

RADIO COMMERCIALS

In 30 or 60 seconds, a good radio ad grabs attention, involves a listener, sounds believable, creates a mental picture, spins a story, calls for action, and manages to keep the product on center stage and the customer in the spotlight - all without sounding pushy, screamy, obnoxious, or boring.

Done perfectly, a radio ad is a one-on-one conversation with a single target prospect, written and produced so well that the prospect hears the introduction and says, in essence, "Ssshhh, be quiet, you guys, I need to hear this. It's talking to me."

Writing to be heard

Great writers tell you to write out loud when you create radio ads. Here's how:

- Use straightforward language that is written exactly how people talk.
- Write to the pace people talk, not to the pace at which they read.
- Include pauses. People need time to think, and the announcer needs time to breathe.
- Cut extra verbiage. You wouldn't say indeed, thus, moreover, or therefore if you were explaining something exciting to a friend, so don't do it in your radio script, either.
- Rewrite elaborately constructed sentences. Don't expect listeners to track through phrases linked together with who, which, and whereas. Instead of *'The new fashions, which just came off the Paris runways where they made international news, are due to arrive in Chicago tomorrow at noon'* try *'The newest Paris runway fashions arrive in Chicago tomorrow at noon. You're invited to a premiere of the world's leading looks.'*
- Tell listeners what to do next. Prepare them to take down your phone number, or at least repeat your number for them. Most important, help them remember your name so they can find you in the phone book or online. (Warning: Don't waste radio time telling people to look us up in the Yellow Pages, especially if your competitors overshadow your presence there.)

Radio do's and don'ts

Use the following checklist of ideas to employ and landmines to avoid:

- Do stick with a single theme in each ad.
- Do make a simple offer that calls for immediate action.
- Do generate leads by making no-risk offers for free estimates, free brochures, or free information.

- Do limit a 30-second ad to 60 or 70 words unless it includes an intentionally rapid-fire conversation.
- Do use radio as a complement to other advertising: Look for our coupon in Friday's paper.
- Do say your name three times.
- Don't expect the ad to make the sale; use it to make the contact.
- Don't advertise products with a bunch of disclaimers.
- Don't fast-talk the prospect.
- Don't use incomprehensible jingles.
- Don't use weak attempts at humour.
- Don't talk to yourself. We've been in business 25 years... We're excited over our new inventory... We're open until 10 p.m. Instead, turn every statement into a consumer benefit (Shop 'til 10 nightly!) if you want to hold listener attention - and you do!

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Plans? Who needs plans?

Advertising willy nilly without really thinking about your budget and the right places for you to advertise will surely blow your ad campaign quickly. Your plan is a must for your ad budget to be spent wisely and your potential customers to be turned into paying customers.

Run that ad just once

Your ad is so great, you only need it to appear once to make a huge splash. Whether it's a commercial or a print ad, just run it once and you'll instantly blow your ad campaign. Frequency is the key. When you know your target audience, you also know where you need to advertise. How often you run the ad makes a big difference as to how effective the ad will be.

Don't tell the customer to act now

Your **"Call to Action"** is completely optional if you want to turn your ad campaign into a disaster. You might as well tell customers, "Contact us if you want to or when you get around to it."

A compelling Call to Action is crucial to completing the sale. Tell customers to, **"Call Now!"** or **"Hurry! This offer expires soon."** If you're not telling the customers to act right away, they won't. They'll put your company in the back of their mind and then forget about you in a few minutes.

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