

What Makes a Great Ad?
Get the Most From Advertising in Local Publications
by Peter Montoya

So you want to run an ad in your local newspaper or regional magazine? Either way, you're spending from hundreds to thousands of dollars in what amounts to a marketing Hail Mary pass.

Think about it. You hope that people who have a need for your financial services will a) read the publication, b) notice your ad, c) read it, and d) actually call you. No matter how good your ad is, the chances of all this happening are microscopic, which is why corporations advertise in multiple publications. You don't have that luxury, so how do you get the most from your ad and avoid wasting your money?

Avoid the "Me Too" Ad

You need to create an ad with "stopping power," meaning it can stop a reader as he's turning the pages and compel him to read it. You don't accomplish this by being a "me too" advisor. Look at most financial advisors' ads. You see a mug shot. A name, and designations. A trite phrase like "Caring for your financial needs." It's a boring approach that guarantees failure.

An advertisement works when it's different enough to get noticed. It's a simple idea: don't be like everyone else, and people will pay attention to you. There are several ways to accomplish this with your ad:

- *Go large.* If your budget allows, buy a full page of ad space in a magazine, or a half page in a newspaper. Most advisors go small, thinking "At least I have an ad." But a larger ad equals greater visibility, which usually translates to a better return on investment.
- *Go color.* If your publication prints in color, buy a full-color ad. In a sea of black-and-white advisor ads, you can't help but stand out.
- *Go with a powerful headline.* The best headlines appeal to the reader at gut level. You can find 1,000 ads that start with "The solution to your investment needs." But how about "Will you be flipping burgers when you're 70?"

Readers Don't Care About Your Ad

That's a fact. They didn't buy that paper or magazine to see your ad on page 26. So you must make them care, stop, read and absorb. You have to understand who is reading the publication and what they need.

Most advisors don't do this. They run generic ads that simply say "This is who I am, these are the services I offer, call me." These ads only impress other advisors. Your ad needs to play directly to your reader's needs, wants or desires, preferably all three. For example:

10 Stocks You Can't Afford Not to Have in Your Portfolio

Invest in these ten companies and you'll be in position to realize great growth. I'll tell you what these winning stocks are, and share more ways to build a killer portfolio. Just let me take you to lunch.

This ad appeals to greed and creates a sense of urgency to call this advisor. It's a great ad with confidence and personality.

Four More Ways to Maximize Your ROI

1. *Don't hide your phone number or Web address.* Make sure both are large and visible.
2. *Say what you do.* Once you have appealed to the reader's emotions and presented yourself as the solution, make sure it's crystal clear what you do. Tax planning, insurance, financial planning, whatever.
3. *Buy multiple ads.* Buying a package of multiple ads in the same publication will cost you much less on a per-ad basis than buying one at a time. Also, multiple exposures make an ad far more successful.
4. *Have a follow-up system in place.* Have a dedicated toll-free number and e-mail address for responses, a pre-assembled kit of materials ready to drop in the mail, and a procedure in place for follow-up phone calls.

Peter Montoya is President of Peter Montoya Inc. - the only advertising agency in the country that specializes in financial advisors. Check out MarketingLibrary.net for unlimited access to hundreds of marketing articles, letters and invitations for only \$10 per month. Learn more at www.MarketingLibrary.net or by calling (888) 730-5300.