

The YEBDC Small Business Information Column

by Sue Gingerich, Business Advisor

"A.I.D.A Attracting Customers"

Attracting customers can be difficult for small businesses. With all the advertising from the many businesses already out there, it can be difficult to catch the consumer's eye. So how can a small business, on a limited budget, be effective with its advertising?

First of all, don't spend money placing ads where your customers don't look. In order to do this, it is imperative that you know your customers. Who are they, what are their characteristics? What characteristics do all your customers have in common? Knowing this will help you to know where to advertise, when to advertise, and on what features to advertise.

For example, if your customers are middle aged men, then advertising in a local or regional paper might be effective, as statistics show that the typical cover to cover reader is a middle aged man. However, if your customers are teenage girls, then a local popular music station is more likely the place to get their attention. Most newspapers and radio stations can give you a demographic break down of their readers or listeners, so ask them first, before advertising.

But that isn't the only trick to be more effective. It is also important to get the right message out in the right way. Below are four objectives that when met, help to ensure you are really informing the customer about your business in the most effective way.

1. Awareness/Attention: First you must "GRAB" the customer's attention. Some examples of attention getters are: a great slogan or head line in an ad, hot air balloon above your business location, a clown jumping up and down in front of your business.
2. Interest: You need to create interest in the customer for what you are selling. Interest is usually created by ensuring that the customer knows about the features of your product or service. If you are advertising in the right media, then your customers will be looking, and will see something they need or want. But it still might not prompt them to buy.
3. Desire: Creating desire goes beyond just knowing something is out there, it is showing the customer how your product or service will make their life better, easier, simpler, save them time, money, or make them more attractive, feel better, or safer. Show them what your product or service will do for them!
4. Action: They may want your product now but they still haven't bought. Now it is up to you to make them act. Make it easier for them, 1-800 numbers, information booklets, and convenient hours, when used in advertising may be that final nudge to get them to come in or call. Other suggestions are to advertise limited time offers, or limited quantities. If you know your customer you should be able to come up with ideas that will prompt them to act now!

So go ahead, dare to stand out of all that clutter and tell the world, or at least your customers, that you are here and open for business!

If you have a small business and have a question or problem that you think The YEBDC could help you with please call or write to: The Yellowhead East Business Development Corporation, Box 249, Sangudo, Alberta, T0E 2A0
Phone: 1-800-556-0328 or 1-780-785-2900 / Fax: 780 785-3337 / E-mail: yebdc@yebdc.ab.ca or access our Website at: www.yebdc.ab.ca

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