

Developing a Media Plan

A media plan is how you will allocate your available advertising dollars to get your desired message across to your customers. Before you begin spending those dollars make sure that you have considered these factors:

- **Do you know who your customer is? What does the message need to be?**
- **How do you reach your customers? What age group do you need to reach?**
- **What is the goal for your business?**
- **What role does your advertising have to play for you to achieve your goal?**

Following is a list of advertising mediums with their strengths and weaknesses:

Newspaper

Strengths:

- Reaches a large audience (age 35+) in a single exposure
- Specific sections for specific types of businesses
- Useful for detailed messages
- Can have choice of ad size
- Traditional

Weaknesses:

- Only circulate twice a week
- Rates are climbing faster than circulation
- Circulation doesn't necessarily mean ad readership
- Doesn't effectively reach 18-34 demographic
- Deadlines
- No protection from competitors
- Ad may get lost in advertising clutter.

Cable Listings

Strengths:

- Low cost audio and visual presentation
- Information with advertising combined

Weaknesses:

- Requires a cable hookup
- Increased satellite dish ownership
- Difficult to follow
- Difficult to change advertising messages
- Advertisers are bound a long-term contract
- Short attention span of viewer

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Outdoor Signs

Strengths:

- Colorful, large billboards with striking images and brief slogans get notice
- Can be illuminated and animated
- Variable locations
- Effective for communicating simple ideas
- On display 24 hours per day 365 days per year
- Can support ads in other media

Weaknesses:

- Inflexible
- Copy must be brief
- Readership and physical condition deteriorate
- Only reaches customers outside their homes
- Recall is low, effectiveness is difficult to measure
- Subject to traffic flow

Radio

Strengths:

- Time spent with radio is second only to television
- Radio is virtually everywhere
- It is a 24 hour medium
- Reaches consumers when they are close to making a buying decision
- Can reach specific demographics
- Guaranteed 10 minute competitive clearance

Weaknesses:

- Difficult to measure effectiveness
- Cannot demonstrate or show the product
- Time limitation on messages
- Hard to tell if your demographic is listening at that time
- Difficult for people to remember details without written copy
- Ad may get lost in the advertising clutter

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Yellow Pages

Strengths:

- Reaches customers at exact time they are ready to make a purchase
- Can accommodate a great amount of information
- Has a solid, proven reputation
- Every house with a phone has one

Weaknesses:

- Copy restrictions: the ad must be about your business, not about a promotion
- No competitive protection
- Passive in that it is not used until the final purchase moment

Direct mail (flyers and brochures)

Strengths:

- Capable of targeting specific groups
- Production costs can be tightly controlled
- Can cover every household
- Response rate is easily measured
- Mailings can be personalized

Weaknesses:

- Mailing lists can quickly become inaccurate
- Mailing costs can become high
 - Difficult to coordinate a promotion with mailing costs
 - E-mail is slowly taking over
 - Direct mail often gets thrown away unopened
 - Inflexible, requires a lot of lead time

As stated earlier, the task at hand is to determine which mediums, or media best fit your objectives and needs.

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Buy and Sells

Strengths:

- Appeals to bargain hunters
- Effective medium to reach buyers making a definite buying decisions
- Ads can contain a lot of relevant information
- Effective way to reach low income consumers
- Ad life is about one week
- Useful medium for price and item advertising

Weaknesses:

- Not read thoroughly and is quickly discarded
- Creativity is limited by low quality production capabilities
- Low circulation as it must be purchased
- Advertisers are bound by a long term contract

For More Information

Book: The Total Marketing and Sales Plan

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