

Why People Hate Watching TV and YouTube® Commercials

by Marc Aronson

Small Business Owners Need to Know Why

The economic crash of 2008 devastated most small businesses. Although a substantial number have at least somewhat recovered, most business owners find their advertising and promotion are not driving in the volume of business they enjoyed during the early 2000s.

Typically, small business owners blame their lower profits on the sluggish economy. Many also consider the massive transition of consumers away from traditional media to the Internet and social media to also be culprits, when, in fact, these media actually present opportunities.

There is, however, an additional element responsible... *essential advertising principles that have been altered, infected, squashed and virtually demolished by Madison Avenue ad agencies and university marketing departments.* These establishments seem to have forgotten that consumers have a brain. After all, it sounds painful, but spend some time watching television commercials tonight and you be the judge whether they undermine your intelligence.

There are hidden principles that are so powerful that, when applied correctly, virtually any business will flourish even in a weak economy. Companies that do so can enjoy unprecedented success through Internet and social media marketing, as well as through traditional advertising media. However, before most business owners are able to understand these concepts and apply them, we need to touch on a revolutionary event in advertising history and how it poisoned the ad industry. But first, let us take a peek at what is wrong with your marketing.

Flaws in Your Marketing Communications

What most small business owners fail to recognize is that there historically has been something wrong with the content of their marketing. When the economy was thriving, there was ample spending occurring for even lackluster advertising to work. Small businesses did well and so did their competitors. However, in a lethargic economy, business owners need to increase their market share to continue to thrive. The reason is just common sense. When people spend less, you need to increase your market share accordingly just to maintain your level of gross income.

The fact there are flaws in the content of nearly all small business promotion only becomes noticeable when consumer spending is slow. The question then becomes whether you, as a business owner, can fix your promotion so it will drive in enough business for you to achieve your dreams for your business. The answer is, in most cases yes, so long as there are enough people who need what you provide and have the money to spend. However, to capture enough volume, you must first comprehend what is deficient in your marketing, your competitors' marketing and, in fact, the marketing of virtually every business on the planet. *It is essential for you to grasp that the field of advertising is lost in a sea of confusion.*

When and Where the Problem Began

To comprehend how and when the world of advertising and promotion went astray, you need to travel back to the early 1950s. Before TV and with radio, as well as with early television, most advertisers ran lengthy commercials— one minute, two minutes and sometimes longer. These commercials, as did their radio commercials and

print ads, tended to educate consumers concerning the virtues and benefits of their products and services, and why purchasing them would enrich the lives of consumers. *And most people enjoyed watching them!*



During the 50s, thanks to a prosperous economy and the new technology, people began purchasing televisions in droves. Major corporations soon realized the enormous opportunity television advertising presented. The two major networks (CBS and NBC) grasped the gold mine they offered and began to escalate their advertising rates. As a result, companies could no longer afford TV as a medium and those that could had to cut back the length of their commercials to keep within their budgets. Thus, long *educational* commercials that had been the norm became obsolete.



Next, Madison Avenue ad agencies engineered a way for what they believed would allow for shorter commercials to capture people's attention and increase desire for advertisers' products. They advocated that commercials could ingrain their content into the minds of consumers through messages that relied on something familiar or unusual to capture attention, apply subliminal messaging, and then drive slogans down consumers' throats through repetition. The game transformed into *building your brand* through

messages that said little of anything significant. As a result, many advertisers began to deem it was no longer necessary to educate to sell. Some, high-ranking executives even began to consider that the quality of their products was no longer irrelevant. Instead, they opted for brand building via image ads, slogans, and generalities, fluff and platitudes.

Did this work? From a certain perspective, yes. However, years ago I was part of a marketing study that determined these commercials only succeeded because few companies could afford the repetition that was required via television to pound messages home. Thus, most of the competitors of the largest companies could not compete. These major corporations began to grow more profitable as many of their competitors vanished into oblivion.

Advertising based on creativity and repetition became the sole methodology taught in universities, as the ad industry believed this to be the only effective way to advertise. Then, through the 1980s, we were engulfed by the eruption of the *positioning* era, which further debased the value of advertising to consumers. Today, we have become immersed in a high-tech advertising era of absurdity. Each of these is a progression from the earlier *build your brand* period that resulted from the growth of TV.

How Madison Avenue Philosophy Hurts Deserving Companies

Whether or not business decision makers are conscious of it, most have come to believe that what they visualize and hear on television must be the successful way to strategize advertising because almost everyone in advertising exercises this approach. Thus, via top management consent, advertisers have metastasized this approach into all other media, affecting businesses of all sizes. Truthfully, it is as if we have all been students in a class that neglected to prepare for an exam, cheated off each other, and everyone failed. The problem in the entrepreneurial world is that we never have been told we flunked. Thus, most small business owners continue to borrow ideas from the websites or ads of their competitors and use their concepts to formulate their own content.

Loading your ads and website with platitudes, generalities and fluff that may mean a great deal

to you but nothing to your target markets will not bring you an abundance of business. There is no wonder why some *marketing gurus* have touted that advertising no longer works. No, it is their methodology that is fruitless!

All forms of media CAN produce results. To ensure success, however, you must first erase from your mind all the advertising rubbish that has been polluting your ears and eyes for over 60 years.

Small Business Advertising Mistakes

The Madison Avenue dilemma has led small firms down the path of creating advertising and promotion that fails to separate one business from another. Today, website content and ad copy are nearly always a combination of platitudes and what some call *menu style ads*. Just mix a few trite and meaningless statements with a list of services you provide and your phone will ring off the hook. Right? Well, during prosperous times, maybe. You see, if everyone else says just about the same thing, at least you may get your fair portion of prospects. In prosperous times, this may be sufficient. How about when the economy is slow? If responses to your ads and websites have waned in comparison to the early 2000s, it is because there are less buyers today for what you provide, possibly more competitors, and your market share has not grown.

Examples of Ineffective Headlines

Here are some poorly written headlines from websites of professional service providers in my home city just outside Los Angeles. None separate their respective business from their competitors. In fact, usually their competitors could use the exact same headline and would be just as valid for them. Since these companies created these headlines, one could presume the advertisers believe their statements have meaning and value and will cause people to spend time on their websites and purchase their services. The sad truth is these headlines will not. Note these examples:

Highly successful results since 1994

Providing Passionate and Dedicated Representation to Each and Every Client

We think you're nice

Customer Satisfaction Is our Top Priority

Dial John, John Delivers

Service with a Smile

Transform Yourself

Choose the experienced team of accounting professionals

Custom design to meet your lifestyle.

None of these headlines present new or unique ideas, or make people want to do anything. None make you believe that their business could be a better choice. They are all profoundly commonplace and make no impression whatsoever.

How Can You Capture Market Share?

The goal of ads and promotion is *to cause your prospective customers (clients or patients) to believe they would be making a huge mistake to choose any business but yours for the type of services you provide.* There is a step-by-step procedure to create tasteful ads, promotion, and website content that will cause most of your prospects and referral sources to select your firm. We call this *The Formula for Market Dominance*. Spend time on our website (www.captureyourmarkets.com) and learn how to write promotional content that will set your business apart from your competitors and make yours the logical choice.



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