



How do I design and advert?

The goal of most adverts is to get people to take some type of action - generally to get in contact with you in some way. Good advert design will help encourage people to do this.

Advert Layout

Research by an advertising chap called David Ogilvy found that most people scan an advert in this order; visual, caption, headline, copy and contact information. This gave rise to the basic Ogilvy arrangement, so called after his most successful adverts for some of the largest companies and corporations in America.

Basic Z arrangement

Imagine the letter Z over the advert. Place important details or the first items you want customers to read across the top. The eye naturally follows the path of the Z so put the contact details or call to action across the bottom. Other details should run down the central slant.

Single Visual Layout

Although it is possible to use multiple illustrations, one of the most powerful layouts is to use one very strong visual with a short headline.

Illustrated Layout

Use photos or illustrations to show the product in use or just grab the attention through humour, size or dramatic content.

Top Heavy Layout

Place the image in the upper half of the advert or on the left hand side of the space with a strong headline before or after the image.

Things To Consider

Use Contrast

White writing on a black background can grab the attention or using mostly greys with a big splash of colour can catch the eye. Alternatively try contrasting colours.

Balance

This doesn't mean that you have to line everything centrally and have two of everything, although this can be effective, but do be aware that it should look good. Try aligning everything to the left or to the right to see how it works. A well designed advert should look good upside down so print it off, hold it at arms length, turn it upside down and see how it looks.

Remember to Sell!

Know what the objective of your advert is before you start designing your advert and be critical as you create it that it meets that goal.

It could be that you want people to visit your website to get more information and to enable them to make an informed buying decision - if so does the advert encourage this and give a good enough reason for them to visit?

Are you offering a special discount or coupon to encourage people to use you instead of your competitors?

Your advert should provide a path for the customer to follow to reach your predetermined objective and deliver a clear call to action, together with your contact information in an easy to find position.

Reflect Your business

Customers don't always expect everyone to have a fancy, graphically designed, bells and whistles type of advert. It depends a lot on your business size, type and style. It can be off putting when expectations do not reflect the reality, customers may feel that they have been duped or tricked. This applies equally to both large and small businesses so take care. A simple black and white advert may be all that is needed to reflect your business and deliver your message and that time, equally a carefully crafted and well thought out and designed full colour advert might be more in keeping with the product or service you are promoting

Make it work for you

Importantly the advert has to feel comfortable and work for you. Think carefully about your advert design, what you want to say and how you would naturally say it. If it 'sounds' right to you then it is likely to feel right to your customers. If you were in front of one of your customers and explaining what it is you do, why you do it and why they should use you what would you say? Capture that, put those types of words and sentiments in an advert and it is likely that it will work well.

Things to avoid

Clutter

Don't try and fit too much into your advert. Using 'White Space' is a recognised method of making messages in adverts clearer and should not be considered as wastage space.

Unclear message

Do you know what your potential customers are looking for? Does your advert clearly identify how you can help them, bearing in mind the order that people scan adverts?

Graphics/Pictures

Avoid having too many small images or graphics. If they are too small to catch the readers attention at a quick glance and draw them to your advert then all they will do is distract and frustrate them.

Capitals.

Test have shown that peoples brains process words better when they are in lower case. In fact we can recognise rather than read many familiar words by the shape they form in lower case. Using capitals could just slow the reader down.

Errors

Incorrect details or spelling errors can be really annoying and very expensive. It is very easy to miss even the most glaring mistakes when you are involved in the creation of an advert. You get so caught up in the detail of how to layout the ad, which images to use, which font looks best etc that you can read an incorrect telephone number a few times and it doesn't even register. Take time out away from the advert before coming back to check everything is correct. Even better, get someone else to check it for you. Oh and never rely on spell checker to check your spellings'.

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