



## How to Write Print Ads

### Elements of Effective Print Advertising

Print ads are an effective, affordable advertising medium you'll usually find in magazines and newspapers. If you're an ad agency copywriter, freelance copywriter or small business owner managing your own ad campaign, these elements show you how to write print ads that help you reach customers and get sales:

#### 1. Headline

Your headline is the first line of copy your reader is going to see in your print ads. A strong headline will hook the potential customer and compel them to read more about your products and services.

Sample headlines from print ads:

How will it move you?  
Print ad for: Wii Fit

Help Make Bedtime Worry Free  
Print ad for: GoodNites Sleep Pants

Power is Nothing Without Control  
Print ad for: Pirelli Tires

It's time to say no to fake food  
Print ad for: Hellmann's Real Mayonnaise

#### 2. Subhead

You won't find a subhead in all print ads. A subhead is optional but its purpose is to expand on your headline and draw your reader in even further.

Sample subheads from print ads:

Headline: For nine months, you protected him like no one else could.  
Subhead: Now we're here to help.  
Print ad for: Enfamil

Headline: All New  
Subhead: When was the last time you heard that, and it was actually true?  
Print ad for: The Saturn SKY

Headline: Feed Their Wonder  
Subhead: Introducing Lunchables Wrapz!  
Print ad for: Lunchables

Headline: The La-Z-Boy Home Theater Collection.  
Subhead: Because customizing your home theater should also extend to your backside.  
Print ad for: La-Z-Boy

### **3. White Space**

Just because you're buying a full-page print ad doesn't mean you have to fill the entire page with text and images. White space is just as important to your print ads as the copy you write.

White space makes your print ads more visually appealing, which will pull more readers into your ad. If your ad doesn't invite the reader in, they won't ever make it to the end.

### **4. Images**

Images are not required in print ads. They can dress up your ad, though, as long as you choose the right image. Any images you use should go hand-in-hand with your copy. They're not just for decorative purposes.

Photos are best for your print ads but you can also use illustrations if your product is technical and photos wouldn't tell the story as well. You can use multiple images as long as they are important to the ad, such as showing the product's uses. Just don't overload your ad with images for the sake of dressing it up.

### **5. Body Copy**

The body of your print ads should be written in a conversational tone. Don't overwrite your ad.

You have a very limited space to write your copy. Make each word count. Every sentence should explain what it is you're selling and why the customer should choose you.

Your customer has a problem, such as bad breath, a boring car or a bulging waistline. You're offering the solution in your print ads, such as breath mints, a new sports car or low fat chips.

Most print ads you'll find in magazines keep the copy brief, unless you're talking about a medical ad that requires legal information on the drug and its side effects to be disclosed. Take a look at a print ad for any prescription drug to see an example.

Print ad copy doesn't have to be long. You're not writing a book and trying to cram every single copy point about your company into the ad.

Take a look at print ads in the magazines or newspapers you want to advertise in. Make note of how long the copy is to see what your competition is doing.

Even if these ads aren't selling what your company does, they are still your competition because you're competing with them for the customer's attention. If your print ads are filled with text from top to bottom and they're placed next to an ad with images and brief copy, your ad is likely to go unread.

## **6. Call to Action**

What should the customer do now? If you don't tell them, they'll just put your ad down and move on to something else.

Tell them to call now, visit your website, receive a discount for ordering before a certain date, get a free trial or offer a gift with their order. You want to make your reader act now as opposed to whenever they get around to it, which is usually never without a solid call to action.

## **7. Contact Information**

Do not forget your contact information. Don't just include your website because that is where you want people to go. Put every bit of your contact information in all of your print ads.

You want to give each customer every possible resource to get in touch with you. Don't just assume everyone will want to visit your website or call you because they saw your number on the print ad.

Give the customer options so they'll choose to contact you. Right now.