

Television Advertising



Television advertising is one of the most under utilized marketing approaches in small business. The gross under utilization of television by small business is due in large part to the preconceived notion that television advertising is far too expensive. Very few startup businesses take the time to look into the variety of marketing possibilities available through television advertising.

We encourage the use of this medium as a means of expanding your disability consulting service after at least a two year structuring period. The only real precaution we recommend is that you have a solid understanding of the disability consulting process before you begin this type of aggressive advertising.

In this chapter, we will discuss some of the basic considerations in the purchasing of television advertising. Our goal is to make the development and use of television advertising as simple as possible. We hope that this discussion will supply at least some of the critical information necessary to save you advertising time and money.

Television Formats:

There are three types of television formats. These are network, local and cable. Network television is controlled by a central broadcasting network that manipulates the schedules of a number of affiliate stations around the country. Network television is best known for its outrageous advertising cost and is more suited for those who wish to reach a national audience.

As consultants, we are interested in local advertising. The local television market supplies programming to a set geographic area. With you at the center, a local station may cover an area approximately twenty-five to one hundred square miles. These local stations are ideal for introducing your service to the community.

The third television format is cable. Cable television can not only offer programming that is locally produced, but can also supply programs to a

multitude of stations via satellite. Cable T.V. is nothing less than a modern revolution in broadcasting that has profoundly changed the medium of television.

Many cable channels around the country will assist you in producing an ad for less than twenty five hundred dollars for a thirty second spot. As an advertiser, you will find cable to be one of the easiest, cheapest and most effective advertising sources available. Cable also offers public access channels that may be a free source of exposure for your firm.

Pre-production:

Pre-production is a term used to describe those actions that should be taken prior to the actual production of a television advertising piece. The most important pre-production concerns are theme development, script preparation, cost analysis and legal approval.

Theme:

Theme development is extremely important and should be one of your primary concerns from the outset of production. Unfortunately, you're going to be on your own in theme development because no one understands the basic concept of disability consulting like you do.

It is a good idea to discuss the disability consultant concept with the advertising department of the station you are using. But, remember that it is your responsibility to make the ad work. Rule one for theme development is to keep it simple! If a sixth grader can understand the basic concept of your advertisement, you're on the right track.

Here is a hypothetical description of a thirty second advertising theme:

This ad shows you sitting at a desk. Across the desk from you is a disabled person who at the beginning of the ad looks very worried. It appears that you and the person are having a conversation although nothing you and the client is saying can be heard. The only voice heard by the television audience is that of the announcer who is explaining your service and its exciting benefits. At the end of the ad, the client shakes your hand and appears relieved to have found

your service.

The above scenario represents a workable theme for a disability consultant T.V. ad. The advantages of this and similar advertising themes is that it can be done relatively cheaply because of the lack of fancy setup and preparation.

Script:

Advertising script is the next most important pre-production consideration. Using the above theme as the basis for your script, you must now determine what you would like to say to your audience. Take a few minutes to determine the primary goal of your advertisement. Narrow the primary goal as much as possible in order to keep things simple. Then begin to write your script.

Do not allow the television station to write your script for you! Again, only you have a true understanding of this business concept and of the goals of your ad campaign. It is wise to allow the station to make suggestions on your script but don't allow them full control of the message. Also, you would be wise not to allow any part of your script to be added or deleted without your consent. Approach script writing using the same rules as in writing standard print advertising.

Cost analysis:

Cost analysis is of critical importance and is best achieved by working with the television station advertising department. Don't be afraid to ask for the going rates for setting up and producing an advertisement based on your theme. Try to get a feel for using cheap approaches to ad development by asking the ad department how to get your desired effect for less money. Try not to allow your search for a bargain to compromise the impact or message of your advertisement.

Save money by staying clear of actors, special effects, two or more camera angles and other expensive extras. The station and the advertising department will be more than happy to discuss these cost factors with you prior to the production of your ad.

Approval:

In some states, you must have FCC approval to air your advertisement. The

purpose of this approval requirement is to make sure that the content of your ad is not beneath the standards of your community or in violation of any FCC rules. The station's advertising department will explain this procedure to you prior to producing your ad. The approval is usually not a problem and is most often handled by the producing station.

Ad Production:

As a disability consultant, you must focus your attention on the use of local and cable television as your primary advertising vehicles. These two media sources will allow you to produce ads designed specifically for broadcasting in your community. Ad production involves a number of factors and events that can greatly affect the cost of the finished product. To be an effective business manager you must be aware of all factors that can affect your overall advertising budget. After all, you are footing the bill!

The following is a list of ad production factors that can greatly affect the final cost of your commercial advertising product:

- Tape vs. Film
- Camera Angles
- Set
- Shooting Time + Rehearsal
- Shooting Location
- Casting
- Changes
- Editing

We strongly recommend that you produce your ad on video because it allows you to more readily control your advertising cost and content. There are also multiple free platforms such as youtube that enable you to present your ad to a large and diverse audience. With video tape, you can inexpensively reproduce, edit or upgrade an ad as you wish. Try producing your own video ads using free video production software such as "Imovies for Mac", "Windows Movie Maker", "Lightworks", "Avidemux", "VSDC Editor", and many more freely available online.

Camera Angles:

You have the option of producing as complex a television commercial as you

can afford. One way to increase cost is to increase the number of camera angles. A camera angle simply refers to the direction in which the scene is being shot. Multiple camera angles can greatly increase the complexity and dynamic effect of your ad, but almost always costs more.

There should be some savings if your advertisement is done on video tape. This will only hold true if you are using no more than two cameras. The cheapest approach to the production of an ad is through the use of only one camera. The next cheapest is a single studio camera and a camcorder combination. Two or more cameras will normally cost slightly more money and may require a greater number of studio personnel. The rule of thumb is that the more equipment or personnel needed to produce your commercial, the more the commercial will cost.

Shooting Time:

Shooting time refers to the amount of time spent actually shooting your commercial. Shooting time can be further subdivided into a number of other contributing factors. These other contributing elements include setup and rehearsal time. Setup refers to the act of putting together the stage or set upon which the ad is to be shot. The set itself may have to be built, which will also add to your cost. Most stations have a number of standard sets that can be used. These include the ordinary office set, the beach set and a few other commonly used backgrounds.

Imagine for a moment that you have created a dynamic theme for your commercial. You just know that your idea will bring the customers in by the hundreds. You sit down at your first advertising production meeting and explain your concept to the television marketing department. They like it! A week or so later you get a call from the station to come in for your second ad pre-production meeting. At this meeting they are prepared to tell you what it will cost to produce your ad. You're in shock! The price they're asking could make Donald Trump blush. What do you do next?

The above scenario is not so uncommon, but should not keep you from producing a down sized version of your winning commercial. Take the time to ask the marketing department for a complete breakdown of the cost analysis for your commercial. This breakdown will give you some idea of the areas where savings might be made.

Go through each item separately and ask how you might get a similar result for

less money. You will be surprised to learn that you can get a well done similar commercial for as little as half the originally determined price.

Shooting Location:

Shooting location refers to the actual location where the commercial is shot. Generally, if your commercial requires both an indoor and outdoor shooting, you're going to pay much more for your product.

Shooting a commercial on location (outside the studio) involves time, equipment, personnel, setup and take down. Usually more direction and rehearsal time is required for outdoor shootings. Try to avoid themes that require outside stages to produce your ad.

There are very few commercial situations for a disability consultant that would require an outside scene, although those of you with impressive looking offices may want to show it in a single shot. However, building shoots generally do not sell services. You could waste a lot of money showing a building and not produce a single sale because of it. Try to keep your themes as simple and to the point as possible.

Casting:

Casting refers to the type and number of professionals used in a given commercial production. If your theme requires an actor and an announcer, you will pay extra for their expertise. If you decide to use voiceovers, consider using an announcer and hold off on the actors. If you recall our theme suggestion, you will remember that we used an announcer, but played the additional non-speaking roles ourselves. Bring in a friend or perhaps even a real client to play a role, but don't use actors unless you simply can't avoid it.

Changes:

Whenever a person is producing something that means a lot to him, there is a tendency to never be satisfied. This tendency toward last minute changes will also occur when producing your television ad. You can save yourself money in the long run by going with a gut feeling and changing something that just doesn't look right. After all, the idea behind doing a commercial is to achieve a

desired effect. If changes must be made, make them before the final edit.

Editing:

Never try edit a television commercial via the script alone. You cannot determine the actual effect of your ad until you have actually seen it played out on screen. By using video tape, it is possible for you to see each segment of your ad as it is being produced. This is extremely important if you are trying to focus on the root of your advertising theme.

Always ask to review each segment both singularly and in conjunction with previous segments. The order and flow of your commercial must be smooth and the message clear in order to capture the attention of your audience.

As you can see, television production of commercials is not easy. It takes a high level of personal involvement in order to get things right. Since this type of advertising is a major investment, take the time to control its creation without hindering or interfering with the work of the station experts.

Work as a team with the advertising department and you will succeed at producing excellent and inexpensive television advertising. In many areas of the country, you will be able to produce effective thirty to sixty second T.V. commercials for less than five thousand dollars. Don't be afraid to look seriously at television advertising as a means of boosting your service to new levels.

SUMMATION

Television advertising has three basic source formats. These three formats are:

Network Television.

Local Television.

Cable Television.

As a disability consultant, you should use only local or cable television as the production sources and distributors of your ad.

Pre-Production:

Pre-Production is a term used to describe those actions which should be taken

prior to the actual production of a television advertisement. The most important pre-production concerns are theme development, script preparation, cost analysis and legal approval.

Ad production:

The following is a list of ad production factors that can greatly affect the final cost of your commercial venture. Each of these cost generating factors must be considered as you develop your television ad campaign:

Tape vs. Film

Camera Angles

Set

Shooting Time + Rehearsal

Shooting Location

Casting

Changes

Editing