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# Is Your Print Advertising Overdue for a Check-Up?



By Linda Jacobs, Owner, Downtown Dezin

As a graphic designer in the tri-county area, I am often hired to design print ads for my clients, many of which advertise in this news magazine. With a captive B-to-B audience of 16,000 readers, it's important for your ad to stand out, not only among your competition, but also among all readers, whether it's in this magazine, or any other print media in your marketing plan.

Americans spend an average of 18 minutes\* reading magazines on a daily basis. Many times you may keep an issue handy on your desk, or on a table in your workspace or office for others to enjoy. Do you pick it up and glance casually? Do you just look at the photographs? Or do you take the time to read articles that are of interest to you? What catches your eye? What ads stand out? Ask yourself why, and then, if you happen to be an advertiser, look at your own ad, with a critical eye. Would a potential customer even take a second look at your ad? Would they be intrigued enough in your product or service to call or purchase from you? Lots of questions, but they deserve your serious attention when your advertising dollars are being put to the test.

There are a few key elements that your ad should include, here's a quick checklist:

- **Strong Headline:** Keep it short, answer a question or solve a problem, or state a benefit to the reader. Engage your reader immediately.
- **Text/Body Copy:** Again, keep it simple with a focused, concise message that supports the headline...too much text may turn your reader away.
- **Visual Image:** Is your image intriguing? Does it support your message? Is it bold or visually appealing?
- **Call to Action:** What is it you want your reader to do? Visit your store, buy a

product, act on a sale or special offer? Give them a reason to "act now!"

- **Company Signature:** Include your logo, tagline, address, phone number, website...everything necessary for your potential customer to contact you easily.

After reviewing this list, and answering these few simple questions, you should be able to diagnosis the "health" of your ad. The layout should guide your reader through the ad in the direction you want them to take. And don't forget white space! You may be inclined to fill every inch of your ad, no matter the size, but white space directs the reader's eye to the most important component(s). Your ad should be able to grab the reader's attention within seconds, often that's all the time you have!

Finally, your ad should no doubt maintain your company identity and deliver your overall brand image. Is your logo prominently displayed? Are the fonts and colors consistent with all your other marketing materials? If a reader visits your website, sees your sales and promotional materials, receives a direct mail or sees a billboard of yours, will you and your company be recognizable?

If you've spent marketing dollars to create an identity, advertise and promote your business, you'll want to be sure those dollars are all in "the best of health."

\*Source: Statista, The Statistics Portal

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