

# 5 Ways to Get the Most out of Your Advertising Spend

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Advertising options are more plentiful than ever before - publications, radio, outdoor, sponsorships, events, radio, TV, direct mail, e-mail, banners, pay-per-click, Facebook, flyers, and on and on and on. How do you choose which options are right for you?

**1. Know who you're talking to.** What do your target customers read? Where do they learn about products and services? Are they "traditional" media readers or Twitterers? Do a survey to find out where they get their information. Add tracking codes to marketing vehicles and a section to your website so you can learn more.

**2. Don't just throw darts (or dollars).** Start every year with integrated strategy and devise a spending plan. If budget permits, plan a campaign that cuts across multiple media. Frequency, consistency, and ubiquity are critical to advertising effectiveness. Do not just buy ads because it "seems like you're getting a good deal," but be sure to negotiate frequency discounts and talk to media companies about other ways you can participate with their media properties. Really know who the media is reaching, cost-per-impression, and how other advertisers have fared using that media. Ask for advertisers as references. Be sure to leave some dollars aside to test new and creative media outlets. (Who would ever believe that a pizza box or YouTube video would one day become an ad vehicle?)

**3. Jump off the page!** Your message needs to be powerful, benefits-oriented, and relevant. Too many marketers decide they can simply develop their own copy and graphics. Rely on the experts to build you a truly great campaign. A well-crafted ad campaign will live on for years and is well worth the investment.

**4. Go virtual.** If your target market is web savvy (and most of the world is these days), use online media. It's tremendously cost-efficient. Blogs, e-newsletters, drip e-mail marketing, and Facebook flyers usually cost less than "traditional" media outlets, and you can get "real time" data on who responds.

**5. Be the brand.** Remember, you are your own best billboard or TV spot. Make sure you and your team are walking, talking ads for your business – year-round. Especially in these tough economic times, public speaking, attending industry events, building social networks, targeted PR, commenting on relevant blogs, and writing articles are all ways to keep your business "out there." Be consistent, pithy, and compelling.