

## Putting Your name Out There

Last month I wrote about three capabilities of advertising: *keeping* your name in front of your customers, *putting* your name out in front of potential customers, and *educating* both customers and potential customers by telling them exactly what they could be buying from you. The key to success, I wrote, is to have both your name *and* your product line in front of all those people!

I also wrote that your website should be the core of your advertising program, because it represents a huge canvas that can be used to tell your entire story. Many quick/digital/small commercial printers are using postcards and other “smaller-format” media to advertise/market their businesses. There’s certainly a place for those media in your advertising program, but I think their best use is to drive people to your website where they can learn—where you can tell them!—much more about you.

I promised to write more this month about advertising/marketing, so here are a few more strategies and tactics that to consider.

### Wrap It Up!

Quite a few quick/digital/small commercial printers have dedicated delivery trucks or vans. Another group uses a personal vehicle for business purposes, including “interesting” designs like the Honda Element or the Chrysler PT Cruiser. What all of these share is the potential to serve as mobile signage, *putting* your name out there in front of customers and potential customers. If I were you, I would definitely look into wrapping your vehicle.

You can learn a lot about the state-of-the-art in vehicle wraps in *QP’s* sister publication, *Wide Format Imaging* ([www.wide-formatimaging.com](http://www.wide-formatimaging.com)). For today’s purposes, I think it’s enough to say that some very cool things are being done with this combination of printing technology and marketing imagination. You may even be able to print the wrapping on one of your own wide-format devices (although I can tell you that installation is one of the art forms in this product category!)

You should certainly be able to participate in the design of a cool full or partial wrap for your vehicle. Check the Yellow Pages or search online for someone who can do the rest.

### Yellow Pages

While we’re on the subject of the Yellow Pages, I would spend only a very small part of my marketing budget on this medium. The idea of “dominating” your page or category made some sense back when the Yellow Pages was the first place people looked for a place to buy something, but in the Internet era, the “Big Book” just doesn’t stand up as a place to put your money. I can’t remember the last time I took mine down off the shelf.

The Yellow Pages does share one characteristic with Internet searches, though. The people who find you through either medium tend to be shoppers. When casual buyers look in the Yellow Pages they find many printers and usually call a few of them. When they search online it’s usually the same result.

Here’s some advice, though. When these “shoppers” call you or e-mail you or put their specs in for an estimate at your website, *do not* complain! When you advertise, you’re asking for people to give you a shot at their business. The more public your advertising, the more likely it is that you’ll get responses from price shoppers and casual buyers. When they respond, it just means that your advertising is working! You may never have thought about it in this way, but the best you can hope for from any sort of “directory” advertising is probably to find an occasional gem among the stones.

### Large Format

While we’re somewhere near the subject of large format printing, I would also be considering billboard advertising if I were you. As I wrote earlier, I like the idea of mobile signage, but I also like the idea of a big sign that just sits there—as long as it sits in a high-traffic area! That’s the key to billboard advertising, and I think it offers a significant advantage over radio, which is a medium that many printers seem to want to try, but with little success.

The two are similar in that both media are experienced from a car. (Obviously you don’t have to be in a car to listen to a radio, but isn’t it true that radio advertising salespeople are always pushing the value of “drive time” spots?) My primary problem with radio has always been picking the right station—1000 cars with their radios on could easily be listening to 50 different stations. Beyond that, not every car has its radio on.

A billboard, on the other hand, is hard to miss, especially one you drive by regularly. True, over time it becomes “part of the landscape,” but that usually happens *after* it imprints on your consciousness. If your goal is to *put* your

name out there, a billboard in a good location can definitely do that. It can also list your product line and invite people to visit your website!

### **Ad Specialties**

Ad specialty items provide another great way to *keep* or *put* your name out there. Your choices range from inexpensive pens and other trinkets to items of greater perceived value; for example, imprinted flash drives are pretty hot right now in the promotional products marketplace. I have a special place in my marketing heart for imprinted t-shirts, in fact, I wrote about that all the way back in 1992! (“The Year of the T-Shirt,” *QP*, October 1992, which you can still find in the article archives at [www.davefellman.com](http://www.davefellman.com).) I’m also still a fan of imprinted note pads, which carry a high perceived value and a very modest cost for a printing company.

### **Multi Media**

The original question was “what works?” in terms of advertising. I hope you’ll see that there are quite a few viable strategies, and I hope you’ll also see how the individual elements can be combined into a comprehensive, multi-media strategy that could really work for you.

Right now I’m thinking about a two-pronged program to *drive* people to your website, consisting of e-mails to the people you have e-mail addresses for, and postcards to the people you don’t. In both cases, the incentive is a free ad specialty item, which they get by registering at your website, a process that involves some exposure to your product line. And while the e-mail or postcard might come out of the blue to some of the people on your mailing/e-mailing list, some others may say: “Oh yeah, I know this company. I’ve bought my letterhead from them, I wonder what else they sell?” or “I’ve seen their truck/van/billboard a million times. I’ve even thought about calling them, but I’ve never quite gotten around to it. I think I’ll do that right now.”

That sounds like effective advertising to me!