

Yellow Page Secrets ***Revealed!***

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It is perhaps one of your biggest advertising expenses behind a TV commercial, yet it is often misunderstood and rarely pays for itself: The Yellow Page Ad. When you are new in business, if you are like most, you will eagerly call the local yellow page rep and ask for prices and then the games begin! The Yellow Pages (YP for short) is a reference book similar to an encyclopedia and is used by consumers to find local businesses.

Yellow page ad rates are shrouded in smoke and mirrors and the “justification” always seems to be “*but you have to be listed in the yellow pages!*” The truth is, consumers have moved away from solely using the YP to using on-line searches for their needs but they will check the YP for credibility.

There is no other advertising medium that will place you in direct competition with all of your competitors. In fact, 49% of people going to the YP have no name in mind of where to shop. If you place a “me-too” style ad, you are in trouble because without anything else to go on, the public will shop on price alone, which is the worst marketing strategy to have. (By the way, a “me-too” ad is a pretty graphic of a young female, a menu-style list of services and a BIG header of your company name).

This report is designed to navigate you through the YP maze and enable you to make smart decisions about this misunderstood advertising medium. It is also highly secretive information that most YP reps will never tell you. So before you invest thousands of dollars in a YP ad, read this report in its entirety.

The Top 12 Factors of a Successful YP Ad:

1. Every element in a successful ad should solve the customer's problem
2. Ad size, content, and composition are far more important to success than positioning within the heading
3. Color ads generate more calls, but usually not enough to justify a substantially higher price. Use the money to place additional black and yellow ads under secondary headings or in alternative directories before investing in color
4. Advertisers should advertise in every directory that demonstrates strong usage regardless of publisher
5. Track every ad with a metered telephone number to measure how well it is performing
6. Customers want to do business with local companies. Multiple local numbers and cities in an ad will increase the overall call count

7. Publishing only an 800 (national toll free) number without including a local number is the **kiss of death**. Consumers are leery of ads that only feature toll free numbers and suspect that the call is not being answered by a local service provider
8. Hard to read ads result in fewer calls
9. Good photos & illustrations receive lots more calls and before and after photos work better than an image of a pretty woman
10. Include bullet points and small easy-to-read paragraphs for maximum impact
11. Avoid humor. It is unnecessary and likely to backfire
12. Displaying 4 or 5 credit card logos will generate more calls than simply saying "all major credit cards accepted"

Which Directory Should You Advertise With?

A business person should place ads in Yellow Pages directories the way the chairman of Texaco places oil wells. The Chairman doesn't start the year deciding where he'll drill his one and only oil well. That would be a quick road to bankruptcy. **Texaco's Chairman drills wells every place that is likely to produce a profit.**

Similarly, a business should advertise in every Yellow Pages directory that is likely to generate significantly more profits than the ads cost. To do this, take the price of a full page ad and figure out the number of patients you will need to cover the cost of the advertising. Do this on your most popular service. For example, if the ad costs 10k annually, and your most popular service is Botox at \$475 per area, you will need to attract at least 21 new patients to pay for the ad. This is why it is so important to track where each and every new patient comes from.

Comparing directories

Buying Yellow Pages advertising is more confusing than it needs to be. Directory deadlines always seem to be looming, and this forces a quick decision. Pricing is complicated, and the number of bundled packages and vague discounts are enough to drive a person mad. Requesting a proposal from each publisher first is a good way to start.

Every directory has strengths and weaknesses. By understanding them, you'll be in a better position to decide which is best for you.

Utility vs. Independent Directories

In the United States, the term "Yellow Pages" and the familiar "Walking Fingers" logo may be freely used by anyone. The trademarks were not properly protected and have fallen into the

public domain. This means there is no "official Yellow Pages publisher," there are only utility publishers (controlled by the phone company) and independent publishers (not controlled by the phone company).

This is not usually the case outside of the US where the trademarks have been properly protected and use is restricted to the trademark owner. Nearly every market in the US is served by at least two, and often many more, directories. Directory publishing can be highly profitable and competition between publishers is fierce. Determining where to advertise can be a confusing chore. As more directories enter the market, usage changes.

Independent (non-telephone company) publishers have existed nearly as long as telephone service itself. Yellow Book, the largest independent in the US, was established in 1930. In the US, the difference in rates between utility directories and independent directories is greater than anywhere else in the world. If price were the sole deciding factor, the independent directories would rule. As you might suspect, price is NOT the sole deciding factor.

So how can an advertiser determine how much usage any particular directory receives? Unfortunately is not always easy. There is no national rating service for Yellow Pages directories the way Nielsen rates television and radio. However, comparing competing directories side-by-side offers valuable clues.

Checklist of a Good Directory:

- ✓ **Complete** - Containing the listings of every business in the market. Some directories only list the companies that pay to be listed. If a consumer is frustrated looking for a phone number two or three times, he'll assume the directory is no good and throw it out.
- ✓ **Well Developed** - Containing a large number of high-quality, content-rich ads. If you see page after page of listings without any ads, the directory is probably not used heavily.
- ✓ **Rich with Good Community Information** - Consumers use the Yellow Pages for much more than selecting plumbers. They expect comprehensive information on their community including governmental offices, points of interest, maps, stadium seating, and so on.
- ✓ **Well Designed** - Consumers expect their directory to be easy to use with logical, well organized sections.
- ✓ **Intelligent Coverage** - The directory should cover a geographic area that is consistent with the customer's shopping pattern. Consumers will travel great distances for skilled specialists but will barely budge for pizza.

Directory coverage area (also called scoping)

Directory coverage areas will rarely perfectly match your business's service area. You'll need to decide how much of the coverage is relevant when making your decision. For outside service companies that travel to the customer's location, it's important to look at directories that are adjacent to your primary directories to see if you could generate enough profitable business to justify investing in advertising in them.

Yellow Page Display Ad Elements

As a service to its customers, the YP usually offer free graphic designers to create your ad. This is tantamount to handing the wolf the keys to the hen house! As friendly as they are, YP ad execs want to sell you big colorful ads, not write salesmanship-in-print (which is the kind of ad you will need to differentiate yourself from the competition).

You want to first negotiate the price, and then give them camera ready art work. *It is your responsibility to create a killer ad that produces results*, especially when you will be paying for it each and every month. (This is actually true of all advertising).

Good ads tell the customer what to do, why to do it, and when to do it.

For example:

- Call Now for Fast Service!
- Call for FREE quote NOW!
- Call Now for your FREE REPORT "10 Simple Steps to Erase the Signs of Aging!"

A consumer reading your ad should think to herself *"This medspa really cares about me and can easily solve my problems"*. The truth is, a person looking in the YP is a "buy now" consumer. They have read about or heard about certain procedures from the media or their friends and they are now ready to BUY. Nine times out of 10 they aren't calling for a brochure, they are calling to book an appointment.

The critical elements that your YP ad must have are:

- A strong solution oriented headline
- Before/after image(s)
- A "call to action"
- Testimonials

These are all elements of a direct response advertisement. Sometimes referred to as a classic ugly ad, these ads outperform "me too ads" 10 to 1 when formatted correctly. This is usually the case when the headline is a great grabber, strong enough to compel prospects to wade through dense text. Further, with a great headline the dense text needs to be designed in such

a way that the main points are extremely scannable to the majority of readers; those who won't make the effort to plow through the verbal forest, even when attracted by the headline.

It goes without saying that any YP ad should differentiate the business. If a potential customer can't tell the difference between you and the medspa ad on the following page, **change your ad!**

Yellow Page Results

YP ads can and should be a part of your overall marketing strategy, but don't put all of your eggs in one basket and don't be seduced by a savvy YP ad exec who is extolling the virtues of YP. Times are a changing and you should expand your marketing portfolio to include not only YP, but direct mail, online ads (called pay-per-click), local newspapers, magazines and radio. Each has its advantages and disadvantages but if you follow our proven strategies, they can all work for you.