

Altman Dedicated Direct

STRATEGY... TACTICS... RESULTS

Column: **"After the Phone Rings ..."**

Month: **July 2006**

Topic: **DR Print Advertising: Magazines, Newspapers and More**

DR print advertising can provide a testing ground prior to getting a product on TV, or a way of expanding TV success to another medium. Because of the broad range of print media available it can provide a multitude of benefits.

Print can be as mass a media as TV (e.g. TV Guide, USA Weekend, Parade) or as niche as renting a mailing list (The Cross Stitcher, Flute Talk, Volleyball Magazine). Whether your offer is presented in niche publications or broad based ones depends on your product and audience. If you aren't sure which publication types to go after, develop a tactical plan for testing print that lets you test a few publications in both niche and broad areas.

In selecting which publications to test, look for those with repeat DR advertisers. Some magazines attract audiences that like to buy direct and others don't. Many repeat DR advertisers cues you that the readers are highly direct responsive. Evaluate the proportion of subscribers versus single-copy buyers. Subscribers are more committed and involved than someone who was merely attracted to the cover on that month's issue.

Print is similar to DRTV/DR Radio in that each is a "self-selection" media. You, the advertiser, don't know who specifically will be reading that publication. The reader must "raise their hand" (respond), and self-select as your target. With self-selection mediums it is imperative to serve up all the product benefits you can within the space limitations, as it is harder to know which benefit will appeal to any given individual.

Buying DR print means buying smart. Ask for DR rates; these are significantly lower than general advertiser rates. Discounted print is also available. Each magazine or newspaper has "perishable inventory" to fill. If ads aren't sold at full rate, the publication will offer the remaining space at discounts. The best way to access these is to establish a relationship with remnant space brokers who function as "clearing houses" for discounted space. Brokers may specialize in certain types of space (e.g. newspapers or magazines) but the key point is they will be made aware of deals first. To take advantage of remnant space your ad should be "ready to go"; the deals are offered up on a "first come, first served" basis.

A key question to address is how well your product presentation can be made within the one-dimensional printed page. Are you able to making a compelling enough pitch to sell off the page? Or should you instead consider a lead generation/2-step marketing approach? The approach that is more in tune with your offer will dictate the size of space you purchase. Selling off the page usually implies a full-page ad or larger, while a 2-step approach generally implies 1/3 page or smaller, as your goal is merely to drive an inquiry for additional information. (If you use a 2-step approach, please review the recommendations in my April column).



853 Academy Street, Rural Hall, NC 27045-9329
Tel: (336) 969-9538 E-Mail: Altman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com
Fax: (336) 969-0187 Web: www.AltmanDedicatedDirect.com



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Make sure you track results carefully. Include a source code for every ad – don't rely on asking customers what magazine they saw the ad in. If possible use a unique landing page on the web that is solely for space ads, if not one for each unique ad that is run. The better you track the results, the more you will be able to assess your success and determine whether to advertise in each publication again.

Although space ads likely won't launch your company (like direct marketing firms Lillian Vernon and J.Peterman), they can become a valuable addition to your marketing arsenal if you manage the process and evaluate results as carefully as your DRTV/radio efforts.

Shari Altman is President of Altman Dedicated Direct, a direct response marketing consultancy specializing in continuity and auto-replenishment, retention and loyalty marketing. She can be reached at 336-969-9538 or via e-mail at SAltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com



853 Academy Street, Rural Hall, NC 27045-9329
Tel: (336) 969-9538 E-Mail: SAltman@AltmanDedicatedDirect.com
Fax: (336) 969-0187 Web: www.AltmanDedicatedDirect.com

