit the media by mistake they work better than the professionally-produced ads. Their secret? They told the truth. In one ad, they said, "Volvo, boxy but safe." Do you have the courage to say you are "boxy"?
- 2- Don't play follow the leader! If everyone in your category has a full page in the yellow pages or local paper, don't try to out spend them to dominate the market. Find a media they do NOT dominate and you can have the strongest share of voice in that media at a fraction of the cost. And in advertising, share of voice does equal share of mind. There is an old expression; "Unless you are the lead dog, the view ain't too pretty!"
- 3- Be relevant, not ridiculous! Many times I've heard clients say, "I just want my advertising to stand out." Really? Then run screaming naked down Main Street...you'll stand out and you'll be noticed. Just don't expect me to buy a car or retirement savings plan from you.
- 4- Lead with your perceived negative! Here's one that really takes courage. Research has proven that if you admit an already known weakness, the consumer will give you the positive. Like Buckley's Cough Mixture...."it tastes awful, but it works!" Do you have the courage to admit something about you "tastes awful"?
- 5- Stick-to-it! Sound investments take time to pay off. Do you have the courage to stand by your advertising decisions, or are you going to change the message or the media if you don't get a return by Friday. When you started your business your goal was not to sell everyone in your first week. You had a long-term plan for consistent and sustainable growth.  
Do you have a long-term advertising investment strategy, or do you change direction just before your campaign starts to work?
- 6- Have the courage to admit you are not 'normal'. Being in business you do not absorb media the same way 'normal' people do. When you hear your ad or your competitors ad, you hang on every word to make sure there are no errors or to hear what your competitors are doing. You are not normal. Do not make media choices and advertising decisions based upon your personal media habits or choices. You are NOT selling to you.
- 7- Dare to be different! Most advertising is full of clichés...'conveniently located...super-savings.....huge selection...unbelievable...'  
The dictionary definition of cliché is *a hackneyed or over-used phrase which has literally become meaningless over time*. Why would you use language which has become meaningless to your customers and prospects? Don't say what your competitors are saying!
- 8- Check your ego at the door! Some of us want to have 'the biggest ad' for all the wrong reasons. A half page newspaper ad, for example, garners 80% of the readership of a full page, yet our egos encourage us to spend twice as much for the full page. In yellow pages, surveys reveal that sixty-five to seventy percent of yellow pages users will go to the small ad of someone they have heard of before they'll call on the large ad of someone they have never heard of. Make an investment to be 'heard of'.

- 9- Admit you are not the only genius in your company! Your front-line sales people know the kinds of information customers want and what concerns your prospects have. Pick their brains so you can craft advertising messages that deliver the information and answer the concerns your customers have.
  
- 10- Don't be afraid to seek a trusted advisor! Admittedly, some advertising sales people can NOT be trusted. But the great ones know that if they give you honest counsel, your investment in their media will grow as your business grows. Find someone whose advice and expertise you trust, then don't be afraid to let go of the reigns and capitalize on their knowledge.

*Need to make your advertising work harder for you?  
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