



53 Designing adverts that sell

Why is this important?

Many people spend pounds on unplanned and poorly measured advertising and then find that they do not get the return they anticipated. Many are persuaded by the press to take late space or advertise in the latest feature and then find – because they rushed the design of their advert and made a spur of the moment decision – that it did not generate a result. This can be very frustrating and can result in a loss of faith in advertising as a method of attracting new customers. Many business owners make excuses for their lack of results by saying that they simply use advertising to keep their name out there. Advertising is very expensive if you do not get a result from it. There are many businesses generating thousands of pounds from advertising that works. They are the ones which have learnt how to design adverts that sell. They continually monitor and measure the return they get, fine tuning as they go. This is important if you want to get the best return from your advertising spend.

Your challenge

Your challenge will be to make sure that any advertising that you do is targeted correctly. Any advert that you design will need to be designed to attract the right people. It will also need to appear in the right publication, which is one that is read by the highest number of your target prospects. You need to find out what the people you want to reach read, and where they go to research information about suppliers of the product or service that you are selling.

For each publication you will need to consider

- Who reads it?
- Are the readers the people you want to reach?
- What are the readership or circulation figures?
- What geographical region does it cover?
- What are the planned features and how will they attract attention to your advert?
- Are there any specific sections that may naturally draw attention to your advertisement?
- Who else is advertising – what kind of responses and reactions did they get from their advert (people are often more than happy to share their experiences)?

How to create an advert that sells – the AIDCA formula

Whenever you create an advertisement there are five essential key elements that follow the way a person psychologically responds to advertising both logically and emotionally. If you follow this formula when designing your advertisement it will give you the best chance of motivating your reader to respond.

The formula is easy to remember and easy to apply.

- **A** – It must attract **Attention** with the headline and the picture.
- **I** – It must keep the **Interest** by making it easy to read and understand.
- **D** – It must build **Desire** with the value, offers and benefits.
- **C** – It must **Convince** with a special offer, guarantee or testimonial.
- **A** – It must ask for **Action** by telling the reader how to respond and provide contact details.

These rules apply to any form of advertising that you do.

YOUR ADVERT DESIGN – SPECIAL RESPONSE CHECKLIST

- ▶ Who are you targeting? – describe your buyer.
- ▶ Decide what you want to sell to this buyer through this advert.
- ▶ Imagine that you are this buyer looking for information about this product or service – what would be the picture they have in their head? What information would they need?
- ▶ Choose an image that shows the buyer using or enjoying the product or service. Make it something that they can easily relate to.
- ▶ Think about what would get that reader's attention in the headline. This might be a special benefit, a new special offer, a short positive description of the product, a question that the target reader has to answer 'yes' to. You can also provoke curiosity by promising answers to questions they may have.

Sample headlines

Let's imagine I want to attract new members to a golf and country club here are some examples of headlines that could attract the attention of the target audience.

- Enjoy a challenging round of golf at the exclusive...
- The perfect round of golf.
- Calling all golfers...

- Do you want to spend more time playing golf?
- Three ways to improve your golf swing immediately.
- Do you want a *free* round of golf?
- Good news: golf club membership at special rates.

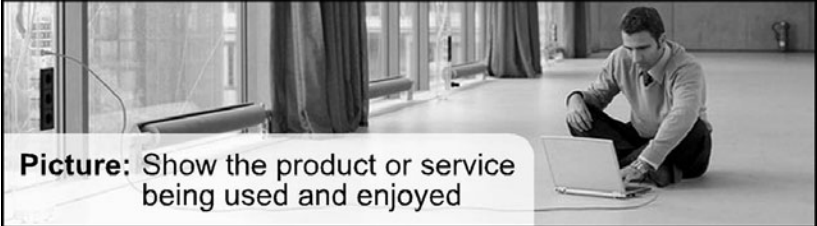
Consider the layout of the advert and how you can make it easy to read and follow.

Write a list of the benefits that this reader would get from the product of service. Write in a simple, straightforward way as if you were speaking to the reader telling them all about what is in it for them.

Decide what you are going to use to convince the reader and prompt a direct response from your advert. Give a special offer or guarantee.

What action do you want your reader to take? Tell them to call you, book a free consultation, or visit your showroom. Make sure that you have put all the correct contact details in your advertisement.

Sample advert layout

Advert Sample Structure	
 Picture: Show the product or service being used and enjoyed	
Headline:	Attract the attention of the target audience
Sub-headline:	Link the headline to the body copy and promise value
Body copy:	Communicate your unique selling proposition and sell customer outcomes
	Bullet points for strong emphasis
	• • • • •
Convince:	Include a special offer, guarantee or customer testimonial
Action:	Ask customers to respond, tell them how and where to contact you

How to use this information

Take some of your existing advertising and run it through the AIDCA formula test. Step into your readers' shoes and see your offer through their eyes. Decide what could be improved and test it out. Monitor the results you get. Stop all advertising that is not bringing you a return. Make sure that you are targeting the right people through the right publications and if you have been guilty of making last minute decisions and placing haphazard adverts, stop it now. Make a commitment to design adverts that give you and your business the best possible chance of a positive return.

Think AIDCA and get more response