

3 Power Tips to Super Charge Your Ads

If you're like most small business owners you would really love to get a lot more results from your ads.

Wouldn't it be fantastic to place a small ad, or mail a letter or flyer to your target market and then get your phone ringing off the hook.

It isn't that difficult once you know how to construct an ad that attracts your best prospects and gets them to take immediate action.

The problem with most marketing pieces is that they don't get immediate action. One of the reasons for that is because small business owners are sometimes misled into believing that they don't need immediate action from their marketing.

They believe that getting their name out there in the marketplace builds brand 'awareness,' and that's all you need from your marketing.

Don't you believe it.

Building brand awareness in a marketplace is for the big guys with unlimited budgets. It takes deep pockets of money to build brand awareness in a marketplace. I'm talking about millions of dollars.

Many of you have probably seen the barrage of TV ads for Geico Insurance -- the ones featuring a Gecko lizard riding in a car, sometimes singing, sometimes just enjoying the ride.

Geico Insurance is trying to build brand awareness with these ads. The commercials don't focus on the benefits of Geico Insurance, and they usually don't ask you to take any action after viewing one of their commercials. They are simply trying to get their name out in the marketplace. That's pure awareness advertising.

They are hoping that after spending millions of dollars on these cute awareness ads, that you will remember Geico Insurance when it comes time for you to buy insurance.

Sometimes this works, more often than not, it doesn't.

At any rate, this strategy is a disaster for small business owners--it doesn't work for them and it costs a fortune. My advice is to not spend a penny on this type of marketing.

Every ad, flyer, letter, etc. that you use to market your business should be designed to get immediate action. It should get your very best prospects taking an action that will bring them one step closer to buying your product or service.

Here are three power tips to help you super charge your ads:

Power Tip 1. Target Your Best Prospects

The purpose of your headline is to attract, grab and hold your very best prospects' attention.

When I say 'your best prospects,' I mean people who want and are actively searching for information about the solution your product or service offers.

One of the best ways to attract your best prospects' attention is to make it clear in your headline that your ad has some important information just for them.

Here are some examples:

'Get Rid of Bugs Fast!'

would attract 'people who are searching for ways to get rid of bugs -- fast.'

'How to Sell Your Home for Your Asking Price'

would attract 'people who are searching for ways to sell their home for their asking price.'

'Teach Yourself to Play Piano'

would attract 'people who are searching for a way to teach themselves how to play piano.'

'We'll Teach You to Play Piano in Your Own Home'

would attract 'people who are searching for someone else to teach them how to play piano -- in their own home.'

Did you notice that the last two headlines are trying to attract two completely different types of prospects, even though both want to learn to play the piano?

By targeting your very best prospects in your headline, you now have a much better chance of getting them to respond, because the rest of your ad is written especially for them.

You've gotten their attention. You've hit their hot button. Your headline says, 'Stop. I've got something you've been searching for.' That's powerful -- and very effective.

A small business owner, Roberta, had been running small ads to promote her business in her community for years.

When we asked Roberta if she was happy with the results she was getting, she confessed, 'No, I'm not happy at all. I get very, very few calls from my ads -- and even less sales.'

'The newspaper rep says that I'm building awareness in the community with my ads and that it takes time to do that. She says I have to be patient. I have been patient, but if I don't start seeing results soon, I'll go broke.'

Roberta's situation is all too common. She has been misled into believing that 'any old ad' will do as long as it 'gets your name out there.'

Not true. You want more than ad readers -- you want sales.

We're happy to say that it was easy to help Roberta start getting immediate results from her ads once we showed her how to write a headline that attracted her 'best prospects,' AND enticed them to call her -- immediately.

Roberta learned that it doesn't have to be difficult to get immediate and profitable response from her ads -- as long as she puts in the correct elements in every ad she invests in.

Our first Power Tip was to make sure you target your Best Prospects in your headline.

By targeting your best prospects in your headline you are much more certain of gaining their attention. If you don't get your prospects' attention, how will you get them to read your ad and respond?

Imagine yelling 'Hey You!' at a crowd of people. You're not going to get much attention, especially from the specific people you are trying to attract.

Now imagine yelling, 'Everyone who wears glasses, please look this way!' That will get the attention of everyone who wears glasses. They will want to know why you are asking specifically for their attention.

Sell to the Searchers

Keep in mind that everyone is constantly in 'search' mode. We are all searching for things. Sometimes we are searching for an apartment, or a home to live in. Sometimes we are searching for clothes to wear.

Other times we are searching for something that will relieve the pain we have in our shoulders. We sometimes search for a place to eat, or a movie to go see or rent.

Most of our lives are spent searching for things we want-- things that will make us happy.

You've heard me say many times that my simple definition of marketing is, 'Helping people get what they want.' If you want the maximum response to your ads then you must understand this searching process that everyone goes through.

You need to design your marketing so that you sell to the 'Searchers.'

If you are selling chocolate candies, then develop a clear picture in your mind of the thousands of people in your marketplace that are 'searching' for chocolate candies.

Those are your Best Prospects. Those are the people who love chocolate candies and always have their chocolate radar on.

If you put the words 'Chocolate Candies,' in large, bold letters at the top of your ad, your headline will act like a magnet and attract everyone who loves chocolate candies. Those are just the people you want to attract.

You want the people who are 'searching' for chocolate candies to say, 'Wow! That headline is talking to me. That's exactly what I want.'

That's how you target your best prospects and get their attention.

But of course, there is more to it than that. Getting the attention of your best prospects is an important first step, but you must then get them to take the second step.

If you were the only business offering chocolate candies, then your marketing job would be easy. You

would simply let the chocolate candy searchers know that you have what they want.

But in today's world, marketing is rarely that easy for one important reason.

Competition.

You are not the only company selling chocolate candies. The chocolate candy searchers have hundreds of options to choose from. They don't have to buy from you.

We once had a client, Bob, who was having a frustrating time getting his best prospects to notice his ads, let alone respond to them.

He was using the name of his business as his headline at the top of his ads just like most of his competitors. That's the worst thing you can do.

We showed Bob how to target his very best prospects in his headlines and we also showed him how to use Power Tip #2, described below, to compel his best prospects to choose his company over his competitors.

The difference in results was instant and amazing. Bob was only getting 2-3 calls from his weekly ad before, after his new ad ran he got 156 calls the first day and dozens more over the next few days. These were his very best prospects who wanted what Bob was selling.

Bob's business took off like a skyrocket. Within a few years he was generating nearly 1.5 million a year from his small business.

It didn't take any more work--in fact it was less work--it just took changing his approach. You could be doing the same thing.

Power Tip 2: Tell Your Prospects Why They Should Choose You Instead of Your Competitors

Let's picture a small chocolate candy booth at a festival with a big sign above it that says, 'Chocolate Candies.'

Assuming that your sign is big enough, you are now getting the attention of your best prospects--the chocolate candy searchers.

But now picture two more identical chocolate candy booths --one to your left and one to your right. All three of you have the same 'Chocolate Candies' sign above each of your booths.

Put yourself in the position of the chocolate candy searchers. They have found what they are looking for. But they now have a decision to make. Which booth do they buy from?

With competition you must now find a way to make your product/service or business stand above your competitors.

You must give your best prospects good, solid reasons to choose to buy your chocolate candies--or insurance, or shoes, or accounting services, etc--as opposed to your competitors'.

Basically you need to find a way to offer your best prospects more than your competitors' are offering. In this way your best prospects will clearly see that they would be foolish to buy from anyone other than you.

There are a million ways to do this. You could offer:

- a lower price
- a brighter, more fun atmosphere
- free samples
- a baker's dozen
- friendlier service
- quicker service
- a free gift for the kids with every purchase
- an excellent guarantee
- buy 10 get one free
- free gift wrapping
- free delivery service
- to take credit cards
- a place to sit
- longer hours
- more elegant packages (Godiva Chocolate)
- a different recipe
- etc., etc., etc.

Now picture the three chocolate candy stands again.

Both of your competitors' signs state:

'Chocolate Candies!'

But your sign says:

'Chocolate Candies!

-- Try a Sample --

New French Recipe -- Creamier, Twice the Chocolate Flavor, and Now Packed with Almonds

We Guarantee Your Satisfaction

Can you see that the chocolate searchers are going to be drawn like a magnet to your chocolate candy stand?

You have now offered your best prospects much more than your competitors are offering. You have given your prospects solid reasons for choosing to buy from you instead of your competitors.

You can apply this power tip to any product or service.

After you have applied Power Tip #1 -- Target your best prospects in your headline -- next you would tell your prospects why they should choose you instead of your competitors.

You can do this right in your headline, or in a smaller sub-headline directly below your headline.

If your ad is big enough, you can provide more details about why your prospects should choose you in your body copy--that's the smaller type usually found under a headline.

This is an incredibly powerful marketing tip. You must show your best prospects why it makes so much more sense to buy from you instead of your competitors, or else they will continue on their search and leave you behind.

Everyone wants to get the very best all around value they can when they purchase products or services. It's vital that you present your business, product or service in a way that leaves no doubt that you are the one that provides the best value. You are the company they should buy from.

Make a list of every benefit you can think of that you already offer to your prospects and customers.

Ask your prospects and customers for their advice about how you could offer them even more value for their money.

Look at your competitors to see how well they are offering more value to their customers. Learn from them and then do it even better than they do.

Be on the lookout for ideas that would help you to leap ahead of your competitors in service, quality or overall value.

Then don't bury these benefits. Put them at the top of your marketing pieces in your headlines, or sub-heads. Then elaborate on them in your body copy.

Apply these first two Power Tips to your marketing pieces and you will see a tremendous boost in results.

When you learn to attract your very best prospects and then show them why it makes more sense to buy from you rather than your competitors an incredible thing happens--your business grows and your bank account grows.

The first two Power Tips in this 3 part series covered 1) the importance of targeting your best prospects in your headline, and 2) telling your prospects why they should buy from you rather than your competitors.

Don't make the common mistake of thinking that these tips are too basic to have much of an impact on your business.

After 30+ years in the marketing profession I have learned firsthand that the most effective concepts are almost always the most simple--and the most overlooked.

Here are just a few small business ad headlines that I recently found in our local newspaper:

'The Passing Parade'

There is no possibility that this company's best prospects will know that this ad has something of interest for them.

'Catch Some Raise'

The person who came up with this headline is obviously focused on being clever with puns. Headlines are not supposed to be clever, they are supposed to be clear. This one isn't.

'Holes'

By this headline would you know if this company had something for you? I don't think so. What a waste of time and money.

If you look around you will find lots of examples of headlines that don't make it clear who they are targeting and what they are offering to that target.

You'll also find lots of marketing pieces by companies that don't tell you why you should buy from them rather than their competitors.

You'll also discover that many small businesses run ads that simply use the name of their business as the headline.

They don't understand that the name of your business is not a benefit to the people glancing at their

ads.

The name of your business doesn't usually attract your best prospects, and it doesn't tell people why they should choose you rather than your competitors.

If you were searching for a way to sell your home quickly and for the highest price, which headline would attract you more:

General Realty, Inc

or

Selling Your Home? Call Today for Your Free Copy of the Home Sellers Report- 23 Tips to Help You Sell Your Home Quickly and for the Highest Market Price

The only thing the first headline tells you is that they are in the realty business--along with a thousand other realty businesses. There is absolutely no reason to call them.

The second headline attracts its best prospects--people who want to sell their homes. It also gives them a good reason to take action immediately by telling them why they should contact them rather than their competition.

This is exactly what your best prospects want.

These are two powerful tips that can help to significantly improve the pulling power of your ads.

Power Tip #3 completes this series.

Power Tip 3: Tell Your Prospects What to Do Next

You've attracted your very best prospects with your headline.

Then you told your prospects why they should choose you rather than one of your competitors.

Now it's time to tell your prospects exactly what you want them to do next.

Sound obvious? It isn't.

Most small business marketers mistakenly believe that their prospects will figure out what to do next -- without being told.

One of the primary tenets of effective marketing is to make every aspect of doing business with you as clear and as easy to understand as possible.

While some of your prospects may figure out what the next action step is, many more won't. They won't even think about it. They will just drop your marketing piece and move on...to your competitor.

If I ask you specifically what is the next step you want your prospects to take after reading one of your

marketing pieces, you may be tempted to say... 'Buy my product,' or 'Buy my service.'

But that is often not the next step.

One of the biggest mistakes a small business owner can make is trying to make the sale in one, quick and easy step. That's called the One-Step Strategy, and it's almost always the least effective strategy for small businesses.

If you're using it, and you probably are, then you already know that it produces very little results.

Very often the next step may be taking action to obtain more information.

Most people want at least some basic information about your product or service before spending even a few dollars. They want even more information before making any kind of substantial purchase.

If there isn't any information available, or it is difficult to get or find, most prospects will simply look to one of your competitors who makes it easier for them to get the kind of information they want before purchasing.

Most small businesses leave out this important and vital step in their marketing system. If you understand how a system works, then you know that to skip just one step in a system, dooms that system to failure.

Here are just a few ways that a prospect can request more information:

- Come to your business to see your product
- Come to your business to talk to you or a sales representative about your product or service
- Call and ask for more information
- Call and ask for your brochure or Info-pak
- Call your phone hotline
- Call for a Fax-On-Demand
- Call to set up an appointment
- Go to your web site to learn more
- Send an e-mail to request more information
- Write to your business and request more information
- Fax a request to your business to request more information
- Fill out your coupon or form and mail it to your company to request more information
- Sign up for a free report or newsletter to learn more
- Click on a web site or e-mail link to obtain more information
- etc. etc. etc.

Can you see that the next step is not always obvious?

By telling your prospect exactly what action to take next, you remove all doubt and confusion. You have made his or her decision much easier. They now know exactly what to do and what to ask for.

Which ad would you respond to if you were searching for persistent headache relief?

1) An ad for a headache relief solution with just an address and phone number at the bottom.

or

2) An ad for a headache relief solution with the following at the bottom:

'Call 555-5555 Today and Ask for Our Free Headache Relief Kit.'

The first one doesn't tell you what to do, so you aren't sure if there is any information available or how to get it.

The second makes it easy for you to obtain more information. You know exactly what the next step is and it's easy to take.

There is no doubt, ad number 2 will get the lion's share of the calls from that company's best prospects.

These three power tips, used together will form a solid foundation for significantly increasing your marketing response.

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