

Before you get started...

Creating an effective ad begins with establishing its objective. Should the ad sell the company image or a product? Is it expected to bring the reader to the point of purchase or just present an idea for consideration? For what audience is the product intended? Answering these questions before starting to design your ad is the first step to creating an effective ad.

No matter what your objective, every ad's success depends on its ability to communicate with the audience. Readers are busy and will only give your ad a glance before deciding whether to read it—or turn the page. Help readers immediately understand what you are advertising and what's in it for them.

Keep these suggestions in mind when putting together your ad's creative. They are the result of conducting studies for publishers on behalf of thousands of advertisers per year for over 60 years.

There are exceptions to each of the tips listed, and ads that fail to show how your product/service is of value to readers may not be successful—even if they incorporate these suggestions. Because each publication delivers a different audience, a message that is effective in one publication won't necessarily be effective in another.

Above all, use common sense and never lose track of the needs and interests of your audience.



Creating Effective Advertising

Some tips to consider before designing your next ad.

Readex Research is a nationally recognized, independent research company located just outside of St. Paul, Minnesota. The firm has been conducting survey research for publications since 1947. Today, Readex's clients represent a broad range of publications, including business-to-business, medical, association, agricultural, consumer special-interest, and custom publications. Readex conducts nearly 600 projects per year, contacting more than 250,000 respondents.



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2251 Tower Drive West, Stillwater, MN 55082
tel 651.439.1554 fax 651.439.1564

www.readexresearch.com



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To Create Effective Advertising...



UTILIZE YOUR AD READERSHIP SCORES

These scores represent a sample of reader opinion of your ad's effectiveness. The ultimate objective of any advertisement is to sell something. An ad cannot sell if it does not capture readers' attention or interest. By deciding to advertise in a particular publication, you've identified its readers as your potential customers. Take their advice in evaluating your ad's creative. Readership studies are not a popularity poll, they are an opinion poll relating directly to the success of your advertising.

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Present One Central Proposition

You put a lot of thought into your objectives, so make sure your ad supports them. Avoid extraneous ideas that dilute your message. Keep copy clean and clear. Eliminate trivia, such as company history, and resist bragging about your company with unsubstantiated claims.

Support the Basic Proposition with All Elements of the Ad

The headline and illustration should reinforce each other while establishing the ad's message. The reader should know at a glance what is being advertised. Sub-heads and copy must then relate to and support the headline and illustration.

Show the Product in Use

Demonstrate your product in a realistic environment and help readers visualize how they could use the product. Avoid static graphics that portray product categories, assortments, or lines unless you clearly state why a choice is offered.

Appeal to the Reader's Needs and Self-Interest

Get right to the point of the message. Clearly illustrate what the product or service will do for the reader so

interpretation is not necessary. Using a play on words or a testimonial from someone famous, yet unrelated to your industry, may insult the reader's intelligence and neglect to convey a sales message.

Sell the Merits of the Product/Service

You have only a few seconds to attract readers' attention, and they want to know what your product/service can do for them. It's your ad's job to make sure readers understand why they should buy your product/service.

Emphasize Benefits, Not Facts

Facts are static pieces of information that only describe what a product or service is, while benefits are dynamic interpretations of what the facts will do for the user. Telling readers your product is efficient wins only half the battle. Telling readers your product can help them slash their material costs by 45%—now that's getting your point across.

Design the Ad for Easy Reading

Avoid dark backgrounds, reverse type, and overprints on tint block. Choose typefaces and sizes on the basis of readability. Copy may be

long or short, but it must be organized and well laid out. "Artistic" is good only if it assures ease of reading. "Aesthetically unattractive" is not necessarily bad, provided it contributes to an ad's success.

Use Humor Carefully

Entertainment is not your primary objective and may not successfully make your sales points. Using humor can backfire, resulting in a negative perception of your company, such as immature, tasteless, or tacky. Remember: what is humorous to the advertiser may not be funny to the reader and may rob you of being taken seriously.

Repeat a Successful Ad... Drop a Low Scoring Ad

An effective ad does not wear out as fast as the advertiser thinks it does. Frequency reinforces basic selling propositions. It takes many runs for the reader to tire of an ad that is of real interest. Conversely, an uninteresting ad will not improve with repetition. Using Ad Readership results will help you stay with a winner.