



Don't Damage Your Brand With The Next Cheesy Cable Ad

We've all seen, and laughed at, the cheesy cable ads. From the low-quality video production, the ugly flashing headlines, the silly scripts, the ridiculous acting...they've been entertaining us for years. And, they've raised the question "What were they thinking?" What is so hard to understand, is that the very advertisers who continue to spend good money to produce and run these brand-damaging ads, had to have seen ads like these, themselves...and asked the same question.

We think we can speak for the general cable audience when we say "STOP the madness!"

Prospective advertisers, you might want to answer these questions before proceeding:

1. Do you have quality products or services?
2. Do your products/services hold strong benefits for the demographic audience who will be exposed to your cable spots?
3. Do you believe that advertising is a necessary investment in those products/services?
4. Do you want to influence buying behavior through advertising?
5. Do you think cable spots can accomplish this?

If you answered "No" to any of these questions, you should reconsider your 4Ps (Product, Price, Position, and Promotion). If, however, you answered "Yes" to all of these questions, then you should read on.

Now, we want to offer a few tips that will help you improve the impact your ad has on potential customers:

1. Hire a copywriter/scriptwriter who understands benefit-driven advertising strategy. Don't have your wife or brother-in-law write the script because they have a marketing degree.
2. Be wary of using humor in your ad, unless you are certain it can be pulled off and supports the selling proposition of the ads.
3. Actors must be directed by someone who knows how to direct.
4. If you or someone within your company is not a capable spokesperson or narrator, hire someone who is.
5. Lighting and sound are critical factors in the final quality and appearance of your spot. Cutting corners here by hiring a cheap video production service will undermine the credibility of the ad content.
6. Developing your ads in light of a thoughtful brand strategy, advertising strategy and marketing communication plan will ensure maximum success.
7. Plan and implement a media plan that will maximize your accuracy, effectiveness and budget.
8. If you can find a firm or strategic team that offers all these services, you are likely to have better results and fewer communication issues.

My philosophy on broadcast advertising is that it must contain benefit-driven content. And that content should not take a seat to entertainment, even when the entertainment is good. If a consumer is not in the market for your product – doesn't care about the benefit your product provides – then it won't matter that they are entertained, either.

However, if a consumer is truly seeking the benefits offered by your product, it is more important to convey those benefits, tell him/her what, when, why and how, than it is to provide them with entertainment.

If you adhere to these simple rules and philosophy, you will not be the next advertiser who gets a call from his good friend saying, "What were you thinking?"

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