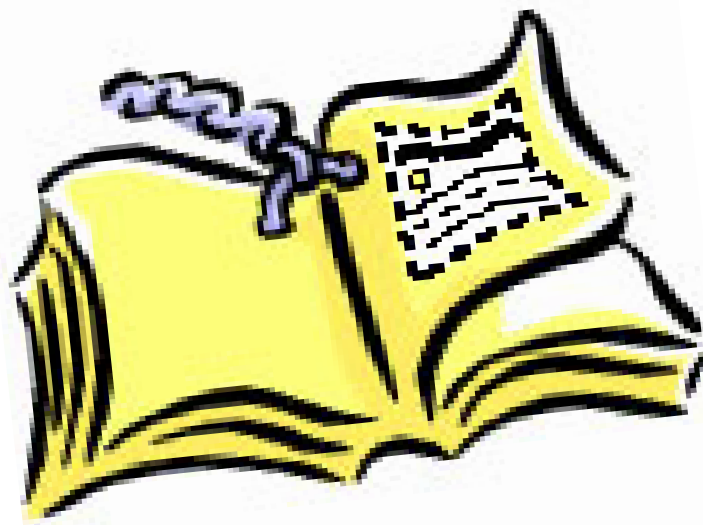


Yellow Pages

SUCCESS SECRETS



**How To Attract More New Business With
A Riveting Ad That Captures Immediate
Attention... Arouses Intense Interest...
and Gets The Call Every Time!**

Robert Boduch

Yellow Pages Success Secrets

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Introduction

The Yellow Pages can be an extremely effective advertising vehicle for businesses that serve a local region. Yellow Pages have the most extensive distribution system and a long-lasting shelf life that's tough to beat with any other advertising venue.

Everyone knows about the Yellow Pages. Every home and business receives at least one copy of each issue. It's often the first place anxious buyers turn to find suitable solutions to their needs and desires. For newcomers to an area, it may be the only place they look, as they likely have not yet established new buying patterns.

Most people expect to find certain types of businesses listed there, so reach for the Yellow Pages as a primary source of information. The Yellow Pages are often the preferred choice for both a consumer and business buyer looking for products and services that aren't required on a regular basis. Many use the Yellow Pages to shop around for a better selection or price. What makes the Yellow Pages such an effective marketing tool is one proven fact: people use it when they're ready to buy.

The only downside of Yellow Pages advertising, if there is one, is the cost. It takes money and a year-long commitment to place a good-sized ad there. But for many businesses, there's no more effective way to attract new customers and additional revenue.

If you're going to advertise in the Yellow Pages, you should do all you can to make it pay off. After all, it costs the same to run an ineffective ad, as it does to run a super-responsive one.

A quick look through the Yellow Pages directory from any city reveals an abundance of weak, under-performing ads. There's a similar pattern used by most

advertisers, that is considerably less effective in producing results, than it could be. Most of these businesses are spending hundreds of dollars every month on ads that are weak and unresponsive. And that's a shame.

If you currently advertise in the Yellow Pages or are considering it at some point, here are 93 surefire tips, tactics, and ideas to help you get the maximum return from your advertising investment.

Getting Started

1. Give yourself plenty of time to create your ad. Nothing breeds advertising mediocrity like an impending deadline. Know your deadlines in advance and beat them by a week or two. Once you've completed an ad, file it away for a day or two and try to completely forget about it during this time. When you look at it again, you'll likely come up with a few simple changes that will make your ad even stronger. Tinker with it until you've done all you can to improve response.
2. Before you sit down to create your ad, take the time to do some planning. Most successful ads begin with a plan. A plan gives you an outline or a framework to follow. Your answers to the questions below will help organize your thoughts and provide a foundation to build your ad upon.

What results do you want to achieve?

What approximate percentage of new business do you expect from your Yellow Pages ad?

What action do you want to encourage prospects to take?

Who is your target prospect?

What is the biggest benefit you can offer in your ad?

What are the secondary benefits that could also help draw responses?

What approach will you use to capture attention and attract interest?

What size of ad best meets your requirements and budget?

Which directories will the ad be placed in?

3. Review what your competitors are doing... and then go in an opposite direction. Resist the temptation to present your advantages in the same way. You should definitely avoid the common approach used by most Yellow Pages advertisers. That approach consists of:

- company name and logo
- brief description of products and/or services

- location and hours of operation
- something about what you special, or...
- company slogan

Since most advertisers use this basic format, or some similar variation, you should not. Distinction is the most important factor to consider and the greater your competition, the stronger your distinction needs to be. Your objective in creating Yellow Pages advertising should be to:

- (A) Grab your prospect's attention...
- (B) Sell this prospect on your unique advantages – advantages that distinguish you from everyone else in your field of endeavor...
- (C) Encourage your prospect to take immediate action of some kind.

4. Visualize the mental process your prospect goes through when he needs the kind of product, service or solution you offer. Get inside your prospect's mind at the time he reaches for the Yellow Pages. This is the key to connecting with the people who will ultimately determine your degree of success – your prospects and customers. Put yourself in their shoes. Then ask yourself, "what would make me call one company over another?" Understanding the "wants" and "needs" of your market is a fundamental requirement of an ad that pulls superior results.
5. Do a little research on your own, before committing to colored ink. Additional colors (black is standard) cost more, so take the time to query advertisers who are currently using other colors. Ask if they've received more leads and/or customers, as a result of using additional color in their Yellow Pages ads. If your budget only allows for one option — additional colors OR a larger size ad – go with the larger display ad.
6. Consider all options for placement within each directory. Often, several different headings may be suitable for your ad. A custom cabinetmaker may prefer an obvious category such as *Cabinetmakers*; however, potential clients might first search headings like *Home Improvements* or *Woodworkers*. You want to be sure to have an adequate presence wherever your prospects are most likely to look for your type of product or service. Choose the heading that's the best "fit" for your business.
7. Examine each possible category and note the size of competing ads. If there are plenty of ads in a particular category, chances are that many of them are identical sizes. Advertisers often have a tendency to do exactly as the competition does. Nothing more. Nothing less. It seems reassuring on some level, but in fact it's a fatal flaw. To succeed you need to stand apart from all competitors instead of blending in. Sameness breeds mediocrity.

8. Study the various ads under a separate heading – one that’s unrelated to your business. View the ads as a prospect would. Ask yourself “Who would I call and why?” Pay attention to your thought processes as you eliminate potential candidates from the running. Make a list of the things that made you favor one company over another. Do this for a few different headings and you’ll gain some valuable insights into what elements attract business and what elements actually deter it.
9. Appeal to your customer’s self-interest. Ask yourself this question: “What is it that I’m really selling?” *Rolex* doesn’t sell watches, they sell luxury. *LensCrafters* doesn’t sell eyeglasses, they sell better eyesight. *Seven-Eleven* doesn’t sell milk and bread, they sell convenience. Take a closer look at your product or service. Find out the underlying reasons why people buy in your category. Then construct your ad to appeal to these important factors. Understanding why people buy is a prerequisite to creating an ad that works well.
10. Create an outline of your ad using the 4 ingredients of a powerful Yellow Pages ad:
 - Captivating Headline
 - Unique Benefits
 - Enticing Offer
 - Contact Information
11. Study Yellow Pages ads from other cities. You can find them at your local library or online. Look up your own specific category and observe how others have approached the same marketing challenges you’re facing. Also, browse through categories that are completely unrelated to your field. Keep your eyes open for ideas, concepts, strategies, or tactics that may be transferable to your industry.
12. Decide on the size of your ad before you begin the actual design. Then, create your ad to that exact size. Use whatever zoom function your software program features to make your ad the full size of your screen. This will help you make the smallest of adjustments quite easily and will prevent mistakes that are routinely overlooked at a scaled-down size.

Strategies For Success

13. Give your prospects the information they need at the “moment of truth” when they’re ready to make a purchasing decision. Most Yellow Pages readers are ready to buy NOW. They only reach for the Yellow Pages and refer to a specific category when they are serious about finding a solution to a problem.

They want to know who can best help them. Therefore, it stands to reason that your message should be based on solutions, advantages and customer benefits. Focus your message on what you do and how you benefit customers, rather than on who you are.

14. Create an original look that clearly and succinctly communicates your unique advantages and gives prospects a reason to call you. Your advertisement should answer a vital question: "What's special about your company and why should people call you?" Take the time and make the effort to create an ad that works hard for you the whole yearlong. Focus on creating a distinctive, benefit-oriented ad.
15. Use your most valuable space to attract interest by appealing to the "wants" of your customers. The most common mistake made by Yellow Pages advertisers and the biggest waste of prime advertising space is the use of a company name and/or logo at the top of the ad as a header. To do this is to give up your most valuable space for something that is virtually meaningless to your customers and prospects.

Choosing a display type ad frees you of the obligatory company name-heading format that other listings may require. Does your prospect really care what you've named your company? I highly doubt it. What your prospect does care about is whether you have what he needs NOW. Can you provide the solution to his pressing problem?

16. Pack as much sales power into whatever space you can afford. Many people equate advertising clout with success. For some, the bigger the ad, the more established... more impressive... more likely to meet the need a company appears. This may be unfair... but it's also a reality. If you can't compete on size, compete on impact, power and on motivating action.
17. Avoid using the same old tired, worn out cliches to describe your product or service. Phrases like "quality workmanship", "fast, reliable service", or "friendly staff" are too generic to be effective in attracting new customers. Instead, try to create something original, something that half a dozen other companies in the same category aren't also claiming to offer.
18. Create a distinctive look and feel to your ads. Sound-alike ads have a neutralizing effect on each other. Most ads in a given category basically say the same thing. They communicate the same message. Why? I have a theory. With the deadline fast approaching, the busy entrepreneur looks at the other ads in his area and creates his own based on what appears to be working for others. Big mistake.

19. Make your ad stand out head and shoulders above the rest of the ads on the page. This shouldn't be too difficult since 95% of all Yellow Pages ads follow the standard approach. Any departure from this traditional format is a step in the right direction.
20. Position yourself as helpful and interested in serving the needs of your market. Separate your business from all others by offering a few simple tips in your area of expertise that could save people time money or spare them frustration or aggravation. For example, safety supply house could offer a few safety tips; a mailing list broker could offer tips on how to test a list. This information could be presented in a side bar of your ad. Details presented in this manner produce a visual draw without detracting from your sales message.

This strategy gives you a decided advantage over your competition. When help of a related kind is required, you have a greater chance at being the business of choice. Offering a few helpful ideas benefits you four ways:

1. It makes your ad different from the others...
 2. It creates warm feelings towards your company...
 3. It helps place you in the category of "expert" in your industry...
 4. It makes you unique because nobody else is doing this.
21. Make it clear to shoppers why they should choose you. Give them a strong reason. Offer an advantage. Spend most of your creative ad development on this. It's the most important part of your ad. Present this information in your headline and follow it up quickly with a few bullet-point reasons for your prospects to call or visit you.
 22. Establish distinction three ways: the layout... the verbal description and the overall visual design of your ad. The process should begin with a review of competing ads. For example... consider using plenty of words detailing your advantages if your competitors use just a handful. Try a poster-like announcement that stands out like a beacon when surrounded by the sameness of typical ads.
 23. Venture out into new territory. A riveting, never-seen-before ad can have a lasting effect on those exposed to it and a very profitable effect on you. Powerful communications can leave an indelible impression on the minds of shoppers who may be candidates for your product or service in the future. Memorable ads have impact long after the directory has been placed back on the shelf. Beat others to the punch and reap the rewards before they can copy your style.

24. Use human nature to your advantage. The two levers of human motivation are the fear of loss and the hope for reward. All buying motivations boil down to one of the two. A solid knowledge of your prospect should lead you to the most effective approach for your audience. Using this strategy can be strikingly powerful when appropriately applied.
25. Dare to be different. After all, it's your business. It's your future and the future of all those who depend on you. You put in the hours and you've invested the capital. You take the risks. So never settle for an ad that's the same as others. To rise above the competition, cast your company in a different light. Never settle for average results. This is apparently what most advertisers want- the same kind of results as their competitors are getting. It may be enough to get by. You could even do quite well. But any similarity to your competitor's ads will only weaken your own results. Avoid the mold set by others. Instead, strive for differentiation. If you want to achieve breakthrough results, you have to be willing to break with tradition.
26. Make people feel good about their decision to call you. Reward them. Welcome them. Over-deliver on the promises mentioned in your ad. That's a certain way of generating repeat business. Remember, a prospect that calls based on your ad, has certain preconceived notions about your company. You are held in high regard, at least for the moment. Your prospect has high hopes and expectations. You have a standard to live up to; beginning with the way the call is answered.
27. Use the Yellow Pages in conjunction with other marketing methods. Marketing includes everything you do to promote your business from the moment you conceive it, to the service you provide after the sale. Multiple media equals multiplied exposure. A marketing mix that involves several methods of promotion is more effective than any single method.
28. Maintain a single focus. Most consumers tend to one thing only from any given advertisement, if they remember anything at all. For this reason, I recommend using one strong claim in your headline and then following along this theme with additional facts presented as benefits to substantiate this central claim. Beware of competing facts that may dilute your message.
29. Present what you offer as an immediate solution to a problem... an answer to a need... the gratification of a desire. Remember that Yellow Pages shoppers are ready to buy so give them what they want, when they want it.
30. Boost the power of your ad by using proven enhancements. Components that can make your Yellow Pages ad stronger include:

- USP (Unique Selling Proposition) – an original, identifiable claim that separates you from all competitors
 - Premiums – Freebies or incentives to encourage response
 - Credibility Boosters – proof that you have what it takes to best supply what buyers want
 - Features connected to benefits – adds power, believability and understanding to any benefits offered
31. Avoid telling prospects that they can “find you fast in the Yellow Pages”. This is a terrible mistake – yet it’s one I see being made all the time. Sure, your prospective customers might find you there. Truth is... they’ll also find your competitors. This eliminates any advantage you might have had. Now there are plenty of other ads vying for the same prospect’s attention and business.
32. Track every response. Knowing where the call originated is critical in determining future advertising strategy. When you have the same ad running in multiple directories, it pays to know which directory a caller used to locate you. Sometimes it may be obvious. Other calls won’t be as easy to trace back to a specific listing. Identifying the source of every caller gives you accurate measurement of each ad’s effectiveness.
33. Sell the sizzle. The Yellow Pages is a dictionary-like resource guide used by huge numbers of ready-to-buy shoppers. Many reach for the Yellow Pages because they need information. They want the facts, so give it to them. But provide it with a little sizzle. When you stress the benefits, you’re selling the sizzle. Your challenge is to make the benefits more appealing than your competitors. Benefits are the advantages or helpful results customers get as a result of buying your product or service.
34. Test and record the effectiveness of each ad. This provides you with valuable data you can use to choose the size and placement of future ads. The easiest way to measure your ad’s results is to list a separate telephone number for each ad – one that isn’t advertised or used for any other purpose. When the phone rings, you’ll automatically be able to identify the advertisement that triggered it.
35. Provide a secondary line where prospects call for detailed information, product updates, special sell-offs or discounted prices. This number should be play a lesser role visually in the ad, apart from the main telephone number you want prospects and customers to use. Having a separate number allows interested prospects to gather additional information anonymously. It gives you the opportunity to sell more products or services using voice mail as the medium.

36. Protect yourself from having your winning ad stolen by a competitor. When you've employed some of these concepts and you have an ad that looks like a sure-fire success, add a brief copyright notice. Simply place the following somewhere in your ad in small type: copyright © 2000 (your company name). This kind of notice serves as a deterrent, one that should make would be thieves think twice before attempting to rip-off you're winning ideas.

Ideas for Content

36. Supply the details Yellow Pages shoppers want to see. Here's a list of some of the things typical buyers want and look for:

- Fast service
- Reputable companies
- Availability
- Professionalism
- Guarantees
- Free offers
- Specialization
- Specific numbers
- Hours of business
- Location
- Why they should choose you
- Reliability
- Capability
- Easy access

37. Write an attention-getting headline that appeals to the market you want to reach. The headline is the most important component of a Yellow Pages ad. The headline is the lure that instantly communicates your primary advantages over all others. A strong benefit-oriented headline is critical to achieving maximum results from your ad. Lead with a headline instead of your company name.

38. Give your audience a reason to respond to your ad. Provide a call to action. Invite them to call or visit for a free sample or premium. You can build your own in-house list of prospects this way, a list you can later mine, over and over again. These are qualified prospects for the kind of products/services that you offer, by virtue of that fact they took the time to reply.

39. Position yourself as helpful and interested in serving the needs of your market. Separate your business from all others by offering a few simple tips in your area of expertise that could save people time, money, or spare them frustration and aggravation. For example, a safety supply house could offer a few safety tips; a

mailing list broker could offer tips on how to test a list. The information could be presented in a side bar of your ad. Information presented in this manner produces a visual draw, without detracting from your sales message.

This strategy gives you a decided advantage over your competition. When help of a related kind is required, you have a greater chance at being the business of choice. Offering a few helpful ideas benefits you 4 ways:

1. It makes your ad different from the others...
2. It creates warm feelings towards your company...
3. It helps place you in the category of an expert in your industry...
4. It makes you unique because nobody else is doing this.

40. Pack an extra punch into your headline. With a smaller Yellow Pages ad, you won't be able to fit many details. The headline is the most important component on your ad. With a smaller ad, it needs to work even harder. It's your strongest lure. That's why the company name as a headline just doesn't cut it.

41. Add power. A smaller ad with impact will out-pull a larger ad without it. The key to implementing impact is to hit quickly and hit hard with your most powerful benefit message. How? One way is to use an oversized, bold headline that gets right to the point. Your headline must attract the attention of your prospect by appealing to his/her specific wants, needs or desires. Then follow up with several quick, bullet-point benefits that can be read at a glance. Impact makes the difference.

42. Create a different message and present it with your own flair. Find your strongest, most appealing advantage, then, present it in a way that beckons the reader's attention. Be original. All the other ads on the pages are shouting out to the same prospects, trying to grab their attention. For your ad to reach out and grab the prospect, it must be unique amidst the sea of similarities. One way to do this is with a short headline in large type, draped diagonally across the ad space.

43. Arrest the attention of your prospect. Stop him cold. The most effective headlines are stoppers; they immediately halt the reader in his tracks and pull him in to read the rest of your ad. Even the scanning eye is magnetically drawn inside by the irresistible pull of a good headline.

44. Keep your Yellow Pages headlines short and to the point. I recommend using no more than a handful of words... up to seven or eight, maximum. If you can generate the right kind of attention with fewer words, so much the better. Some excellent Yellow Pages ads feature one-word headlines. To come up with a winning headline, experiment by writing out a dozen or two possibilities. The key behind a successful headline is to make it impossible for readers to ignore.

45. Stress the benefits, not the features. Features are the physical characteristics of your product or service. The benefits are the useful or helpful advantages provided by a feature. The benefits are what the customer gets as a result of owning the product. Benefits are the reasons why most people buy.

46. Add some personality to your advertising. Show your prospects that behind your business name are sincere people who genuinely care about those they serve. Make your ad communicate on a personal level. Projecting an image of your company as one of concern could be as simple as mentioning the local charity to which you contribute regularly. Infusing your ads with a personal touch separates you from the companies who seem only interested in lining their own pockets.

47. Be clear, concise, informative and persuasive. Avoid industry jargon and product names that are not well known and instantly recognizable to your audience. Avoid common statements that are so overused they don't mean anything anymore.

48. Include lots of information. The more you tell, the more you sell. Don't waste valuable space. Provide every conceivable benefit, every reason you can give for doing business with your company. Provide more relevant information than your competitors.

49. Use words that sell the prospect on doing business with you. Avoid flat, bland advertising that generates a ho-hum response. Everything about your ad should be geared toward generating action. It's this action that leads to more immediate sales or sets the sales process in motion.

50. Phrase your benefits in a unique way that's markedly different from the competition. Make them more compelling, more impressive. Don't just say the identical thing your competitor does. A quick glance through any Yellow Pages directory will show you how many businesses say basically the same things as their competitors.

51. Instill a sense of empathy and understanding for your target market. In order to do this, you have to first have an accurate knowledge of your audience... its "wants" and "needs". Talk to your current customers. Find out why they reward you with their business. Imagine yourself as the customer. What would you want from a company like yours?

52. Boost your ad's power with a strong testimonial headline. It works better in some categories than others particularly those where prospective customers may have a fear of being ripped off. One example is the home service or renovations industry. This would include plumbers, roofers, general contractors, painters, etc. "ABC Plumbing came To the Rescue, At A Price No One Else Could Touch."

Follow up a testimonial with a list of why a prospect should choose your service over another.

53. Direct your prospects to you. Make it easy for them to reach you. Depending on your type of business and location, you may want to display a map as well as a listing of your hours of business. In some situations, it may be preferable to provide a directional line such as “next to Union Station on Front Street”, rather than a map. Make the information available that would allow any reader to reach you on the first try, whether by visiting or calling.

54. Consider credibility-builders such as significant customers that have used your service, the number of years you’ve been in business, your industry experience or any unusual recognition you may have received. Remember: Uniqueness stands out.

55. Sell with specifics. Specific details are more believable than vague generalities. A seminar company claiming to have delivered a “Computer Care & Maintenance Course to 4,719 students in 1998”, has a higher degree of realism than the firm that says “thousands attended our programs in 1998”

56. Increase your chances of getting calls from your Yellow Pages as by providing the important answers that prospects seek. Yellow Pages shoppers usually know what they want and they’re ready to buy when they call. Often the only remaining decision to be made is where to buy. You can make that decision easier on the prospect by providing relevant details of importance. People want to know that you have the answer to their problem. And, that want to know that you can be trusted. Give them the proof they need to call you first.

Design Tips

57. Command attention to your ad with an attractive layout. Here are 3 qualities of a good ad layout that attracts attention and produces results:

1. Visually appealing and easy-to-look-at presentation
2. Conveys a feeling of action
3. Avoids perfect balance and symmetry, the “sameness” that only helps an ad blend in, rather than stand out

58. Highlight the elements that make your company, product line, or services, different and special. You can do this in your supporting copy. Bullet-points and numbered lists help to keep these details organized and hard-hitting.

59. Use bullet points or numbered lists to communicate your best benefits in a concise, succinct and organized manner. This kind of point-form presentation can improve efficiency in how your information is relayed to the reader. Short,

powerful, bite-size chunks of information allow you to present your most vital benefits or product details, quickly.

60. Make it easy for the reader to locate and read your contact information. Most people respond to yellow pages ads by phone. After all, it is a phone book. Therefore, it seems logical that the primary contact information should be your telephone number. Make it visually prominent. Big, bold and clear for all to see. Place your telephone number at the bottom of your ad. It should be the natural conclusion to your message – the point to which you ultimately direct your prospect.

61. Draw the eye with a “reverse-type” format. Reverse-type (white letters on a black background) can be a useful attention grabber, when used correctly. A little goes a long way. Highlight one or two areas of your ad, at most. Overuse nullifies its’ impact. The human eye is naturally drawn to any dark objects on the page, first. Try it for headlines, special offers, telephone numbers, or testimonials. It’s a great place to add an extra push by listing a strong extra benefit that your competition either doesn’t offer, or doesn’t promote. For example, a firewood supplier would likely offer a delivery service as part of regular operations. Some may offer it free, others for a slight additional charge. But an intelligent upstart company could offer free stacking for seniors. This is a unique benefit, worthy of drawing extra attention via reverse-type.

62. Maintain as clean a look as possible, while still delivering impact. Yellow pages ads that are cluttered with too much information in too small an area are less effective than those that jump right out at you and are easy to read.

63. Let people know how you do business. Display any credit cards that you accept. Indicate all acceptable forms of payment, other than cash. Don’t give the anxious buyer a reason to go somewhere else instead. Tell all about the convenience you offer.

64. Consider color carefully. When color was first introduced, red was the only choice for most directories and just a small percentage of advertisers used this option. At that rate, an ad with some eye-catching red ink might have really stood out on the page. Now, there are several color choices available; blue, green and red. Consider what others are doing around you. If yours is the only colored d, you have a better chance to create an ad that leaps off the page and commands attention.

65. Make a strong first impression. The overall visual presentation can cause prospects to make an instant decision as to how they feel about you and whether yours is a business they want to connect with. Create an ad that projects a good, positive feeling, vibration or impression.

66. Allow adequate space in you ad so your most prominent, prospect-centered points really stand out. Get the largest as you can afford. Avoid over-crowding and cramming. Surrounding a block of text with a little space draws attention to those featured words. It catches attention and appears to be a less formidable task to wade through. In effect, you are “framing” your text, signaling its importance, which in turn motivates readership.

67. Multiply the effectiveness of your graphics with “captions”. Captions are those words attached to photographs, cartoons, or other visuals. A strong graphic, accompanied by a caption, has the power to command more attention, than the graphic ever could on its’ own. Captions that provide important benefit details in a few words can have significant effect on results. Captions are one of the most-read components on an ad. Why? Human Nature. Analyzing a graphic requires thinking. The natural tendency is to read the caption to get a quick understanding of the whole picture. Since a caption attracts a large readership, you can improve your ad’s results by filling it with hard-hitting, benefit-oriented sales copy.

68. Complement a graphic with a “call-out”. The call-out is simply a line that leads from one element of a graphic to a textual definition or description. The advantage of the call-out is that, even when the reader knows what is being singled out, they can’t help but be drawn to the verbal description. Use this to your advantage by giving the reader another strong reason to patronize your business over another.

69. Command the attention of your prospects with a “balloon”. Balloons work the same way as call-outs and captions as attention-getting devices. Balloons are the circled words found in comic strips or photos that indicate the thoughts or feelings of the subject. The appearance of a balloon signals to the reader the location of necessary details. It’s no surprise that they rank very high in terms of must-read ad copy.

70. Organize your message so it’s easy for your prospects to notice it... to grasp the value in it for them... and to take action by connecting with you. Attention. Interest. Desire. Action. Your entire ad must be easy to follow with all elements working together to produce a coherent message. Start with your headline and conclude with your phone number and a call to action such as “Call NOW for your FREE ESTIMATE!”

71. Make one single element the dominant visual feature. A bold headline or a striking graphic that instantly communicates your message is the most important part o your ad. It should stand out as the one eye-catching element that reaches out and nudges the eyeballs of the prospect. An attention-arresting visual is the tool that ensures the rest of the ad gets a reading.

72. Use your Yellow Pages space to effectively communicate your marketing message. To make sure your message gets across, it must be easy to read and understand. “White space” can be an important ally. The correct use of spacing provides a rest for the eye. It also helps set off the important points by framing them, making them appear more significant.

73. Do the unexpected. Research indicates that typically, the human eye reacts in a certain way. Normally, the eye goes from dark areas to lighter areas, from large objects to small, from brighter areas to dimmer ones. The eye focuses on things that appear out of place. This could involve shapes, colors, sizes and the positioning of elements within the ad. Use this valuable data to make the readers eyes go where you want them to go.

74. Insist upon legibility. Avoid type that is less than ten points in size. You don’t want to cause any strain for your reader... in fact, you want to make it incredibly easy for them to get the information. Also be careful with script fonts or other fancy fonts that may look good to you. Font selection is not the place to let your creative mind soar. This choice should be based on clarity, readability and overall appearance. Stick to one font throughout, or, one headline font with a compatible, separate font for the body copy. Limit your type sizes to three different variations.

75. Avoid placing copy on tints or shaded areas. It’s more difficult to read and therefore, easier to avoid. Clarity of communication should be given primary consideration throughout the ad design process.

76. Focus your design efforts on immediately capturing your prospect’s attention. The most effective ads work almost instantaneously. As soon as the page is turned, this ad jumps right out at you, demanding your focus. To maximize your ads potential it must work at-a-glance. If your headline or graphic doesn’t capture readership, you lose. Oh sure, you’ll get calls. But my guess is that you won’t get as many as you could.

77. Capitalize on natural visual appeal. Headlines and illustrations are always seen first, before typical body copy. These elements need to work as the pull that brings the reader into the heart of the message.

78. Take advantage of the availability of “tools of emphasis”. Bullet-points, numbers, bold lettering, boxes of various shapes and sizes, checklist, asterisks, underlining, etc.— can all be used effectively to emphasize key words. Don’t use them all... choose a maximum of three tools in any given ad. And, don’t try to emphasize everything to the same degree. To emphasize everything is to emphasize nothing.

79. Consider colors carefully. Color can make your ad stand out. Color naturally draws the eye if the ads around you are all black. Studies show that color can

boost readership, improve retention and even increase a buyer's tendency to purchase. However, keep these points in mind...

1. You are usually limited to a few stock colors only. (usually red, green, blue and white)
2. Your background remains a constant yellow – not the most compatible background shade.
3. If your colored ad appears on a page with several other colored ads, any eye-catching appeal has been lost altogether.

80. Select a format that is different from the competition. Consider unusual approaches like an editorial style that simulates a public service announcement, or, a letter format, from one individual to another. A copy-rich design can draw attention when all the ads around it use small amounts of brief, point-form text.

81. Utilize every element that assists with the sales message and delete any that doesn't. Avoid unnecessary artwork that doesn't contribute to the sales message. Artwork shouldn't be used as decoration. If it doesn't help sell, it doesn't belong.

82. Make your telephone number stand out. The most important contact information in a Yellow Pages ad is usually the telephone number. Make it a prominent part of your ad. Also consider including other important contact details like:

- Street address
- Fax number
- Web address
- E-mail address

For retailers, providing a street address is essential. For a consultant working from home a phone number alone would likely be the preferred contact listing.

83. Use action graphics that direct any movement into the ad, instead of away from it. A visual of a car, for example, should lead to your advertising copy. Have photos and illustrations aimed in the direction you want readers to go. If the car is positioned to drive off your ad, that's exactly where your reader's eyes will go, right to your competitor's ad. The result: lost impact and your potential customer may be gone forever. You need a provocative big idea to create a breakthrough ad that generates record-breaking response. Step away from your business. Take a look at it through different eyes. Step outside the box. Play around a little. That's one way to generate a brilliant ad.

84. Feature your name prominently, if your company is well known in the marketplace. If you're a relative unknown vying for the reader's attention, you

probably shouldn't make a big deal out of your name. It takes years to develop name recognition. If you've got it – use it.

85. Lead towards a competitive advantage with any attention-getting device used. If you're going to use shadow boxes, starbursts, reverse-type, etc., use them to highlight your major selling points like testimonials, headlines, free offers, or major benefits. In the Yellow Pages, you're surrounded by the competition. On a page filled with competing ads, you want to direct your prospect's attention to your big advantage — something you offer that others don't.

86. Use the border or frame that outlines your ad to attract interest. Again, the key is creating a standout border that is unique, and visually magnetic. Consider all options including: thicker lines, rounded corners, dotted lines or original artwork as a border. But don't make it so detailed that it detracts from your message. You want to create an ad that is the dominant one on the page or under a given heading.

87. Insert photographs when they help to convey the image, tone, or feeling of your business. A photo of yourself can be particularly advantageous when you're selling intangibles like personal counseling, financial planning or life insurance. In this kind of selling situation, you're really selling yourself. People feel reassured when they can see what you look like. They feel more comfortable... it's almost as if they've already met you. Be certain that your self-portrait is a quality shot and that you "look" the part for the role you play in your business. You want to be sure you convey the right image.

88. Utilize simple design options like boxes, drop shadows, pull quotes, arrow starbursts, bold, italicized or underlined text. Employ these enhancements with care. Avoid overuse. Using too many of these devices in a single ad will only create a scrambled, unprofessional look.

89. Focus your prospect's attention by using solid blocks of black or another color option. Type placed on a solid block stands out visually and is easier to read than text placed on blends or shaded colors. Whenever you're using reverse-type, always use solid blocks of dark colors.

90. Mix colors with care. Just because different color options are available doesn't mean you should use them all. Exercise caution and restraint. Colors should work together to create a sense of balance, instead of a scattered look. You want your prospect's eye to go back and forth between colored ink and black. If your color ink selections don't work well together to create a more interesting visual presentation, avoid them in favor of black on yellow paper.

91. Impress prospects with the right images of your company. Your Yellow Pages as can play a significant role and have a substantial effect on your success since

it's often the first glimpse a prospect ever gets of your company. Be sure the image that you project in your ad is one that addresses the specific "needs" and "wants" of your targeted prospects.

92. Select only quality photographs – clear images that are sharply defined with plenty of contrast. Make sure the subject of the photo doesn't blend with the background. Maintain a clearly defined contrast between light and dark. For black and white output, use black and white originals. Color photos don't reproduce as well in black and white.

93. Design your border to complement your ad – not overwhelm it. Use your border to help attract an audience to the message contained inside, rather than drawing attention to the border itself. Keep in mind that the space a border occupies, is part of your ad space. Choose wisely.

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