



Market Knowledge

High Impact Yellow Pages Advertising

For many contractors, their largest annual advertising expenditure is a "Yellow Pages" ad. After all, it remains a reliable method of attracting new customers outside of the word-of-mouth referral process.

Yellow Pages ads are effective because they are different from traditional ads. With a newspaper ad, you are fishing for customers in the market for your specific service. With the Yellow Pages, they are already swimming toward you, trying to find the names of reliable, local providers.

Many contractors tell me that, they don't bother with the Yellow Pages because they have a steady stream of referrals. I challenge that assumption by reminding them that customers who may have been imprecisely referred to their company will inevitably look in the Yellow Pages to find the correct contact information. And if you're not there, you just lost a prospect.

When buying your Yellow Pages ad, remember that the sales representative may not always give you the best advice. He or she is receiving a commission on the space and will often try to sell you extras that may not add value. Many contractors upgrade to full-color ads with photos that are simply stock images provided by the designer. Unless the image showcases a specific competitive advantage, it may be superfluous. Do you really need to see a picture of sprinklers watering a lawn when shopping for an irrigation contractor? Same goes for cute logos and graphics, which often distracts from what the customer is looking for.

What should your ad include? First, grab their attention with a bold headline. Your company name is not a headline. Try something that communicates an important benefit that differentiates you from the others. Chris Agee of Sprinkles Irrigation in Atlanta advertises "A Live Person Answers Our Phone" and "We Show Up When We Promise." Bet those headlines keep his less-organized competitors squirming. Consider reverse type (white letters against a black background stripe) to make your headline really pop.

If you have a company web site, include its address. More folks are going on-line, and an effective Yellow Pages ad can serve as a portal to your site, where customers can then learn a lot more about your business and its strengths.

Second, promote your services and experience. Be sure to focus on listing your benefits and what you can do for them, rather than providing a laundry list of options. Avoid bragging as in "we're the best." Instead, use phrases that will cause potential customers to read on, such as "No Extra Charge for Weekends," "Free Estimates," and "Fast Response."



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Third, remember your geography. Property owners want to hire someone who is conveniently located. If you have a defined area of coverage, say so. If you cover all areas, make sure that's known too.

You're spending a lot of valuable dollars on your Yellow Pages ad. If it conveys a professional and reliable image, then get ready for your phone to start ringing!

About the Author:

Jeff Carowitz is a leading expert on marketing for the green industry. As a consultant with Strategic Force, he works with manufacturers, wholesale distributors and contractors in developing marketing programs for profitable business growth.