



Convince Me – You’re Advertising Better Be Persuasive



While I was doing some reading recently I happened upon some disturbing reports that confirm what I’ve noticed more now than ever before; the existence of ineffective advertising. For a number of reasons many of the things that we have been lead to believe in the Modernist Marketing of the last century, creative or effective advertising have fallen through the cracks in the maelstrom of marketing activity.

I see volumes of newspapers and magazines filled with beautifully decorated pages of process colour ads that have cost their advertisers a lot of money, I’ve seen spectacular websites that cost even more but most of these ads and sites are highly ineffective.

Ineffective advertising has been exposed and is beginning to show the cracks in the foundation. With the advent of services like Google analytics (to name just one) a company can now measure the effects of offsite ads (print) and on-line conversion.

No longer do we have to wonder as John Wannamaker professed “I know half of my advertising doesn’t work; Problem is I don’t know which half.”

In today’s world we can measure rather than speculate if our ads are working or pulling.

Marketers know more now than ever about their customers; what they do and why they do what they do.

For offline ads to be effective, and that includes outdoor ads as well, it is imperative that marketing, sales and creative professionals pay strict attention to getting it right.

Many ads created by ad agencies or creative departments are exactly that; creative but not persuasive.

Oh I understand the argument; imagine being faced with writing and creating a dozen ads or more every day for a host of businesses; many of whom are in competition with each other. Some of the ads get a healthy dose of thought and many should but they don’t because of time and deadline constraints. You find yourself stealing ideas from other ads, words and phrases even offers and specials you shouldn’t use, but you do. Now everyone begins to look and sound alike. Customers don’t seem to notice. They see everyone else with the same kind of stuff so they think they’re in the game. What they don’t get is that they are copying from others that don’t know what they’re doing either.

In 1961 Rosser Reeves wrote a book called “Reality in Advertising”. He was David Ogilvy’s brother-in-law; both are recognized as early advertising geniuses.

Rosser summed up the lack of persuasive ads this way:

“Let’s say mister customer that you have a million dollars tied up in your company and your advertising isn’t working and sales are going down. Everything depends on it. Your future depends on it, your family’s future depends on it, other people’s families depend on it.... Now, what do you want from me? Fine writing and fancy pictures? Or do you want to see the damned sales curve stop moving down and start moving up?”

In today’s world accountability is the benchmark that advertisers will be calling for. No longer will advertisers be complacent, they are demanding “results”.

What has become evident is a focus away from the strictly creative look of ads to the persuasiveness required to get the reader to commit to buying the product. You must convince advertisers to grasp that they need to get away from the me, me, me ads and start to think about first, how to “get out of line”® or how do I differentiate myself from the fray, and second offer a convincing story to persuade customers in terms that they like and are comfortable with.

You will need to show the relevance of the product or service to many segments and different buying types at every step along the buying process; and be able to convert one-time buyers into happy long term relationships.

Are you persuading or shouting at prospects?

In the last newsletter I spoke at length about headlines now I want you to think about copy and copywriting. Forget telling everyone about how great you are and who your employees are, focus on the product or service. The prospect wants to know that the product or service will do what they need and that they are about to make the right buying decision based on what you’ve told them. Remember that persuasive ads focus on the prospect not on the advertiser.