

Village of Paw Paw

Downtown Development Authority

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Small town advertising myths and realities

Let's explore some myths and realities of advertising in your small town newspaper. But you don't have to take this articles word for it; you can test every one of them.

Myth: One big ad will make a big impression.

Reality: The same money invested in a regular series of small ads will yield bigger results.

First of all, you want to give the image of stability. Repetition also helps; as people notice and retain your message.

Myth: Change your ads all the time. Readers get tired of the same thing.

Reality: Develop a good campaign, or theme for your ads. Stick with that one campaign, and only make small changes of headlines or details.

Absolut Vodka used one advertising campaign for years and years: the shape of the bottle. Look your local weekly paper to see who uses the same style border or other ad feature for a long time. It is recognizable.

Myth: The newspaper staff can make all the design decisions.

Reality: It's your business. Ask for what you want!

Follow some good evergreen design advice, from Troy White. The number one design problem with local ads is a lack of white space in the ads. Many designers love to dominate the ad with stock clipart, and tend to change fonts and designs each time. What works best, according to reader survey research is lots of white space, clipart is secondary or accent material only. A consistent theme is also important to ad readers. If you cannot work with your local paper to do what you want, perhaps, it is best if you layout your own ads; in Publisher or some program that is not necessarily high tech, but effective nonetheless. If you choose to work with your local paper's designer then follow this advice . . .

- Start early, well before deadlines.
- Give them a pencil sketch of your ad.
- Insist on a proof.
- Make changes.
- Repeat.
- Take the finished ad, circle the items you want to have as a permanent part of your campaign or theme. Ask that these always be included.

Not only will you be happier with the results but most likely the local paper designers will as well. An effective ad that gets results means you'll likely advertise again and again!

Don't forget these basics:

- Include accurate, easy to read contact info. All of it. Yes, every time.
- Create a compelling offer. That's the center piece of any ad.

That's it. Pretty simple stuff that can help you get the results you want from your local print advertisements.