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## HOW TO GET THE MOST OUT OF YOUR BACK TO SCHOOL CAMPAIGN

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**T**his is the season when it feels like every company in Antigua will attempt to spread the exact same message in their advertising. No, we are still a few months from “Merry Christmas!”. But, midnight, on last-lap Tuesday is the unofficial, official start of the “Back to School” season.

Unless you build a bomb shelter and only utilize technology from the 18th century, you will be bombarded by all the back to school ads flushed into the airwaves and online. These ads are not just for school supplies but will run the gambit from absolute school essentials to cars and busses! Yes, we wouldn't be surprised if some liquor store decided to have a back to school special on wines...

Unfortunately for advertisers, these messages become noise after a day or two, and the market they are trying to capture eventually patronizes the same businesses they have always supported, or they ask around; asking even random individuals where they can get certain school supplies. Many businesses, because of the reality created by the generic and unimaginative crowded airways and by-ways, begin to discount the value of advertising and insist that advertising has little to no effect. But there is a massive divide between “advertising” and effective advertising. There is also real and tangible benefits and value to keeping your business and your brand in the public eye. So the WHY, is scientifically proven and self-evident, it's the HOW that makes Tarsier and our clients leaders in this business. Simply put, if you are wearing blue, no one will notice you in the sky. Meaning, it doesn't matter how great or needed your product is, no one will buy it if they do not know it's there. The point of advertising in general is to prevent your business from being the zebra in the herd. Businesses should desire to leave a lasting positive impression in the markets' as a recognized brand that captures attention.

Every business should desire brand loyalty and should aspire to transform first-time customers into repeat

business. The first step, of course, is to be recognized as a viable option for the product or service on offer. They must not only know your business exists, they must relate it to the product or service which interests them. So how do you ensure you are heard when everyone is saying the same thing?

**Here are five things to remember when planning your Back to School campaign.**

### **1. Remember you are not your audience.**

In some cases, you may be a mother or father of a school-aged child and you are actually in the demographic you are targeting. If so, then great! But it doesn't mean you are the parent of a school aged child, operating within a particular median income range, who does not have their own transportation, and who may have several other children of different ages to make back to school ready. Remember you need to know the demographic you are targeting and what appeals to this market. Are they looking to save money or time? Are they looking for great quality or just a one stop shop where they can get everything they need in one buying experience? Some buyers may want to visit a store that is friendly and has the experience that will engender confidence in the products or prefer an environment to ask questions and leisurely explore the variety in the offerings.

### **2. Sometimes you may have to sell an idea or a feeling, not simply a product.**

You should know and understand your customers true

motivations and appeal to their wants and needs by accessing their emotional brain to build the right sentiment around your product and your business. In some instances, benefits, both real or imagined, may be an easier sell than the actual product. Bottled water can be sold for \$3.00-\$10.00 not only because it's water, but because some believe in the need for its purity and the refreshment it provides. Those desirables are not the actual product, but can be regarded as the benefits it provides and the emotion we experience, knowing we are drinking "good water;" - peace of mind, a sense of good health, more refreshed, contented in the belief that you made a good choice! Knowing what your target market finds desirable will inform

advertising efforts.

## 4. Be prepared to step out of your comfort zone.

You may have been delivering the same message for years and though that message might have worked several years ago it may not resonate with market today. It may be time to change the conversation around your brand or perhaps



what you say, how you say it, how you brand; even the colours or the voice you used in your advertising. All can positively or negatively affect how your advertising is received by potential customers.

## 3. Don't do what everyone else is doing.

In seasonal advertising, this is most important! When everyone else is shouting, whisper. If everyone is screaming "Sale! Sale! Sale!" make an emotional appeal or sell quality, sell access, offer a cash back, launch a points or reward program to build long term relationships with customers. Break the clutter in the advertising by having an ad that tells a joke or empathizes with the back to school shopping and hassle predicament. Yes, you can certainly also offer a sale, but is that enough? There are many approaches that could improve your ability to differentiate yourself and stand out! There are many ways to say the exact same thing, which will garner far more attention and thus achieve a favorable result from your

even the brand itself; or a singular element of it. Perhaps it is time to try different advertising mediums. Quite often, businesses become accustomed to a singular approach or message and may want to continue to utilize this. However, if the market is not responding it is no longer relevant. And even if the market has responded in the past, has the competition around you changed? Do you have the same share of the market? Did the economic or social circumstances change for people in the last year? Advertising is a conversation. You must listen to the market if you want the market to listen to you. Change is not always rocky territory. While it's natural to avoid traversing unfamiliar terrain, in business, fear has limited usefulness, and in advertising, it has even less value.

## 5. The messenger is as important as the message.

There is a not too old saying that goes "the three most important words in real-estate are location, location and location!". Advertising is similar, where you are placing

the ad may make or break you. The medium used to deliver your message is just as important as the content. This is also an aspect of knowing your audience. It also encompasses knowing the best places to reach them. Some markets are best reached via traditional media while social media better serves others. Still, be mindful that the decisions do not end there. There are many avenues and sites to choose from as the various demographics each have their preferred path to information and your content placement must be managed even down to determining the right time of day. Keeping an ear to the ground can help you tap into that new media hot spot before your competition does. Or may allow you to work around the competition so that your message is not lost. Additionally, the site or method you choose should be complemented by a message that allows you to stand above all the ads in these spaces.

## 6. Use a professional agency to create your ads.

If you need health care you go to the doctor. In the same way, if you need legal services you go to a lawyer. Thus, if you need advertising and marketing services, you should go to an ad agency and trust their advice. Let them know your goals and allow them to use their training and experience to make it happen! The job of an ad agency is to get to know your market through research and by objective observation, using their experience and the pool of skills and competencies that can be deployed in a way you are just not equipped to do. They develop campaigns and strategies to appeal to your identified demographic. Be mindful that these ads may not appeal to you if you are not in the target market, so don't expect it to. If you are selling fashion school bags for 14-year-old girls and you are an adult man, the campaign completely attracts you maybe you need to go back to the drawing board. And be mindful that it's better to pay a professional and increase your chances of getting value for money, than just attempting the usual advertising approaches which falls flat or simply has limited returns. Working with right agency can make all the difference. Always remember that your advertising or marketing budget should be regarded as one of your most important line items. However, it is not an expense, it is an investment and a professional ad agency allows you to maximize the returns on that investment.

Tarsier Ad Agency is grounded in over a decade of experience in the advertising solutions industry. We have built a formidable reputation as professionals and creative thinkers. Our principal creative has help to shape and create branding and marketing solutions for businesses, both

locally & regionally. We are an established company with an excellent track record for the best customer satisfaction and have never compromised on the quality and the services provided to our many clients. We understand the individuality of each customer and the importance of working in a collaborative environment which will ultimately lead to getting the most out of your brand.