

Does Advertising Work?

by Dr Greg Chapman, MBA

There has been a lot of controversy about the latest ads from the Australian Tourism Commission by Baz Luhrmann which many commentators say won't work. These are ads that tie in with Luhrmann's new film *Australia*. The general comment is that these fairly depressing ads won't work, compared with the exciting ads by the NZ Tourism Commission which do appear to work. They are just too arty and self indulgent to actually attract any US tourists to Australia.

I would also suggest that Luhrmann has put one over the Tourism Commission. Think about it. Luhrmann released a film in the US and has effectively got the Australian taxpayer to pay for cross promotion of his film in a very expensive market place.

Nice. Where do I apply?

The Australian Tourism Commission has form in producing ads that please the Australian film critics, who would be the last people I would call for advertising advice since most the Australian films they praise bomb at the box office. The key in creating advertisements is not whether you like it, or your friends like it; it is whether it causes people in your target market to buy your products and services. That is the only test that matters.

Some critics of this campaign hark back to the wonderful days of the Paul Hogan promotions in the US. (I think Hoges must have been the first to cotton on to the scam of getting the taxpayer to promote his films which I am sure many more saw than will see Luhrmann's.) However, John Richardson, the former assistant general manager of the Australian Tourism Commission, says Hogan was useless as Luhrmann.

Australia had a salutary lesson with the Hogan campaign in the United States in the early 1980s. That campaign aroused enormous interest in America, awareness of Australia went sky-high and was still high a decade later. And in that decade the growth in tourism from the United States to Australia

was the poorest of any of our major markets – by far. Almost all of the growth you referred to came from other markets, where the Hogan campaign was not shown.

Too often, advertisements are made to feed the vanity of the people who commission them, and also to promote the agency that produces them. Agencies like to win awards with their ads, so they can charge more. Getting pats on the back from your friends is not what you want, unless they are also your clients, and certainly you aren't in the business of producing promotion pieces for your advertising agencies.

Awareness of your products or services is only of value if it results in sales. If you can't measure the sales impact, there probably isn't any.



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The most successful ads seldom win prizes, and for you, the advertiser, it's not about you or your agency, it is about your buyer. If the ad does not appeal to them, you are wasting your money.

May Your Business Be – As You Plan It!

Dr Greg Chapman is the author of the internationally recognised book *"The Five Pillars of Guaranteed Business Success"*. Download a free copy of his Mission Statement Tool from his website at www.FivePillarsBusinessSuccess.com