



How to make ads that pull

The more impressive the benefit, the greater the results in advertising.

Name the benefit. Be specific about it.

The more specific advertisements are the more successful ones. This holds true regardless of the type of publication, audience or product. As an example, an advertisement headlined “Low-cost steam – shop assembled and ready to use” pulled 100 percent more readership than “Steam That Satisfies.”

The product is the big benefit. Tell me what it will do.

The more successful advertisements lay greater emphasis on the product. This is demonstrated by the advertisement headlined “How to get good pictures for sure.” In this advertisement was a large illustration of the camera. It received nearly twice as many inquiries as the one with the same headline that pictured an attractive man and woman gazingly admiringly at the very small camera in their hands.

Make it easy for consumers to visualize the benefit. Keep your advertisements simple.

In one respect or another, simpler advertisements are consistently more successful. Those advertisements that have a single rather than multiple focus come out ahead.

Emphasize the benefit as much as possible. Use large space.

In the larger space you can tell readers more about what the product can do for them. You can use a larger illustration to show more clearly what the product is and how it works. Of a group of advertisements almost identical except for size, the larger ones will almost always do as well or better than the smaller versions.

Don't obscure the benefit. The cute, the catchy or the tricky may not work.

Being cute, catchy or tricky is subordinate to conveying consumer benefits. This does not mean that the catchy picture or phrase should summarily be rejected — on the contrary, reader-stopping headlines and tricky illustrations have been outstandingly successful.

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Get personal about the benefit, but don't get personal without a purpose.

It is generally accepted that formal, impersonal and passive phraseology is undesirable for mass advertising. Much depends upon whether the conversational feeling is appropriate for the advertising being written. If it is, then informality is desirable — certainly the case for much consumer print advertisements and all radio advertising.

The benefit is not always rational.

In addition to the tangible benefits from using the product, there may be intangible benefits. This is especially so for many products where the physical differences between it and its competitor are not that great. The taste of two colas may be preferred by similar proportions of the population, but the meaning that Pepsi and Coke have to their loyal users varies significantly. How an ad conveys and reinforces that meaning, through its words and visuals, can be as important as some product's tangible benefits.

Advertising Pitfalls

Perhaps the greatest obstacle to good advertising is excess. Ads can end up so crammed with ideas and features that they appear dense and uninviting. If over-designed, they can be more artistic than motivational, obscuring the sales message. If over-written, they can become too subtle or cute. Certainly, some of the best ads ever created are clever and visually arresting, but good ads must also sell.

Similarly, selling points may over-promise. Use "largest," "best," and other superlatives only if you can back them up. Avoid any claim that could be construed as deceptive.

In addition, make sure the overall tone of your ad is upbeat and appealing. Emphasize the solutions you provide, not the problems you address.

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