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Is Your Advertising as Effective as It Should Be?

Melody Brooks

Businesses leave money on the table every day with ineffective advertising—and most have no idea they're doing it.

The purpose of advertising is to get customers through the door, but they need a good reason to make the trip. A successful ad is more than just a name and phone number—it grabs attention and calls the reader to take some kind of action.

Many businesses don't realize that simple changes in their ads can make a big difference to their bank accounts. For example, the annual graduation insert in the *Record-Times* is a prime opportunity for businesses to advertise their best "graduation special".

Of the 30+ retail businesses that advertised in the 2009 insert, guess how many gave readers some kind of special deal?

One.

Why didn't the other advertisers take this chance to grab some extra business?

The offer possibilities are many:

—Buy one meal, get one free on graduation night at a fast-food restaurant, or purchase the sandwich and get the fries and drink free

—A free meal for graduates, a free drink for the graduate's parents, free desserts, or a coupon good for graduation weekend at a sit-down restaurant

—A discount of 10% on floral orders by mentioning the ad

—A \$5 coupon, a special on photo albums, or a half dozen cookies thrown in for every graduation cake ordered at a grocery store

—Buy 10 gallons of gas, get a free hot dog and drink

The only limit is the business owner's imagination.

In this economy, it is imperative that businesses make the most of their advertising dollars and do what they can to entice customers to visit—in person, by phone, or online.

Effective advertising can be a foreign concept to businesses in smaller towns, because they have never needed to actively advertise. Many have no direct competition, so are likely to stick with an ad in the paper or in the yellow pages, if they advertise at all.

What they may not know is that it's not always about competition or the lack of it, though losing business to competitors in larger towns has always been an issue for Wheatland. It's all about getting warm bodies with wallets into the shop, giving them good service so they pull money out of those wallets, and getting them to come back.

In the floral example above, if the ad brought in just five orders for flowers averaging \$30 each, or \$27 after the 10% was deducted, that's an extra \$135 for the week, minus ad costs.

Big deal, one might say. However, what if the flower shop started a monthly email newsletter (at very low cost) and offered specials? What if every third Monday was 10% Off Day, or customers got a free vase and could fill it at 25% off during their birthday month? Using the \$27 per order figure, five extra orders per month means \$1,600 extra per year.

When every penny counts, that's nothing to sneeze at.

Melody (Wilhelm) Brooks was born and raised in Wheatland and helps businesses maximize their advertising dollar to keep their customers coming back for more.

To learn more about growing your business with simple, painless marketing, please contact her at grabmorecustomers@gmail.com or 303-384-9919.

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