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In the first two parts of this series, we explored the fundamentals of writing copy for print media. This time we'll take a look at the unique copy requirements of television and radio.

Even if you've written your own print ads, you may feel that you are in over your head in the world of broadcast media. It's tempting to take a radio or TV station up on their offer to write the copy for you. Resist the enticement with a polite "no thank you." Rarely, if ever, will the resulting ads set you apart from your competitors.

Radio

When you place a radio ad, you're speaking to a captive audience - the listener has to take an action (actively change the station) to pass by your ad. Because listeners are often sitting alone (frequently in their cars), speak to them like you're having a one-on-one conversation. Address them directly, and your message will get across.

Use these tips to learn more about what it takes to use radio successfully.

- A good radio ad doesn't differ greatly in structure from any other type of ad. Begin with a headline - in this case, a strong opening line that tells the listener what you're going to tell them. Then tell them. Then finish by telling them what you've already told them. End your ad with a call to action - buy our product, read our magazine, call now, etc.

- On radio, you need to keep your message simple and focused. Choose one theme and stick to it. Remember that it takes longer to say something out loud than it does to read it. The average 30-second radio spot contains only about 70 words. Mention your company name at least three times in those 30 seconds.

- Different radio stations require different types of ads. In "Guerrilla Advertising," Jay Levinson identifies two basic types of stations. "Background" stations are on in the background and are typically music stations that are listened to passively. "Foreground" stations require active listening. They would include talk radio, all-news radio, call-in shows, and the like. Make your ad sensitive to the format to keep the listener's attention - don't use a "voice-only" ad on a music station; don't put a country and western jingle on a classical music station; and don't use a music-driven ad on talk radio.

- You have two basic choices when it comes to creating a radio ad. You can provide a script and have it read by the announcer. Or you can provide a tape. If you choose the latter, have a professional announcer read the copy; and consider using background music or sound effects as a way of making the ad stand out.

- If you're using a script, consider placing your ads on the show of a well-known radio personality. By having the personality read your ad, it will sound like a testimonial. And make sure the personality is familiar with your product or service - send them a sample, if appropriate.

- Repetition is very important in radio, because it takes several airings for the listener to become familiar with your name and product or service. Frequency helps you break through the clutter. Consider running your spots at the same time every day for a week. Take a week off and then run it for another week.

Television

You might think of television as the exclusive domain of corporate advertising. But with the growth of cable and the ability to broadcast to a specific region, television can be used effectively by small businesses too. This medium must be utilized carefully, because it can be easily misused - a bad ad not only makes you look silly, but can actually decrease your customer base.

These tips can help you use advertising correctly.

- Television is a visual medium. You need to communicate your message visually; the viewer should be able to tell what the ad is about with the sound off. Therefore, your visuals should be the most important part of your ad. Your script -- the actual words used during the commercial -- is the least important part.
- Successful television advertising sells through emotions. Television viewers rarely remember the details of an ad, but they can recall how the ad made them feel. Make sure they feel motivated after viewing yours.
- Get to the point. You have about two seconds to grab the television viewer's attention, so use a strong opening image - the visual equivalent of a strong headline. You then have a total of maybe five seconds to say what the ad is about - if it's not clear you've lost the viewer for the entire ad.
- Keep your message simple. Stress your benefits. And remember to stress them visually. You can do this by "showing" what they are, rather than just "telling" what they are.
- Be sure to tell the viewer your name visually. Put it right there up on the screen, along with your logo, and your address and phone number. Better yet, hit them twice by having the voice-over announcer read it aloud at the same time.
- Don't forget your call to action. Tell the viewer what to do - Call now!!!; Visit your local dealer; Compare the value; Come see us; etc.

Broadcast media can give you impact and communicate emotion and identity faster than any print media and it probably should be part of your ad plans. Guerrillas know that just because Super Bowl ads cost a bundle doesn't mean they can't be on TV too!