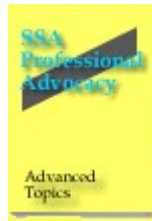


How to Write Competitive Ads



In order to successfully compete in today's advocate environment, it's wise to know a little about what has been occurring in the advocate market over the last three years. One of the more threatening recent events in advocate marketing has been the proliferation of advocate trainers. Logic tells us that the more advocate trainers there are, the more advocates they will produce. By producing more advocates, they're simultaneously increasing advocate competition.

We have just completed a study of advocate trainers with surprising results. To our amazement, these inexperienced trainers were having very little effect on the advocacy industry. Although there has been an increase in the number of advocate trainers over the last 3 years, these trainers have been largely ineffective at producing successful advocates. Thankfully, the ineffective materials offered by these inexperienced trainers has allowed the rest of us to avoid advocate market saturation.

The Big Boys!

The news concerning advocate saturation is not all good! Although advocate saturation has not yet occurred, advocate advertisement saturation is occurring thanks to large attorney representative firms like Bender & Bender. These national firms use mass media advertising in an attempt to siphon off the best of the Social Security cases nationwide.

Don't worry; we have a solution. In this report, I'm going to show you how to counter a competitor's advertisement, whether you have a large or small advocate firm. As you review this material, you'll come to understand many of the weaknesses of the large attorney-based firms. Once you understand their weaknesses, you'll find it a good deal easier to compete without anxiety.

Counter Advertisement:

A counter ad uses the ad language of a competitor to improve your own ad language. Think of a counter ad as an ad sitting right next to your competitor's ad in the exact same advertising source. It's obvious; you're both after the same customers. A potential customer will see both ads. Which ad will the customer choose to review first? It's your job to create an ad that entices a customer to respond appropriately. The concept of counter advertisement can help you to create ads that entice customers in this manner.

Competitors use various techniques to induce sales. Some of the most common ad inducements are fear, greed, prestige and/or beauty. If a competitor uses a common ad motivator like fear, our "Competiphase" approach will help you to create an effective counter ad. I'll use the motivator fear to further explain how counter ads are created.

Fear Based Advertising:

At that time, the only other practicing disability advocates were your neighborhood attorneys. Most local attorneys limited their practices and were not particularly good at advertising their services. Instead of emphasizing their individual strengths, these local attorneys would almost always solicit customers based on fear. Like everything else, fear based advertising does have its place. However, with disability advocacy, I would use the fear approach sparingly.

Example of a Fear Based Ad:

The majority of those who apply for Social Security disability benefits without proper representation are denied benefits. We at the law firm of (Whoever and Whoever) will help you win your disability benefits...

Fear based advertising in disability advocacy has always been popular but rarely effective. You can counter a fear-based ad by simply avoiding all negative ad statements that conjure feelings of fear or anxiety in the mind of the customer.

Example of a Counter Fear Ad:

Acquire your hard earned Social Security disability cash benefits in 90-days or less. We handle everything while you concentrate on healing. You pay

absolutely nothing until you win and collect your benefits.

Notice that the counter ad did not mention how difficult it is to acquire benefits. The counter ad also did not use language that would cause a client to fear Social Security. The emphasis in the counter ad was placed on those positive benefits that a person can derive from using your service.

Benefits of Non-attorney Representation:

Knowing a few of the benefits of being represented by a non-attorney advocate will also help you to produce better quality ads. There are a number of positive benefits for a client who uses a non-attorney disability advocate. These benefits should be emphasized in a typical advocate ad. These benefits include but are not limited to:

- a) Ease of service
- b) Convenience of service
- c) The advocate's knowledge base
- d) Speed of service
- e) Higher likelihood of winning
- f) Reduced costs
- g) No hidden fees
- h) The advocate is a local source
- i) The advocate is hands-on and proactive

Each of the above advantages can be used to counter a competitor's ad presentation. In order to effectively use these advantages, you must first understand them in relation to your competitors.

Ease of service

Ease of service is an important benefit when using a non-attorney advocate. The phrase and concept 'ease of service' essentially means that your service is

easy for a customer to utilize. The easier your service is to access, the more customers it will attract. Example ad language: “You provide the basic information, and we’ll do the rest.” This ad benefit statement places the potential customer’s mind at ease. The customer feels he can depend on you completely to process his disability case. The customer is encouraged to relax and focus on other serious issues in his life.

Convenience of service

Only advocates using our techniques create internal operational procedures that provide convenience to the customer. You should allude to these operational advantages in your ads. Recall our use of the Information packet, the Guidance packet and other operational procedures. These and many other techniques are used to bring both convenience and efficiency to the disability process. Emphasize the convenience of your service in your ads and make it easy for a customer to sign up. A customer should be able to sign up by phone, mail or on the Internet. Providing a customer with convenience will significantly improve your sign up rate.

Example of ad convenience language:

A single phone call from you can start the Social Security disability application process without cost or obligation.

The advocate’s knowledge base

Yes, advocates trained by Disability Associates do possess knowledge that other advocates, especially attorneys, do not have. Do not hesitate to emphasize your knowledge and experience in this field or related fields. Don’t assume that an attorney knows more about the disability process than you do just because that person is an attorney. Experience has shown that most local attorneys are not that knowledgeable about the disability claims process. As mentioned in our training materials, most attorneys still use the old CFR approach to representation, which is cumbersome and unreliable.

Example Knowledge Ad:

Our unique knowledge of the Social Security disability process will enable you to collect a higher benefit amount in less time.

Speed of service:

Our research has shown that how quickly a person receives benefits is second only in importance to the actual benefit amount a person receives. Possessing the knowledge and ability to expedite cases means nothing if the customer is unaware of your ability. You should share this speedier case processing benefit with your customers in your ad language.

Example of Speed Ad:

We can acquire your Social Security disability cash benefits in 90 days or less! Don't wait a year or more to receive your hard earned disability benefits. Contact "Your Advocacy Service" at 555-555-5555 and begin the Social Security disability application process today.

Keep in mind that a speed ad like the one above does not promise a decision in ninety days. It simply puts forth a possible outcome that will attract many more customers to your service. Although a case may take longer than ninety days to complete, you can still maintain ninety days as your company's processing goal. If you're truthful with your clients and state clearly that a case can take longer than ninety days, you'll maintain the trust of your clients regardless of how long it takes to complete the case.

Higher likelihood of winning

Advocates using our techniques win more disability cases. Take advantage of this fact by indicating your firm's winning focus in your ads. Our research has shown that non-attorney disability advocates win just as many cases as attorneys. The good news is that non-attorneys tend to win their cases faster and at a slightly reduced price. You should emphasize these advantages in your advertisements. This is especially true if you're competing directly with an attorney.

Example of a counter win ad:

Using our service will improve your chances of winning your cash benefits by up to 40%. Enjoy a higher cash benefit at a reduced price by using an experienced non-attorney representative. For details, visit

Reduced costs and no hidden fees

When a client is represented by an attorney he is usually charged 25% of back benefits upon the successful completion of the case. What is not widely known is that many attorneys pad their bills with miscellaneous fees. These hidden fees can cost a client hundreds of dollars and are usually extracted at the end of the case. You can compete by using this fee issue in an ad in the following manner:

Example Reduced Costs Ad:

Save time and money with “My Advocacy Service.” Unlike most attorneys, “My Advocacy Service” does not charge hidden fees or unforeseen out-of-pocket expenses. Your case is processed by our specially trained non-attorney disability advocates who will assist you in every step of the process.

The advocate is a local source

Being a local practitioner of disability advocacy can be an advantage. You should try to use your local status by emphasizing this fact in your ads. Our research shows that most applicants prefer to be represented by a local advocacy service. Customers actually prefer non-attorneys over attorneys when it comes to being represented. There are many reasons for this preference, which we will discuss later in a different venue. For now, by pointing out that you are local, you dilute the effectiveness of ads placed by out-of-state firms.

Example Local Counter Ad:

"My Advocacy Business" is a family owned and operated disability advocacy service located right here in (your town). We have been serving (your town's) disabled community for the past few years. Don't place the outcome of your disability case in the hands of a firm outside you're your community. Call 555-555-5555 and allow our local experienced advocates to assist you in acquiring your Social Security disability benefits.

The above ad takes the simple fact that you're a local firm and turns it into a positive for you and a negative for the large out-of-state firm.

Hands-on and proactive:

The most common complaint from those using attorney representation is the amount of time it takes for an attorney to complete a case. Attorneys have slow case processing because of the methods they use in case representation. Most attorneys use a passive approach to case development. This passive approach decreases the amount of work an attorney has to perform, but increases the amount of time it takes to complete the case.

For example, in the case development phase, an attorney will request medical documentation. However, a follow-up to the document request may not occur for months. The attorney doesn't mind waiting because the longer a case takes to complete, the higher the potential fee. You can use this operational characteristic against attorneys in your ads.

Hands-on and Proactive Ad:

"My Advocate Business" is a hands-on, proactive advocacy service that will complete your disability case months before the competition. Unlike attorneys, we do not sit on or delay cases in order to inflate our fees. We go right to the heart of the impairment issue, winning your disability benefits in record time.

Locals Becoming National

Over the past few years, we have witnessed a tremendous increase in the amount of advertising from attorney representatives offering Social Security disability services nationwide. The largest of these firms, Bender & Bender, was previously mentioned in this report. Here is what you need to understand when competing against these large firms:

1. Know their weaknesses.
2. Know the common complaints against them.
3. Use their national status against them.
4. Offer your service as a local alternative.

Weaknesses of Out-of-State Firms:

Large firms that offer advocacy services nationwide have a number of weaknesses. These weaknesses include logistical difficulties, common communication breakdowns, unprofessional case screening, timeline and case execution issues. Logistical problems always arise when trying to represent

large numbers of people from outside of your home state.

Logistical problems include but are not limited to a lack of knowledge about the distinctive internal processes of a particular SSA office. Another problem might be the lack of familiarity with local SSA staff. If you cannot reach a Social Security office without state-to-state travel, this can make it difficult to meet with disability decision makers. All of these are weaknesses that you can exploit!

Mass representation procedures used by large firms require the use of non-professional call center-based case screening. This approach not only decreases the assessment value of each case, it may also weaken case development. These non-professional case assessment procedures change the focus of a case from specific case issues to generalizations, causing more negative case decisions. Mass representational procedures also negatively affect the case processing timeline by delaying or interfering with the execution of Social Security's internal procedures.

Common Complaints:

Yes, large attorney based disability advocate firms do get complaints and plenty of them. If you know your competitor's complaints, you know their weaknesses. The following are the six most common complaints from clients that have used large out-of-state firms:

1. Fee disputes.
2. Additional and/or unforeseen fees.
3. Slowness in execution of case responsibilities.
4. Cases taking a year or more to complete.
5. No communication with clients.
6. Poor communication with Social Security.

Each of these shortcomings can be used in an ad to counter the massive spending advantage of these large firms. The most effective of these complaints is the one-year or more it can take to complete a case. The other most important weakness is the question of fees. If you can make a customer think twice about using a firm because of time or fee concerns, you have a good chance of acquiring the case over the competition.

Use their National Status Against Them:

Our research has shown that those applying for Social Security disability benefits prefer to be represented locally. Local representation allows for better communication between all parties involved in the case. Local representation also tends to be faster and you can expect to win more cases than those represented by out-of state advocates. Clients also tend to trust local advocates more and are quicker to sign up with a local service. It is always a good idea to offer your service as a safe alternative to a fancy national service.