

# SMART MARKETING

## What Type of Advertising Will Get You the Most Response?

This is the kind of question I'm asked most often. This question is often followed by similar questions: Which ONE medium should you use? Where should you spend your marketing dollars?

The answer almost always disappoints, because the answer is almost always "That depends."

### CHECK THE LEADERS

Sometimes the best way to determine what works best for your business is to check what works best for the market leader in your category. If it works for them, it should work for you. That's not always a fair comparison, however, if you have a single small grocery store and the market leader is a giant chain of 100 or more grocery stores.

In fact, if you can't spend the same or more as the market leaders, your advertising may actually *help* the market leaders. I've seen it happen many times.

Our firm has the market leader in many categories in the five-county area around Youngstown. When smaller competitors advertise, it tends to remind people of the category — legal services, shoes, motorcycles, etc. Then, they go to our clients' stores.

For example, somebody watching a commercial for legal services is convinced they should see a lawyer. Instead of calling the firm in the commercial they're watching, they often call my client. That's a tough situation to battle if you're smaller — and if you're larger, it's tough to maintain the level of advertising you need to stay on top.

### MAXIMIZE THE MESSAGE

The best way to handle this is to make sure you have the right message and a message that stands out. You may already be using the most effective media for your type of business. But that's not enough if your message doesn't stand out or if it's the wrong message.

For example, smaller and new advertisers tend to try to cram many messages into a 30-second TV spot or a 6 by 9-inch newspaper ad. They offer this service and that service. They give the audience ten reasons why they should call their business. They ask consumers to check out specials A, B, C and D.



George Farris

The best way to compete is to have the right message going to the right people. And the right message *never* contains everything but the kitchen sink. Instead, the right message is usually ONE PER AD. One message, one theme, one offer, one valuable benefit and one specific call to action.

### FIND THE RIGHT MESSAGE

Why do consumers come to a given type of business? Don't assume you know the answer. Ask, survey, question, probe. What would make them come to your specific location? Again, don't assume: ask.

Even market leaders miss the right message sometimes. They continue to dominate because of name recognition and the sheer volume of their advertising — so they're lulled into thinking their message is the right message.

When market leaders miss the message, you have a clear opening to be competitive and gain some business. Don't miss it.

The right message is more important than tons of advertising — no matter which type of advertising you do.

*Stay tuned and stay smart.*

Questions, comments? Write George Farris at [consult@farrismarketing.com](mailto:consult@farrismarketing.com)

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