

Media Options

Print, broadcast or new media? Indiana experts weigh in on the choices and outlook for the advertising industry.

by Shari Held

TODAY ADVERTISING options abound, making it difficult to determine where to place your message for the most impact. Should you invest in print (newspapers, magazines, brochures), broadcast (television, radio, cable) or Internet-based mediums (banner ads, e-newsletters, social media, Web sites)?

“The first thing you have to do is define your target audience,” says Lisa Liechty, owner and president, Liechty Media, Fort Wayne.

Next, define your target geography, the outcome you want and your budget.

“Everybody is interested in response to some degree, but there is a difference in the image or branding goal versus ‘I want people to make my phone ring,’” she says. “Each medium can carry these things better than others and not all mediums will support different budget levels.”

Print: Not dead yet.

“Print is not dead, but there has been a transfer of budgets,” says Vaughn Hickman, founder and principal

of Carmel-based Hickman + Associates. “Traditional media is losing portions of advertising budgets to the new media area.”

That doesn’t bode well when advertising budgets are not as robust as before.

“Advertising is at a crossroads since reaching a high around 2000,” Hickman says. “It has become a smaller part of the U.S. economy.” He cites an *Advertising Age* survey published this July that reported fewer buyers anticipate increasing their budgets in TV, newspapers, radio and outdoor ads, compared to last year. Pessimism in broadcast TV and newspapers is particularly bad, with 30 percent of respondents expecting to decrease spending in broadcast over the next six months and 44 percent expecting expenditures in newspaper ads to decline.

Liechty still considers newspapers to be a viable medium, especially since many have embraced online publishing of their product, but when it comes to enhancing the corporate brand, glossy magazines do a better job—“particularly if the

magazine has higher-quality production and editorial values.”

“Printing has changed considerably in the past 10 years,” says Tim Simic, president of Hammond-based Green Light Creative. “Now we are able to produce beautiful four-color pieces in smaller quantities for a very reasonable price. Technology has opened up a lot of doors. Print is a great complement to new media, but sometimes a print piece can have more impact.”

Broadcast blues.

“Generally newspaper and television, because they have greater reach than the other mediums, are going to be the most outright expensive,” Liechty says. “But oftentimes, especially with broadcast, it is the most effective medium from a cost-per-thousand standpoint. Outright cost is one thing, but delivery cost per thousand is another. Broadcast still continues to reach a far wider audience than most mediums,” she says. “That is its No. 1 benefit. So it continues to make great economic sense

for enough advertisers to keep demand up.”

Simic advises clients who purchase broadcast time to follow up their investment with a quality product. “I’ve seen a lot of companies make huge media buys and place their ads everywhere, but they just turn into background noise. That’s not very effective no matter what medium you choose, be it broadcasting, media or print.”

Liechty says radio’s strength lies in its ability to affordably reinforce the message with frequency, making it a good vehicle for driving traffic to an event. Its biggest challenges are increasing market fragmentation and audience turnover.

“Cable advertising continues to show an increase,” Hickman says. “It is less expensive and it reaches a more targeted audience.”

Reaching the masses is important, but reaching your target audience—whether it is working women, business executives or the wealthy—is crucial.

New media. “Internet advertising including



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banners, search and optimization and social media is growing rapidly and continues to grow, as does the number of people getting online,” Hickman says. “There is a benefit [to Internet advertising] across all size companies, but for smaller companies it provides a less expensive way for them to reach their customers.”

According to Hickman, current market research found that 89 percent of all buyers, whether consumer or business-to-business, “pre-shop” on the Internet to validate a spending decision. They use consumer sites, blogs and other social media to gather information about the reputation of companies and their products. This could provide good advertising opportunities for some businesses.

Even though new media is the fastest-growing advertising medium, Liechty points out that it still represents only about eight percent of worldwide advertising spending currently. “It is fairly challenging to convey more than just a succinct message with a minimum of visual interest,” she says. “For us, the value of it comes about when that brief message causes the viewer to click through, going back to the advertiser’s Web site or an ending page. In that case, it resembles more of a direct response than branding.”

E-newsletters also offer an opportunity for advertisers. Like Internet advertising in general, it offers greater targeting capability.

The bottom line. “The bottom line is, from an advertising standpoint, you’ve got to use different touch points,” Hickman says. “Everything from printed literature, to broadcast, to a Web site, a blog, a social networking page, an e-newsletter, ads in magazines that reach a targeted audience and cable TV and banner ads. Today, you cannot just say I am going to do only new media. Sellers that use multiple touch points net higher spending, increased sales and greater customer satisfaction.” ■