

But Paid Media Costs Money!

By Kirk Loudon

About the Author

Kirk Loudon is a partner at NextLevel Thinking, a marketing strategy firm that successfully blends emotion, education, and enablement into a marketing approach and framework for your organization that can be effectively communicated internally to your employees and externally to your current and potential customers.

Kirk is a veteran in the marketing and advertising business. He has been a creative force in the southwest market for over 18 years. He has worked in all areas of the business.

So you have these television commercials or radio spots, or even print ads that are ready to hit the marketplace. Great! Here is the question...where are you going to run them? And a better question...what is this going to cost?

Let's answer the second question first. It is going to cost. This is where it gets a bit sticky. You see, if you don't have a lot of awareness in your marketplace, there is no better way to establish a presence than by using paid media. So you will have to spend money to make money. I know...that kind of takes the wind out of your sails, but that's the way it is...I am sorry.

I use the term Paid Media because the other kind of media...you know...the free stuff, it just doesn't work. Public Service Ads that some stations or publications give you are a nice gesture, but they alone will not get the job done. The ads are few and far between and probably not being run at the best times to serve your core audience. Staying in front of your audience is crucial when building a presence in your marketplace. An ad that runs once in a blue moon will not create the impact that you need.

Okay...now you are thinking...“but I heard about these packages that the television stations, radio stations and magazines offer and they are giving us a bunch of ads!” Right...The Package Deal.

Here is how to look at a Package Deal:

If Macy's is offering **Lime Green Plaid Pants, Buy One Get One Free**, is it a good deal? The answer is, of course, no. Crap is still crap, even if it is on sale. If they wanted to really stick it to you they would have done three for one. The point is, when spots are packaged, that usually means the station has extra inventory they are trying to unload. So if you are offered four spots between 2am and 3am during the great documentary, “The Armadillo: Nature's Little Tank”, think twice before buying those slots.

So now you say you are willing to spend some money on advertising and you are ready to buy. USE A MEDIA PLACEMENT FIRM! There are people who know how to do this and can get better rates than you. Also, a good media person will be honest with you if he or she thinks you don't have enough money to do the job correctly.

All media placement firms have software and expertise in this area. They will talk about “reach” and “frequency” and other fancy words. However, what it boils down to is this: are you reaching the people that you want and need to reach? And are you doing it often enough? If the media firm feels you can do this with the money you have, then go for it!

Now the first question... where do I run these spots? This is a bit more vague but there is always a way to figure it out. Say, for example, that you know from your media firm, that 50% of your potential market watches the evening news or reads a specific publication...then that is what you buy. This will change from market to market and this is where the media firm really earns their fee. They will know what will work for you. Keep in mind that different media firms may have different ideas on how to invest your

money. There is more than one way to skin a cat. Do not be concerned if you get different answers from different people. Just make sure that they have the data to support their suggestions.

Oh, one last thing to think about. This is very important. When you decide to dive into this arena, make sure to be consistent. There is no need to change the ads every couple of weeks. You will get tired of the ads long before the public will. Keep your message the same and make the spots look like part of a family of ads. Sure GEICO has three different campaigns running right now, but guess what, you're not GEICO! Just keep things simple and to the point.

To Recap:

You need visibility.

You need to reach your target market.

You need frequency.

You need consistency.

You need to keep it simple!

One of our largest clients followed our plan to a tee. They now exceed their projected goals almost every month, and have increased business 50% in the last six years.

But paid media costs money...and it does work.