

THE 33 RUTHLESS RULES OF LOCAL ADVERTISING

By Michael Corbett

1. **Advertising Is Neither A Necessary Evil Nor A Cure All**
 - a. Many businesses stop advertising in slow times because they consider advertising little more than a necessary evil that may or may not be useful.
 - b. “Growth is relative,” between 10-30% more growth than a non-advertising competitor.
2. **Build A Rock-Solid Marketing Bridge**
 - a. People will perceive your business the way your marketing represents your business.
 - b. That means EVERYTHING—
 - *The phone:* How do you answer? How does your secretary answer? Do you answer by the second or third ring?
 - *Employees:* Their actions directly reflect upon your business.
 - *Business Name:* Does your name say what you do?
 - *Location:* Is it desirable? Is it hard to find?
 - *Store Visibility:* Can you see the store easily from the street?
 - *Signage*
 - *Inventory:* Do you carry what you advertise?
 - *Parking*
 - *Prices:* Are they higher or lower than your competitor?
 - *Service:* It will cost you six times more to get a new customer than it will to keep one! Be prepared!
 - *Quality*
 - *Image*
 - *Name Recognition:* Do people know who you are?
 - *General Customer Perception:* Repeat and referral business will be decided by the way your customers perceive you.
 - *Marketing Materials:* Are your commercials well done? Are your brochures spelled correctly? Are your inventory displays easy to read?
 - *Advertising:* The most crucial of all elements! Effective advertising will make or break your business.
3. **Compile An Accurate Profile Of Your Customers**
 - a. You must find a way to obtain and record accurate and updated information about your existing customers. This should include age, gender, income category, employment category, and how close they live to your specific business.
4. **Identify Your Target Market**
 - a. Who do you want to reach with your message?
 - b. Resist the temptation to be all things to all people.
5. **All The Advertising You Can Afford Isn't Worth The Customers You Already Have**

- a. Utilize things like warranties, questionnaires, or comment cards for names and demographic information on your existing customer base.
 - b. Your existing customers are your best prospects for reselling, cross-selling or up-selling.
- 6. Know What A New Customer Is Worth To You**
- a. By determining the value of a new customer, you can decide how much to invest to acquire a new customer through advertising and marketing.
- 7. Understand The Purpose Of Advertising**
- a. “The purpose of advertising is to create an equity position in a target market and to reach and motivate a sufficient number of consumers so that a business can realize a specific objective.”
 - b. This is where needing an equity position – when a customer thinks of your business first – becomes very important.
- 8. Set Measurable Growth Objectives**
- a. Decipher your average ticket – gross sales/sales over a given time.
 - b. Decipher your closing percentage - # of prospects/# of buyers.
 - c. Average daily floor traffic count
 - d. Estimated number of direct or major competitors
 - e. Your competitors’ estimated daily floor traffic
 - f. Total daily prospects available from competitors – how
- 9. Use The Single Most Powerful Tool In Local Advertising**
- a. Unique Selling Proposition or Preemptive Advantage – an outstanding feature or benefit that people can associate or identify with your business and your business alone.
- 10. If Your Doors Are Open, You Should Be Advertising**
- a. People shop all of the time. If you want a bigger share of the consumer market, you have to let people know about you. You do that by advertising
 - b. People move. There are always new consumers to educate and motivate.
 - c. People forget. How many impressions do you remember every day?
 - d. People often take their time before buying.
 - e. To establish an equity position in the consumer community – when someone needs your product or service – they think of you
- ** “Get into a consumer’s brain and you’ll get into their bank account”
- 11. Budget Adequately For Advertising**
- a. A business owner must be flexible!
 - b. A starting point is 5-10% of your sales
- 12. Think Long Term**
- a. At minimum, a local advertiser should have a long term, flexible budget, a USP and a commitment to at least a 12-month advertising plan.
 - b. You may get a good turnout for a special event, but you can’t count on any kind of consistent results with short term media schedule.
 - c. If you advertise from week to week, idea to idea, promotion to promotion, you’re usually going to end up disappointed.
 - d. You didn’t say “Let’s try this business for a month to see how it works,” did you?

13. Have A Potent Promotional Strategy

- a. A growth strategy consists of:
 - Informing: Getting specific with your target market about what you have to do
 - Persuading: Stressing the benefits and features of your product or services
 - Reminding: Consistently repeating certain things

14. Don't Advertise What You Can't Deliver

Enough Said!!

15. A Response Is Not A Result

- a. Response: When someone comments on your ads
- b. Results: When they buy something

THE TWO ARE NOT THE SAME!

16. Don't Ask Your Customers What Brought Them In

- a. People don't know what brought them in
- b. People don't know that they don't know what brought them in
- c. People don't like now knowing what brought them in and they want to be helpful. They'll make things up
- d. Never change your multiple media advertising plans based on what people say brought them in

17. Position Your Business

- a. Use a positions statement. Continually look for opportunities to position your business relative to your competitors, and then tell your market about it.

18. Week, Sloppy, Boring, Sleepy, Careless, Pointless, Cookie-Cutter, Cliché' Filled Copy Won't Do!

- a. K.I.S.S. – “Keep It Simple, Stupid”
- b. Never mention your competitors in your ads
- c. Stay away from clichés
- d. Make it easy for people to find you
- e. Sell benefits and features
- f. Use one idea at a time
- g. Credentialize – “industry recognized”

19. Use The 10 Critical Components Of Copy

- a. A powerful opening statement
- b. The basic story
- c. The proposition
- d. The exact offer
- e. A guarantee
- f. A call to action
- g. Your name
- h. Your location (s)
- i. USP
- j. Marketing bridge elements that need addressing
- k. The A.I.D.A. formula works well
 - Attention

- Interest
- Desire
- Action

20. Use Advertising's Most Compelling Words

- a. There are certain “buzz” words when used in electronic media that seem to get the consumers attention better such as: you, easy, results, free, save, fast, new, why, love, how, guarantee, startling, sale, benefits, and yes!

21. Always Get Two Prospects For The Price Of One

- a. There's another pool of prospects who are not shopping right now, but might be shoppers within the next few months
- b. Persuade the now buyer pool to act in your favor now, and prepare the future buyer pool by gaining an equity position now.

22. Understand The Objective Of Media Salespeople

23. Any Medium Will Work If you Know How To Work The Medium

- a. Radio is the quintessential “let's try it for a week and see how it works” medium. The way it is generally sold is with the impression that short-term schedules will get impressive result but it doesn't always work that way.

24. Understand The Basics Of Electronic Media Ratings

- a. Cume – the number of unduplicated listeners who tuned into a station at least five minutes of a particular time period.
- b. Average Quarter Hour Persons – the average number of people in a particular demographic who listen to a station for at least five minutes during an average quarter hour within a given time period
- c. Average Quarter Hour Rating – The average audience for a demographic group expressed as a percentage of all persons estimated to be in that demographic group.
- d. Net Frequency – the average number of times that a listener is exposed to a commercial within the expressed time period
- e. Cost Per Point (CPP) – the cost of each rating point for a specific schedule.

25. Stop Spraying And Praying

- a. The “shotgun” approach – trying to reach everyone out there
- b. Successful local advertising is not a function of reaching large numbers of people. It is a function of convincing the relatively few prospects you can afford to reach to do business with you and not your competitors.
- c. You cannot expect to compete effectively when you scatter your ad budget to the local media winds.

26. Use A Proven Scheduling Formula

- a. Choose a medium to dominate
- b. Determine if your chosen medium for domination reaches a sufficient number of your target consumer
- c. Schedule electronic ads for impact
- d. Determine the relative affordability of the schedule
- e. Make a twelve-month buy with a four month option

27. Demand Absolute Accountability

- a. Set up a monthly tracking system
- b. Compare year to year, month to month
- c. Evaluate your advertising results after four months

28. Never Get Diverted From The Real Issues

- a. Are my gross sales satisfactory? Simply pay attention to your gains or losses.

29. Don't Forget How People Remember

- a. The object is to inform, persuade and remind – constantly.
- b. Remember that repetition is the key to learning anything.
- c. Remember that people forget

30. Sell Something More Profitable Than Low Price

- a. Tell your consumers how good your product really is.
- b. Establish your business as the place to go if you want the very best.

31. Avoid The Sale Syndrome

- a. Sales can be successful if used sparingly.
- b. Remember the story of the “Boy Who Cried Wolf?”
- c. As a result of too many sales, the only sales viewed as legitimate are those conducted by companies that have very few of them.

32. Let Your Employees In On Your Advertising Plans

- a. Let everyone in the company know about your advertising plans.
- b. Have meetings, read them your copy, play them your ad.
- c. Tell your employees when you are advertising
- d. Make employees aware of specials, offers, and what is on sale.
- e. Tell them your purpose and work together towards your growth goal.

33. Let Go Of The Branch

- a. Often traditions, beliefs, opinions, preferences, circumstances and rules get challenged. For the most part, people choose to remain well inside their comfort zones.
- b. You gain nothing if you risk nothing!