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How To Write Effective and Compelling Ads That Make You Money

Seven Keys to Successful Powerline Advertising

“Eighty-nine percent of everything you see and hear will be forgotten within seventy-two hours.”

Barbara Dodd, Entrepreneurial Edge Magazine

Howard Brinton’s Starpower Annual Conference was recently held in San Francisco. One of Howard’s Starpower attendees dropped by our offices and was kind enough to update us on what was being discussed at the conference. At one point, he made a very revealing comment. He said, “All the Starpower agents are using technology. IVR systems, contact managers, web pages—at times it’s frightening trying to keep up. But what is really opening my eyes to the change in this business is how they combine their technology with unique and innovative marketing. With so many real estate markets being so lucrative, you have to be different if you want to stay ahead.”

What was revealing about his statement is that so many agents (and other businesses for that matter) continue to market by copying one another—the classic “me too” strategy. Well, this strategy will not differentiate you from your competition and, conversely, doesn’t separate you from the pack of “me too” agents.

In this newsletter, we are going to share with you some powerful techniques that we’ve learned from other agents and Peter Lowe’s seminars that

will enable you to write compelling and unique ads so you create a lucrative stream of leads.

It’s important to remember that advertising is a science. Agents are not born with instinctive advertising skills; they must be learned. Testing and measuring is key. You must adjust your advertising based upon its feedback.

When ads are written effectively, they will do exactly what they should; build your image, expose you to the marketplace, generate leads, and ultimately, make you money.

The Headline

The headline does one thing. It serves as a catalyst for the prospect to read the second line of your ad. That’s it. The key to accomplishing this task is the headline. It must answer the question, “What’s in it for me?”

Your headline should be clear and direct and include the demographic you’re targeting and a specific benefit to that demographic. For example, take a look at these two actual headlines;

1. How a First Time Homebuyer Can Obtain A Loan of \$100,000.
2. When should your family get a loan?

The first headline was more successful since it offered a clear benefit to a specific market. After all, the benefit is all the prospect cares about.

The Benefit

The benefit must be clear, specific and reiterated throughout the ad. Focus on the prospect, not you. A common mistake is mentioning your name or company name over and over. The prospect only cares about themselves or their business—not you or yours. The benefit is what answering this ad will do for the prospect.

Your benefit should try to incorporate an offer that is unique—remember that this offer just needs to be unique to the prospect, not to you.

The Phone Number

When you advertise with your Powerline 800 number, remember you must convey to the prospect that it’s FREE, RECORDED, 24 HOURS. Make these benefits BIG and **bold**. Place them at the top or center of the page. Studies show that prospects are more likely to call a business if it has an 800. Marketing pieces have a residual life, always check to make sure you are advertising the correct phone number.

Source digits are a vital part of your ad. Advertising is not an exact science. The only qualifier of a good ad versus a bad ad is it’s pulling power. The only way to know if the ad pulls is to measure its response. Source digits are the best advertising methodology to measure ad response. You can generate a report via

the web or fax-on-demand that will quantify your call activity by source digits. You should change the source not just on the medium but on the headline as well. For example, don't always run response ads with the same source digit. Each ad should be tested individually.

Know your Demographic

When you are looking for something, doesn't it help to know what it looks like? In advertising, it helps to have a clear definition of who your target market is. While you want don't want to exclude any prospects, you want to be as specific as possible with regard to your target market. This can be as simple as choosing the right publication to advertise in. You wouldn't advertise million dollar homes in a publication that would most likely be read by first-time homebuyers, would you?

To help with pinpointing a target market, Arch has provided direct response reports on disk as well as corresponding ads to go with them. There are investor reports, first time homebuyer reports, listing reports and more. If you do not have our response marketing reports, call your Arch representative to obtain one.

Call-to-Action

Every ad should have this. Tell your prospects how you want them to respond. "Call the 24 hour Property and Information Hotline Now" with your Powerline number is an excellent example of an effective call-to-action. If you don't prompt them to call, they won't.

Know Your Competition

You should know the offers other agents or lenders are advertising. This will give you an edge with creating the most effective ads. You may want to keep a file with clippings of different ads that have caught your eye for one reason or another and review them periodically. Take advantage of learning from the mistakes and successes of others.

White Space

There are a lot of things to put in your ads to make sure you get the attention you need, however, there are some things you

should leave out. Don't give the whole story away in the ad. Some things to leave out might include the price, address, number of bedrooms and bathrooms, or interest rate. This leaves the prospect a reason to call up your Powerline.

Direct Mail Success

Second only to a one-on-one sales presentation, direct mail is one the most effective method of marketing. It's also one of the most cost-effective—if done correctly.

Recalling that people forget 89 percent of what they see or hear, its not surprising that repetition is key for successful direct mail campaigns. Don Hobbs of Hobbs Herder Advertising recommends selecting anywhere from 500 to 3,000 homes in a particular area and mailing two to three pieces of mail every month.

The image you portray with your mail piece says just as much as the writing. Have a consistent theme. Don't go crazy with the fonts or colors. Although four-color is most attractive, it is possible to create a sophisticated black and white mail piece. Save some junk mail for a couple weeks and use it as a reference when designing your next piece.

Sending out mail is a good way to keep your prospects thinking of you, but don't forget about them if you send three pieces of mail and they still don't call. You can make your direct mail campaigns more powerful if you follow up with a personal phone call to every single person on your mailing list. Sounds like quite an undertaking, but it's definitely possible. If you don't have time to sit and dial the calls yourself, Voice Broadcast is the solution. Voice Broadcast is a technology that allows you to make one recording and broadcast it to all of the voice mails and answering machines in your phone list. So now you can make a personal phone call to your list before you send mail to ask them to look for it. Then after the mail, follow up with another Voice Broadcast. With Voice Broadcast, the chances of your mail being forgotten will be minimized considerably.

Any type of advertising campaign is a commitment. First of all, you have

committed a portion of your budget. Secondly, you have committed your image. You can only realistically evaluate an advertising campaign after about ninety days. Then follow through with your commitment by following up with more mail and phone calls. Check your campaign results again after about six months and a year. Checking results this late after the initial mail out is beneficial in planning where to spend future advertising dollars. And remember: ALWAYS ask your customers how they found out about you or what prompted their phone call.

Arch Marketing Support

If you feel you need some assistance with your marketing plan, give us a call. We can assist you with your approach to reaching your prospects to the design of your magazine ads or direct mail pieces. Unfortunately, we can't develop your entire plan or design your artwork from scratch, but we will consult you and do our best to guide you in the right direction. From you, our customers, we have learned what works and what doesn't in regard to advertising with Arch products. We'd love to be able to share this knowledge with you. And besides, it's free since you are an Arch customer. Call customer support to find out how you can get advertising consulting.

Are Your Ads Legal?

Under Regulation Z, the Truth In Lending Act, the Federal Trade Commission requires certain disclosures whenever some "trigger terms" are used. Some of these "terms" include percent of down payment and amount of payment. Real estate and mortgage brokers should review their advertising and Regulation Z to ensure that they are in compliance with the regulation. Contact the Federal Trade Commission for more information on Regulation Z. Real estate brokers should also check with local boards to verify that they are in compliance with their regulations as well.
