

GET NOTICED

in the Media:

Media Buying for the Beginner

By Polly Moter

As a small business owner your marketing budget may be slim-to-none and your ability to enlist professional marketing services including the development of an advertising plan through a media buyer – a person who is responsible for purchasing ad space and time – nonexistent. Those details are left on your shoulders.

While it may feel as if this is a huge undertaking, it is important to recognize that although you may not be able to hire a professional to do your media buying, the necessity for properly placed advertisements in all available media is imperative for the growth of your small business.

A basic understanding of the media buying process is necessary when positioning your small business and its products or services within your target market. The most important objective when buying media is to get noticed by a large proportion of your potential customers, while also being cost effective. Below are suggestions which will enable you to begin the process of media buying while watching your marketing dollars.

- In the beginning of your media buying process, it is important for you to **list and review the many and varied outlets available to you** – keeping your target market in mind. At this stage don't focus on staying within a budget. Be creative when thinking of outlets to reach your target market.
- Once you've established a feasible list of potential advertising outlets, **ask each for a media kit and study them.** The media kits will include not only ad specs and rates, but they also should include key demographic and psychographic information pertaining to their audiences that you can use to help

narrow down the list of advertising outlets that will best reach your potential customers.

- Now that you have selected which outlets will comprise your advertising plan, it is essential to **develop relationships with the advertising sales representatives** for those outlets. Ad reps can provide you with deals on ad rates and good placements. Be sure to ask about frequency discounts and discounts for paying early.
- This next step is where some media buying knowledge and experience might come in handy, but the beginner need not feel anxious. You will need to **gauge the frequency and exposure** you'll require to create an effective advertising plan. The simplest way to do so is to consider the shelf life of your chosen advertising outlets. While daily newspapers are often read and tossed during the same day (hence their name), magazines could sit around for months (consider those old issues of People you've read three dentist visits in a row). Thus, daily newspapers require higher frequencies in order to effectively saturate your target market while magazines require lower frequencies.
- By this point in the media buying process you should have begun thinking about a budget for your advertising plan. If not, now is a great time to start! Looking back through all of your notes, you will

Five Types of Media Outlets

Here is a review of five types of media outlets available for advertising purchase. Each of these five media has its advantages along with advertising disadvantages, accentuating the importance of varying your media saturation to include at least two different media and a variety of sources.

Newspapers provide advertisers with the speed of reaching their target market with ad packages that can meet almost every small business' marketing budget. However, newspapers have a short shelf life. Consider increasing the frequency of running ads in order to be most effective.

Magazines offer the advertiser long shelf life as some issues can be kept for years. Magazines are also a great way to reach a niche audience as there is a publication for just about any business, hobby, trade, sport, industry, etc. Magazines also provide the advertiser with versatility of ad layout and great production quality. Remember that magazines require a long lead time for advertisements to reach your target market so plan in advance.

Radio is an excellent value for reaching large segments of your target market quickly and easily with a variety of formats to match any market. Radio, too, has its advertising disadvantages including no shelf life, requiring higher frequencies for effectiveness. Radio does not provide the consumer with visuals so you will need expert wordsmithing in order to create an image of your product or service to entice the listener.

Internet advertising offers the advantage of providing a direct link to your website. You are also able to target your market by advertising on sites that your customers and potential customers frequent. The click-throughs can be tracked and analyzed. Cost varies widely so ask questions to determine value.

Television is thought to be the most effective outlet for reaching mass numbers of your target market quickly but, in many cases, it is the most expensive.

- Now it is time to buy! **Go for a plan that utilizes a combination of media that will deliver the right impact to your target market.** Remember, your most important objective is to reach the largest proportion of your target market as possible while staying within your budget.

Is it safe to say you are now a media buying expert? Perhaps not, but hopefully you have gained enough knowledge to take on the marketing giant of media buying with confidence. Although you have a small business with limited marketing dollars, you now have the tools to grow your company and increase profits through effective media buying.



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