



10 Essentials to an Effective TV Commercial

Put People in Your Commercial

People relate to other people. Putting people into your commercial can help draw your target audience in as opposed to a 30 second shot of your building's interior, exterior and the parking lot. You don't want your commercial to look hokey so you do want to be careful about having people waving at the camera or standing there smiling. Have them doing something that relates to your business so your commercial doesn't look like a photo that's come to life.

Plan Out Your Video

Using a furniture store as an example, you may have ten different kinds of recliners, eight living room sets and six bedroom suits you want to feature. You're going to have to narrow those shots down because you simply can't get them all into a :30, :45 or even a one minute commercial without flashing so many different pieces of video on the screen that your potential customers will feel like they're in a lightning storm. Wide shots of your showroom are good to get a bunch of your furniture displayed at once and you can select a few items you want to be featured alone. It's crucial you not cram a bunch of video into the small amount of time you have for your commercial. Your video should tell the story about what you're advertising even if a customer has their volume turned down.

Writing the Script

Make sure your commercial's script times out to 30 seconds (or however long you have bought air time for). Use short sentences that grab your potential customer's attention. You've got a very limited time frame to capture your audience and you need to get your message across quickly. Don't get wrapped up in long sentences. Keep them short and punchy. Your audio should also tell the customer what you're advertising even if the customer is in another room and can't see the TV when your commercial airs.

Audio and Video Must Match

When writing your commercial, you must make sure your audio and video match. When you're talking about new car models arriving, you don't want to see video of the current year's make. When you're talking about your big showroom of furniture, you don't want to see the building from the street. You must merge your audio and video to create a powerful sales tool.

Never Forget Your Call to Action

Your call to action gets customers to buy or act now. Don't get to the end of your commercial and leave off your call to action. You want to tell customers to visit today and give your complete contact

information, including Web site address, phone number and street address (giving a quick line about how to find you if possible). For example, "That's Simple Designs, located next to the old train depot downtown."

Stick to Time

You've bought a :30 commercial package. As tempting as it might be to squeak in an extra few seconds, you just can't do it. Your commercial must time out to the exact time you've paid for. Going over will only get your all-to-important call to action clipped because those last few seconds will be cut off when your commercial airs.

Hiring a Production Company

Of course, you want your commercial to be professional. You can hire a production company or many television stations have their own production companies in-house. They can handle all aspects of your commercial, including writing, shooting and editing your commercial. Shop around for prices. Some production companies are able to offer you a commercial package for as low as \$100 that will include still pictures shot with a high quality video camera.

Scheduling Your Commercial

Placement of your commercial is very important. It determines who will see your commercial and how much you will pay for its air time. Having your commercial air at 3 a.m. will save you money but if you don't reach your audience it's not money well spent. The same holds true for the station you're airing your ad on as well. If you're advertising your maternity clothing store, you don't want schedule air time on ESPN with your local cable company.

Frequency

Television is less demanding on frequency than radio but it still deserves more than a one-shot deal. If you were advertising during the Super Bowl, that would be a completely different story. But on the local level, you need to identify the key times your ad should run and buy enough air time for your commercial to reach your audience at least twice. More times would be ideal.

Consistency

Use the same announcer, jingle, fonts, colors, etc. to keep your commercial consistent. This helps people start to get to know your company by all of these factors. The more you recognize the lady pitching the hair salon down the street, the more you know exactly what that company's name and address is before she even speaks in the commercial.