

## Principle 17

### Direct Response Advertising

*Make it personal...*

*what's in it for them*

One of the most common, expensive and painful mistakes people make in their advertising efforts is the use of what is known as “institutional advertising” or “image advertising”. What is that? Well, it’s probably the majority of all advertising you see every day. Institutional advertising is most often used by the big players - McDonald’s, Ford, Nike and all the rest. Institutional advertising does not necessarily sell anything directly. Rather, it promotes the company as a whole. Institutional advertising is all about name recognition and company image. It beats a constant drum which keeps the name of the company in front of as many people as possible, as often as possible.

#### **The purpose of advertising is to sell something**

What’s wrong with this? Nothing for the mega-rich corporations that can afford it, who want to satisfy their egos or show their shareholders how good they are, but for a small, savvy lean marketer, it’s a fantastic waste of money. What you need to do with your advertising is make sales, not necessarily



build an image. That means advertising your specific product or service, and not your company. It means telling your audience exactly how they will benefit from buying your specific product right now, where they can get it, and how they can take immediate action to get it.

The fact is, people don’t care about you or your company - don’t take that personally. That’s the way it should be. What prospects care about are their own needs and wants, and you should appeal directly to that. Tell them about your product and how it can make their lives better today. Educate them about why they should buy it, why they need it, and why it’s a great deal for the money.

#### **Revisit the direct mail approach and wipe away your competition**

Forget about all this: "I'm here!", "Me too!" advertising. Don't waste time bragging about yourself and your company. Put the focus on the buyer - his and her most vital needs right now - then offer them something that scratches their itch, fulfils their need, or solves their problem.

Most beginning entrepreneurs - and also many experienced ones - fall into the trap of going with institutional advertising simply because they see everyone else doing it all the time, and everywhere. They assume it must be working. If you're a giant corporation with an astronomical advertising budget, great. But if you're a lean and hungry small business - or even a moderately sized or large business - use direct marketing, appeal directly the client's interests needs and wants. Sell a specific product with specific details and benefits.

I could go on further about this important topic, but I want you to get the fundamental concept here - sell a specific product tied to specific needs and problems, and you'll some day be big and rich enough to buy the kind of institutional advertising that makes you just that - a veritable institution... That is if you want to waste your money!