

Seven Ways to Waste Your Money on Yellow Pages Advertising

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Each year there is a Yellow Pages arms race where competitors in each category are encouraged to outspend each other. There is only one winner in this arms race, and it is not you! Too many advertisers waste their money on Yellow Pages advertising without first considering their marketing strategy. Empower Business Solutions looks at seven ways you can waste your money.

1. Attempting to outspend your competitor

As soon as Yellow Pages has convinced you to increase the prominence of your ad, they get your competitors to match or outbid you. This becomes an annual auction, with some categories containing pages of half and full page ads. A buyer can be overwhelmed with choice and may make their decision before they even get to your ad. Priority in listing is given to those who have advertised the longest in a category for a given ad size. You can only get closer to the front by upsizing your ad or if someone else closer to the front ceases advertising.

2. Putting all your eggs in the Yellow Pages basket

An advertising decision is something you should only make after you have developed a marketing strategy. Many businesses rush into advertising in the Yellow Pages, just because that's what everyone else does. You don't become a leader by following the herd. You need to consider your payback for your investment in this marketing channel. Ask your Yellow Pages consultant how many leads a particular size ad generates in your category. Then ask yourself how many of these leads will you convert into sales, and then decide whether this is a good investment.

3. Engaging in destructive Head to Head Competition

When you advertise in the Yellow Pages, not only can potential customers see your ad and your offer, so can your competitors. This often results in price competition that can turn your product or service into a commodity. Yellow Pages make comparison shopping easy for buyers and market research easy for competitors.

4. Spending too much on prominence

When spending on a Yellow Pages ad, you can invest in size and colour. Size is important, but what you put in the ad, your copy, is far more important. It is better to go down a size and spend the money you save on a copywriter. Good copy can generate up to 20 times the response as poor copy. Colour is also important, but not as important as size, so go up a size rather than go to colour, which is expensive for its return. If your category is cluttered with large ads, investing in your copy is essential.

5. Relying on Yellow Pages free design service

Ad design is important. Yellow Pages do offer a free design service, but its worth what you pay. The typical design is done in 15 minutes. As they are designing tens of thousands of ads you can't really expect any special attention- especially as there is no charge for the service! When they design your ad, they will appeal to your vanity rather than to your customers. So they will put "Joe's Plumbing" in the headline. But buyers don't care who Joe is, and are far more interested in why they should use Joe. This requires some marketing analysis of your points of difference and ultimate service benefits, which won't happen in 15 minutes!

6. Putting your ad in the wrong category

If you are a plumber, the decision of where to place your ad is easy. But if your business is in a fairly specialised market such as oil refinery plumbing, there probably isn't a good category for you. In fact, for many B2B businesses Yellow Pages is a poor marketing tool. Ask yourself the question, where would a buyer look to find out about your business- it might not even be in the Yellow Pages.

7. Depending on old technology advertising

Every year internet advertising increases, with less being spent on print advertising. Yellow Pages is now available online and for certain businesses this is a better option, particularly with a link to their website. When being sold paper Yellow Pages ads, you may be offered complimentary online advertising. However, unless your ad is near the front, you will be invisible to buyers who rarely will browse further than three pages. It is also worth paying for a link to your website.

The Yellow Pages consultants are on commission to sell you advertising. They only interested in getting you to spend as much as possible, not on providing the best marketing solution for your business. Advertising is not the same as marketing! Good marketing advice on whether and how you should advertise is money well spent. Not only can this increase sales, but it can save you thousands of dollars in advertising.

Before making a decision on Yellow Pages advertising, **Empower Business Solutions** advises that you consider all your marketing channels, and make decisions on how much you invest in each dependent on their ability to attract leads. Having determined how much you will invest in Yellow Pages, do some market analysis and invest in your ad copy. This is particularly important for larger ad sizes. Yellow Pages advertising can be rewarding, but should only be considered as just one part of your overall marketing strategy. To find out more about developing a Marketing Strategy before deciding how to spend your advertising dollars, visit our website at:

<http://www.empowersolutions.com.au>

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