

## Low Carb Marketing

The latest Cracker Jack print ad is pretty irresistible, and if you're like most of us mortals, you'll actually stop to read and "interact" with it. The ad features the familiar Cracker Jack prize box centered in a vast full-page of white space. The "prize box" is perforated, luring readers to tear it open and peek inside where you are introduced to a new Cracker Jack product. The Frito-Lay/PepsiCo folks have paid big bucks for the production (about \$9,200) and placement (\$millions) for that tiny advertising message, yet its graphic uses a mere 1/12<sup>th</sup> or so of its full-page allotment. *Which is exactly why it's so memorable.* Does the less-is-more brevity rule apply to advertising? I offer a resounding "yes!"

Here are general guidelines for effective, pared-down advertising & PR that will serve you well:

**News releases:** 250 factual words. Just the facts, please -- no essays, no subjective copy. Editors don't want to wade through a writer's glowing details. In most cases, they want just enough info to allow them to research and pursue the story for themselves.

**PSAs** – 30 seconds for broadcast; 4-5 short paragraphs for print. Never overwrite a PSA.

**Billboards** --Seven punchy words or less, *including the words in the logo.* Look around and observe how many billboards break this less-is-more rule. Then remember the impact and success of the "Got Milk?" or "Think Different" messages that delight us as consumers and compel us to act.

The following are a few great billboard design examples carrying punchy, succinct messages created by local ad agencies (local businesses should opt to use the highly-creative agencies in Macon instead of going out-of-market):

- "Retail Therapy" created for Colonial Mall
- "Rest Assured" created for Riverside Cemetery
- "Get a Knight Life" created for The Macon Knights

**Radio spots** – The standard 60 seconds, including music, before & after

**Television spots** – Ideally 10, 15 or 30 seconds, but no more than 60

**Web sites** – Here's a website secret that many big, savvy companies already know and smaller companies are catching onto everyday:

The most effective commerce sites now feature succinct, pared-down content, fluidity, and function – they are not the flashy "bells & whistles" sites of yesterday. Today a truly effective website is much more than a pretty face and more than a brochure-on-line; it's a way for potential clients to receive pertinent information and interact with real people who can help them do business.

**Print ads** – You’ve got headline type (called “display type”) and text copy type. Use no more than three different fonts on one print ad. For maximum readability, forget using all caps in text copy and adjust the leading (spaces between lines). Copy should be short and succinct with as few prepositional phrases as possible.

**Direct mail** -- The exception for print is direct mail which uses a dense form all its own. With direct mail messages, more is best. Effective direct mail pieces are copy-heavy and include several pieces, including a lengthy, single-spaced cover letter that extends to the bottom of the back page. Studies show that people who respond favorably to direct mail (and some actually do!) are those folks who want every fact, every nuance of the offer you’re presenting.

To recap, always consider what you can *cut out* or *reduce*, instead of what you can add. In a world already glutted with information, your advertising message will have much greater impact and recall if it’s lean and clean.

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