

A guide to producing advertisements and campaigns with Profile Communications

Books have been written on this subject, so a single page can only give you pointers to questions you need to ask yourself before you should consider advertising for the first time. Not all will apply in every situation either.

Before You Start

Step 1: Why advertise?

Are you sure you know why you are advertising? Have you considered other approaches - direct mail or email marketing, for example? Advertising requires a sustained investment to be effective, so have you allocated the resources to do it properly?

Step 2: Your audience

Who are you trying to reach? It's absolutely fundamental that your message is communicated in a way that resonates with your audience (and not necessarily with you, or the people you work with). It means that the more we know about your audience, the more effectively we should be able to communicate with it.

The key issues are usually their sex, age, socioeconomic grouping, location and motivations.

In some situations, not all considerations will be relevant while in others, alternative factors may be more important.

We'll also need to know what relevant knowledge they have (or lack), as this greatly affects the type of message we need to communicate.

In essence - we need to know who they are, what they think now and what we want them to think after they have seen the advertisement.

Step 3: Core message (or principal statement)

Essentially, this is a simple concept but it's not always as easy to get right. You need to answer the question: *"If our target audience sees our advertisement and only takes one message from it, what should that message be?"*

Step 4: Secondary messages

There may be other messages that you'd like your audience to receive. These may not always be required but you should consider the possibility.

Step 5: Proof sources

You may also need to provide evidence to support any claims you want to make.

Testimonials can be very useful, as are quotations from independent reports. On some occasions, you may have to counter the claims of your competitors.

Step 6: The atmosphere of the message

Should the atmosphere give a strong technical message? Maybe it may require a more emotional approach. It depends on your product, the message and your audience.

Step 7: Guidelines

There may be corporate identity guidelines that determine the use of typefaces, logos etc which need to be considered.

Step 8: Targets, budgets, media and timings

You'll need to have set a budget, have considered the media you wish to use and the duration of the advertising campaign. You should set a realistic and measurable targets: like sales changes, number of responses, before and after awareness results etc.

The Creative Process

Step 1: The briefing

You should communicate your aims in a brief. It may be written or the result of a process of discussion with Profile Communications.

This briefing will be the foundation of the creative work, so it requires careful consideration. Any errors and omissions in the brief make it much more difficult to achieve a good result.

Step 2: Concepts

Profile Communications will then produce a concept. Some agencies produce many concepts for sifting. We generally prefer to create one, or occasionally two, that we consider most closely meet your brief.

At this stage, we are only looking to ensure that its core message meets the brief.

The first concept may only include a headline and a found image with placeholder gibberish text. There's an example below, on the left.

Step 3: Development

Once a concept thought worth developing has been agreed, we will source any visual elements (photography or illustration) that may be required. We will also write body copy for the advertisement, if needed. A more developed concept is shown below in the middle.

Step 4: Artworking and despatch

Once the advertisement has been finalised, we will prepare artwork that is ready to go to the publication, once final adjustments have been made and you have signed it off (*right*).

Notice how the examples below have developed from a creative concept to a more finished advertisement to a finalised high-resolution, print-ready version.

