



10 Biggest Advertising Mistakes

1. **Not being committed to the campaign** – Many business owners treat their advertising as an expense, not an investment. With the “expense” attitude, they will pull out of the advertising way too early and not see any return on their dollars. You will not start seeing results until the third month of the campaign. Whatever you do, don’t stop advertising after one or two months and say advertising doesn’t work. It works; you’re just not using it right.
2. **Not enough frequency** – It costs a lot of money to reach a lot of people, and it will waste a lot of money to not reach them enough times. Most business owners and marketing people realize you need at least a 3 frequency to penetrate the clutter. If you really want to get into the minds of your customer, you will need a 7-10 frequency, depending on the message of your ad and your product purchase cycle.
3. **Not enough reach** – So you have told your message over and over again to the same 1% of the market. Is it time to increase your reach and let more people know about your business? Just know that you will need to keep an eye on the frequency (see #2).
4. **Talking to the wrong people** – What is it you say to your salespeople? – “don’t take no from the person who can’t say yes”. Why aren’t you spending money talking to the people who are the key contacts for your product or service? We have met with too many clients who want to advertise on “their” favorite station. After we find out more about who their customer is, we have to ask them why they are on the sports talk station, when their key contact is a 35 – 45 year old female!
5. **Wrong message** – You are reaching the right amount of people, with enough frequency, but you are still not getting the results you were expecting? What are you saying? Are you telling *your* story? Many times you can take a commercial and insert the competitor and it would not make a difference. “great service, low prices, satisfaction guaranteed, friendly staff, personal attention, blah blah blah!” Tell your story, and give your customer an emotional benefit - not a list of features they have already heard from your competition.
6. **No consistency in the message** – How tempting is it for a business owner to want to put different phone numbers, or different offers in their ads to see which station or media works best? If more customers show up with the \$2.00 off coupon in their hand, but don’t ask for the “free” mystery prize we mentioned on the radio, than radio doesn’t work as well. From now on – all our dollars will go into print! Sound familiar? If you want the most bang for your buck - keep your message the same, and that includes the offer. Most of the time when you ask someone how they heard about you, they will tell you the last thing they saw or heard. That is why the sign out front gets so much credit; it is what people saw coming in the parking lot!



7. **No media mix** – I sat in on a meeting a few weeks ago, and another agency asked the station manager what their exclusive came was. My response would have been, “are you kidding me? There is no station that can say they have an exclusive came. There is too much fragmentation in the market. Mass media is history, welcome to the age of *personal* media.” Ipods, XM radio, internet streaming, HD radio, TiVo, are all giving your customers more choices on how and when they listen/watch their music or favorite show. This is why it is important to use more than one radio station or one TV station, or just the local paper. You will never build your brand and see effective response without a proper media mix.
8. **Spreading the dollars too thin** – This goes back to reach and frequency, but it happens so many times. A business owner wants to “stretch” the advertising dollars over the whole year. You will lose the impact of your message if you try and take a budget that gives you the right reach and frequency percentage for one quarter, and then spread it over the year or even six months. This has happened time and time again. Can you take that money and make it last all year? You are better to saturate the market and know your message is heard, than sprinkle an ad here and there and no one will have remembered what you said.
9. **Putting down the competition** – This is mainly for the politicians. Why are you spending so much money talking about your competition when the people don’t even know who you are? Did McDonalds and Wal-Mart get where they are today by putting down Burger King and Costco? They built their brands by creating an image of fast food and low prices. Notice we said image, because McDonalds isn’t always that fast, and Wal-Mart doesn’t always have the lowest price. If you want people to vote for you, shop at your store, use your service, buy your product, than tell them something other than “my competitor is unethical/mean/dirty/stupid/unqualified blah blah blah!” Nobody likes to be put down, especially in public. So why do you think it will work for you?
10. **Trying to do it all yourself** – You are right; no one knows your business better than you. If building homes is your specialty, than concentrate on building homes. We help a lot of business owners who are just tired of trying to do everything on their own. We consider our agency a partnership with the business owner/marketing director. We have the resources to develop the right media mix that reaches the most people with the optimum frequency. We also have the creative talent to put together the most convincing message to brand your product or service. Last but not least, we treat your dollars like they are ours. Unless you absolutely love advertising, and have a passion for it like we do – then find someone who does and watch your business grow!