

Eason Communications LLC

425 Market St. 2200 • San Francisco, CA 94105 • 415-242-5244

www.easoncom.com

10 Ways to Make Ads Work

By Ellen Eason, Partner

Eason Communications LLC

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You've probably heard the old saying that half of all advertising doesn't work, but the trick is knowing which half does. If you knew that, you could cut your ad budget in half and shift money over to other marketing tools like public relations, events, direct marketing and so on.

Here are 10 advertising tips that will help you improve the return on your investment:

1. Slash your budget for ads that do little more than establish a vague "image," if simple branding is of little value in your industry. (That probably includes most business-to-business companies.) Ads should yield profits after costs.
2. Don't fall in love with photos. Too often a great photo mesmerizes marketers, even when it does not work well with the copy or advance a marketing objective.
3. Make your ads work as part of an integrated marketing campaign in which messages are used in all other marketing tools: sales materials, online activities, PR, direct mail, booth graphics. Often, customers need to see your core message dozens of times before it sinks in.
4. In deciding which publications in which to run your ads, make sure their circulation claims are authenticated by an independent agency like the Audit Bureau of Circulations or BPA. Some publishers are known to exaggerate their circulation.
5. Compare the monetary value of publications by dividing their page rate by their audited circulation. Then you'll know which gives the best bang for your bucks.
6. Check a publication's readership profile (usually in their online media kit) to see if their readers are the type of customer prospects you are trying to reach.
7. Carefully review a publication's "editorial mission" to determine what sort of topics are covered in its articles. Are these subjects that interest your customers?
8. Ask advertising representatives if their publication covers your company or if it publicizes your competition. Why support a publication that boosts your competitors?
9. If an ad rep says that the publication is not likely to write articles about your company, then it's probably not a good fit for advertising.
10. Don't burden your readers with too much copy about your service, product or company. An ad should say just enough to entice prospects to take action by calling you, visiting your web site or making a purchase.

For insights into creating ads that work, contact Ellen Eason at ellen@easoncom.com