

Most people will advertise something at sometime, such as what you are selling, or buying.

1. Headlines should speak directly to prospects, e.g., We can do this for you.
2. Copy must support your claims. When we read newspapers we expect information and that relevant to the benefit headline which attracts readers will be read.
3. It has been said that newspaper readers don't like advertisements. To the contrary they can like them by making your advertisements newsy. Explain what is new about your products, services or the way your business is run?
4. People buy only to get the benefits.
5. Benefits must be supported by product points.
6. Prospects usually want information so will read any amount of good copy.

Why should prospects read advertisements? What they look for include:

1. Problems solved.
2. Lifestyle improvements.
3. Efficiencies to be gained.
4. Increased monetary rewards.

The proposition must be important. The proposition must have value. It must express the personality of its advertisers and it must ask for an order.

Remember expert David Ogilvy's advice that "Headlines should appeal to the reader's self interest by promising benefits. Write headlines which will induce the reader to read the sub-heads and body. You cannot save souls in an empty church. Don't be afraid to write long copy if necessary."

Ensure that your advertisement has a close - Where can I buy it? How do I buy? Why should I buy from you?

What guarantees do you give, what credit cards do you take, what after sales service do you provide, what specialised advice, and what range do you have?

If you can, include a dramatic benefit or advantage in the close, e.g., free written assessment of your requirements.

Step back and assess your advertisement. It will cost a lot and may return a lot, so time spent on it is well spent. If you are busy use someone who isn't. If busy with something else on mind you can't draw up good adverts.

If the main benefit occurs half way through the advertisement, rearrange it so that the main benefit is in the headline or early.

Assess your illustrations

Are the pictures relevant to the headline benefit?

Assess your copy

Does the sales argument flow logically through the structure of the advertisement?

Does the layout of the advertisement conform to reading gravity?

Is the headline of such power that it will motivate prospects to read the copy?

Is the copy interesting enough to hold the prospect's attention?

Assess your close

Is the close sufficient to gain action from the prospect; either to request further information by coupon, or to visit the store, or to be pre-sold and buy?

Remember

The final judgement for every advertisement is the sales. It may be great art and inspired writing, but if it doesn't move people to buy it isn't good advertising.

Minimum requirements of a successful advert

1. It must be interesting enough to get read.
2. It must be persuasive enough to fulfil its selling function.
3. It must communicate with complete clarity - instantly.

Ten ways to strengthen your headline

1. Involve the reader. Address them directly.
2. Use a direct suggestion or question.
3. Pick and select precisely the right readers.
4. Use words that wake up drowsing minds.
5. Appeal to pride.
6. Use human interest.
7. Localise your headline if possible.
8. Be timely.
9. Distinguish your offer, if you can, from other or similar offers.
10. Seek positive contact with the mind of your prospect. Don't talk over their heads with clever language.

Write for easy reading

1. Start with a "bang" involving the reader.
2. Be enthusiastic. Use short words, sentences and paragraphs.
3. Be direct, writing in second person, present tense.
4. Be concrete, specific, honest - use the reader's vernacular.
5. Use visual words, lively words. Be friendly.
6. Be complete, but use only words that move the selling story forward.
7. End with a "bang" involving the reader.

Avoid the following because they turn readers away -

1. Avoid puns, play on words, cliches, foreign phrases.
2. Avoid overstatements that kill credibility.
3. Avoid long words where you can use short words.
4. Avoid formalism and stiffness.
5. Avoid triteness and platitudes.
6. Avoid egotistical statements.

Advertisements should:

1. Attract attention by pulling the eye.
2. Aid perception by being easily understood.
3. End with what to do to secure the product.

An all-verbal or all-text ad may get by without an illustration to attract attention, but most people note almost every illustration in a newspaper sufficiently to determine whether or not they want to read the text accompanying the art or picture.

When possible, use illustrations that show the products in use or glamourise the merchandise.

Poor communication is costly. Avoid these common errors:

1. Don't print type over grey or over tinted backgrounds.
2. Don't print body copy in reverse type (88% poor comprehension).
3. Don't superimpose or use reverse lettering on illustrations.
4. Don't print copy so small that prospects must strain to read it.
5. Don't print body copy in CAPITALS. IT SLOWS READING.
4. Don't use a lot of different fonts (type faces) and sizes. Three different fonts per item or page is the maximum. Eyes adjust to fonts. Too many changes slows this.

5. Don't separate a headline widely from its supporting copy, or an illustration from its caption.
6. Don't use fancy, elaborate borders and other devices that repel the eye rather than attract it.
9. Don't print columns of copy too wide like on this page. Newsletters set in two columns are better. 38% found it hard to read 60 or more words to a line, but don't make columns too narrow.
10. When possible, set text in justified columns like this, because justified makes reading much easier.
11. Sub-headings. Don't set long blocks of body copy in a solid mass. Break it up with descriptive sub-headings.

How to get value from radio:

1. Start with a strong, but credible statement.
2. Work to make it interesting.
3. Make it persuasive.
4. Make it communicate clearly.
5. Focus on the main selling area.
6. Clearly identify your business name.
7. End with what to do to secure the product.
8. Speak slowly and clearly, but not like stiffly or un-naturally.

How to get value from television:

1. Start with an eye-catching and appealing shot which interests potential buyers.
2. Correlate the audio and visual.
3. Demonstrate product points and benefits. People buy benefits.
4. Keep it simple. Don't lose or bore your audience.
5. Avoid fancy optical effects which are so good that they absorb the viewer at the expense of the message.
6. Don't assume that your potential customer knows the product or what it does. Clearly identify it and your company name throughout the advertisement, not just at the beginning or just at the end.
7. End with what to do to obtain the product.

Don't over-sell, and certainly don't under-sell

Readers expect products to be over-sold in advertisements, so if you under-sell yours you will be doing it and the readers seeking the optimum product for their purpose a disservice. However, never over-sell.

List the benefits in order of importance, uniqueness and in superiority compared with the competition.

How to maximise the reading of your advertisements, brochures & labels

Techniques to enhance readership and comprehension of written material have been researched and documented by many experts. The following information comes from research by Colin Wheildon in "Communicating, or Just Making Pretty Shapes", David Ogilvy in "Ogilvy on Advertising" and "The Confessions of an Advertising Man", Alastair Crompton in "The Craft of Copy Writing", Sir Ernest Gowers in "The Complete Plain Words" and from Gordon Dryden seminars and others, and from my 30 years experience in marketing. Other worthwhile reading includes "Odyssey" by John Sculley, "Iacocca" by Lee Iacocca, and "Getting into the Mail Order Business" by Julian Simon.

Correct layout is vital

Wheildon tested the readership of a page and found that the average starting point for the eye is the upper left hand corner of the page. The eye then moves to the bottom right hand corner scanning from left to right (reading gravity). The top left hand corner is the most vital location for an attention grabbing headline in editorial.

Comprehension tests showed that layouts conforming with the above principles gained a 67% Good Comprehension score whilst those which varied from this and had layouts which interrupted reading rhythm scored only 32% in Good Comprehension.

77% of readers said articles in which body type jumped over an illustration or cut-off heading, contrary to the natural flow of reading, annoyed them. The natural expectation was that once a barrier such as an illustration or cut-off was reached, the article would be continued at the head of the next leg of type.

Advertisements which conform to natural reading physiology are acceptable to readers; those that don't conform run the risk of being read less and not well comprehended.

Layout comprehension level tests

	% Good	% Fair	% Poor
Layout using reading gravity.	72	20	8
Layout disregarding reading gravity.	34	31	35

Typefaces (fonts) are important

This and the above are in Times New Roman.

Read Fonts.

Minimum requirements of a successful advertisement

1. It must be interesting enough to get read.
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3. It must communicate with utmost clarity - instantly, effortlessly.

Ten ways to strengthen your headline

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Sub-headings

Don't set long blocks of body copy in a solid mass. Break it up with descriptive sub-headings.

Proof read

Always check by re-reading it, or have your computer read what you have written before sending or using it.

You can highlight it and use Edit, Speech start reading. To end click Stop reading.