

## The Pros of Low-Cost Ads

Knowing how to effectively stretch every dollar you make leads to successful small business. This certainly rings true when it comes to advertising. Those big flashy print, TV, or internet ads may easily deplete your budget without generating much business.

Fortunately, entrepreneurs can take advantage of a variety of low-cost outlets that may prove just as effective, if not more so, than their high-priced counterparts.

True, advertising acumen is something that most small business owners don't have. Marketing consultant Andrew Griffiths likens it to learning a foreign language. But, he adds, "Advertising works and the more time and energy you put into your advertising, the greater your results will be."

Time, energy and creative thinking are key. You can find low-cost options in almost every advertising category. While display ads in magazines and newspapers cost a bundle, advertising in the classified section costs less and is often overlooked. Readers flock to the classifieds in many trade and specialty magazines. Look for publications that specifically target your customers. Try a few test ads to gauge response.

Advertising online through search engines is inexpensive and has become the single most popular new advertising outlet for small business. You'll find complete details and guidelines on creating and managing pay-per-click ad campaigns at search giants such as Google and Yahoo!

A lower-cost option in the direct mail arena is postcards. They are simple, timely and easy for customers to read quickly at a glance. And they are considerably less expensive than typical letter-and-envelope type mailings.

Once you've chosen where your advertising will appear, you need to consider what those ads will say. If you choose to go with several ad methods, make sure they complement each other and send a consistent message. And that message should be simple, yet distinct to stand out from others. Find the right balance between cleverness, which may confuse your customers, and being so basic that nobody pays attention. The same principle applies to your ad's layout, colors, and logo.

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