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Mix Up Your Marketing Mix
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Try pairing modern tools with traditional media in order to advertise your business more effectively.

By: MATT ALDERTON

When San Diego's modern art museum, the Museum of Contemporary Art San Diego (MCASD), decided to market its expanded downtown location early this year, it wanted to attract an entirely new population of museum-goers—young ones. Specifically, the museum wanted to find art lovers under the age of 25, to whom it would offer free admission.



There was one problem, though. Used to interacting with an older audience via traditional advertisements, the museum realized that its tried-and-true marketing tools were the very same ones being rejected as suspect and old fashioned by most modern-day young people. A standard newspaper ad would no longer do. It needed something different.

"Our greatest results are coming from a combination of more traditional media outlets with other, more extreme non-traditional ones," says Jonathan Bailey, CEO of Bailey Gardiner, the San Diego-based integrated marketing company that MCASD hired to help it reach its new demographic. "Our ideal strategy for clients is at least a 50 percent spend on non-traditional mediums."

The strategy his team recommended for MCASD was no different. The museum launched a traditional ad campaign via magazines and billboards in order to reach its older base of customers. It coupled that, however, with an interactive viral Web site, www.feedthegreedyorgan.com, designed to encourage younger consumers to "feed their greedy organ"—their eyes—with a free visit to the museum. The museum's traditional ads drove traffic to the non-traditional Web site, resulting in a 200 percent increase in museum attendance by the under-25 set.

The lesson for small business owners is this: In order to succeed with your marketing dollars, integrate, innovate and interact. "You need every marketing dollar to count," Bailey says, "so simply relying on methods that might work for Fortune 500 companies and household brand names will not work for emerging companies."

You still need traditional advertising. However, to get more bang for your advertising buck, try these suggestions for enhancing your traditional media buys with new tools and fresh ideas.

Print Advertising

Next to word of mouth, print advertisements are perhaps the oldest means of marketing a business. They used to be the most effective, too. Not anymore, though.

"I am an avid newspaper reader—three papers every morning with my coffee," Bailey says. "Yet, I believe the historic form of newspapers are d-e-a-d."

Denise Patrick, senior marketing counsel for Houston-based Pierpont Communications, agrees. A former small business owner herself, she says that many entrepreneurs chase advertisements in major daily newspapers, which are expensive and seldom read in their entirety. Instead, she says, try buying ads in community newspapers.

"People read their community newspaper cover to cover," Patrick says. "The grandkid that won the softball game, that's where his name is. That's where the church news is and that's where the pictures of the ladies in the garden club are."

The key is reaching your target audience—and only your target audience. That's why community papers are better than city papers, she says—because the readership is more targeted—and why advertisements in BtoB publications or trade magazines are often more effective than those in national consumer titles.

Even more effective, however, is another tool entirely, according to Patrick—public relations. That's because the modern equivalent to a printed ad is printed news coverage. The former costs money, but the latter is free, and only one benefits from the credibility of a legitimate journalist's byline. Before buying an ad in your favorite publication, therefore, consider doing something newsworthy—organizing an event, donating to a charity or launching a notable new service—and sending it a press release, instead.

Radio and TV Advertising

Like print advertising, when it comes to radio and television, targeted messages are best. As such, small business owners should avoid spending big bucks for 30-second spots on major TV networks. Their money is better spent, experts advise, on commercials that reach niche markets, run on cable TV, for instance, or on radio stations with narrow demographics.

The best new tool for TV advertisers, however, is actually an old one, according to Peter Koeppel, president and founder of direct response ad agency Koeppel Direct—the infomercial. He says that long-form TV ads are ideal for small businesses because they cost less—a 30-minute infomercial spot can cost as little as \$50 or \$100—and, because the average consumer watches an infomercial for 10 or 15 minutes, they give emerging brands an opportunity to educate consumers about their product.

Even if you don't go the full infomercial route, consider borrowing for all your ads—print, TV and radio—at least one

infomercial feature: the response mechanism. "A lot of advertising is just branded type of advertising to build awareness for a product," Koeppel says, "but nowadays you'll see a larger percentage of advertisers inserting an 800 number or a Web site in their ad, which allows them, one, to get a lower media rate—the direct response rate—and, two, to measure ad response."

Internet Advertising

Eventually, it all comes back to the Internet, where old media is bound to converge with new. "Quite literally, this is the future," Bailey says.

Considering buying a print advertisement? Write a blog, instead. Thinking about radio? Try recording your own podcast. The Internet even presents a world of new opportunities for small businesses that are looking into television, according to Koeppel, as approximately half of people who are online are watching TV at the same time, and most have broadband connections for watching video. "If you don't have the money to run your TV spot," he says, "you can always run it on your Web site."

Just because something's online, though, doesn't make it a good idea. Like standard print and television ads, many standard Internet advertising vehicles, such as banner ads, are quickly becoming dated. "People aren't clicking on banners as much as in the past," Koeppel says. He therefore recommends investing instead in search engine marketing, buying keywords and search terms via services such as [Google AdWords](#).

In the end, it all comes back to engagement, according to Patrick. "It's about taking a static form of advertising and really looking at how interactive you can make it," she says. Run a print ad. Make a TV commercial. Build a Web site. Just make sure that all roads lead back to the cutting edge.

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