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Susan Gunelius: Marketing Communications

Create Vocal Brand Advocates

7 steps to a successful advertising campaign.

By Susan Gunelius | August 12, 2009

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The ultimate goal of advertising is to make a sale. However, not every advertising investment is going to lead directly to sales. Sometimes an ad works not in driving an immediate sale but in building your small business brand or creating awareness of your products and services in consumers' minds. That's why calculating the return on your advertising [investments](#) can get tricky—so much of advertising success is impossible to track because it's highly subjective and occurs in people's minds, not through their wallets.

As you develop your advertising strategies and select the best investments to help you reach your goals, keep the seven steps of advertising success listed below in mind.

Step 1: Awareness

Whether you're launching a new product, expanding your business into a new geographic region, or extending your brand to a broader audience, the first step of advertising success is to generate awareness among consumers. Without awareness, no one will know you exist. Messages in awareness [ad campaigns](#) are typically focused on your brand, your capabilities, your differentiators and the benefits provided to consumers. Awareness advertising gets the business, product or service on the minds of consumers.

Step 2: Recognition

Once you've created awareness, you need to consistently repeat your key marketing messages to your target audience so that the audience recognizes and remembers you and connects it to a previous experience (such as your awareness advertising). The key to successful recognition advertising is to build on the original messages communicated in your awareness ads. Consistency is critical for developing recognition.

Step 3: Interest

Awareness and recognition ads should pique consumers' interest in the business, product or service being advertised. With that in mind, interest ads should help consumers learn more about the business, product or service by answering questions, introduce more niche benefits, and create a perceived need for the product by focusing copy on emotional triggers such as comfort, security and fear.

Step 4: Purchase

By the time consumers reach step four of the advertising success model, they understand the business, product or service enough to feel motivated to take action and make a purchase. Messages related to special promotions and ease of purchase concepts are needed in order to convert that interest into an actual purchase. Strong calls to action are paramount in the fourth step of the advertising success model.

Step 5: Repurchase

Once consumers try a product and are satisfied with their experiences with it, your advertising messages should focus on convincing them to buy it again. Special promotions for repeat customers, focused benefits language that speaks directly to your target audience and a focus on emotional triggers combined with strong calls to action in your ads will drive consumers to repurchase.

Step 6: Loyalty

The goal of every business is to create loyal customers who buy from you again and again, choose you over competitors and go out of their way to purchase your products even when they aren't the most convenient option. Loyalty advertising should focus on trust, building a relationship and meeting consumers' needs. The relationship has already been established, now you need loyalty advertising to reinforce the connection even more.

Step 7: Influencer

Your most loyal consumers are typically so satisfied with your products and services that they are motivated to talk about you and promote your

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business through word-of-mouth marketing. These days, that word-of-mouth marketing presents an incredible opportunity as more and more conversations happen online, giving them global exposure. Consumers are your most powerful brand advocates. Your advertising messages to the influencer audience should be appreciative, recognize its loyalty and encourage it to keep talking about you and your products and services.

Remember, successful advertising messages always speak to the specific target audience you're trying to motivate to action. Speak in a language your audience can relate to and hone in on the benefits, differentiators and emotional triggers that your audience needs to hear in order to move through the 7 Steps of Advertising Success.

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