

Selling Network Ads

Introduction

- **Think Locally Sell globally** (At least regionally or nationally)
- What is a network ad?
- Googled definition of a network -“In graph theory-a digraph with weighted edges”
- A better definition for our purposes-“an interconnected system of things or people”
- Whenever you speak of a network, whether you are talking about hooking computers together or handing out business cards at a Chambers of Commerce meeting, you are talking about communication. This holds true for network ads as well.
- What do we do for a living? Why do people pay us?
Fundamentally we are in the business of bringing people who have something to sell together with the people who want or need that product.
- In short we sell eyeballs. Our customers are not interested in buying an ad, what they are really buying is customers. Network ads are just a way to sell them a whole lot more eyeballs at one time. A way to sell them eyeballs from coast to coast.
- While most network ads are classified line ads, there are network programs for display and inserts. What ever the customer needs we can usually work out the perfect program to achieve their goals

Features and benefits of Network ads

- Network ads are like the ads we all sell every day—ON STEROIDS
- Selling network ads is just like selling anything else, you have to let the buyer know how the product can help them-WIIFT-“What’s In It for Them”
- In a nutshell the primary benefit of network ads is “Advertising 101”-to get results you have to focus on “**Reach**” and “**Frequency**”. The advantage in reach is obvious; advertisers can reach millions of readers across the country. Of course frequency is up to the advertiser but network ad pricing makes frequent advertising affordable and attractive.

Let’s look at the benefits to the advertiser a little more closely:

Efficiency-Network ads allow an advertiser to reach potential customers throughout a region or across the nation with just one sales contact. This is analogous to going to Wal-Mart vs. a dozen smaller stores to get what your family needs. Not only is it a huge time saver but also in the long run it saves a lot of money

Coverage- This is an unequalled reach. Just for fun let’s compare the reach of a Network ad to another network program you may have heard a little something about—American Idol. The second hour of a special two-hour “Idol” in March 2007 reached a record breaking 31.18 million viewers. That’s just over 10% of the population of the US. When you compare the numbers, a Network advertiser reaches more homes than the most popular show on television. If you had an advertiser who interested more in a Regional network,

they also offer similar penetration however it would be within their network boundaries.

Readership-Network ads are placed in publications with high readership. As locally owned publications free papers have been created to address the needs of their communities. They provide readers with the information and advertising they need and want in their lives. This is why free and community papers continue to grow and thrive as the daily newspaper industry shrinks and loses market

Results-Many advertisers have been part of one or more networks for years. A sharp sales person may get an advertiser to “gamble” on a network ad one time or even for a few weeks. The best sales person in the world could not get an advertiser to continue to waste money on ads that did not generate a response. The best testimonial for the network ad program is found in the clients who invest in the network year after year.

Benefits for publications and sales reps

Expanded customer base-Network ads give you an opportunity to sell advertising to businesses that want to throw out a bigger net. Companies that might not even talk to a local media but will talk to a “national” or “regional” advertising firm

Support your industry-Network ads support the advocacy efforts of the Association giving our industry a voice to speak out on the issues important to your business Regional network

ads support the state and regional associations helping our industry to grow stronger in a highly competitive field.

Adds variety to your publication-Network ads fill out your pages with a variety of national/regional advertising. This gives your readers more choices and might motivate local advertisers in similar businesses to advertise. For example a North Carolina furniture company advertises discounted bedroom suites through Network, local furniture store sees this and advertises a bedroom suite-FREE LOCAL DELIVERY

CHA-CHING- rebates adds another revenue stream. Network ads can be quite profitable, improving your bottom line without requiring much effort. Regional networks also offer programs to boost your bottom line profits

Identifying potential network advertisers

Obviously, not every business can benefit by investing in a network advertising program. Mama Pepperoni's Pizzeria Cucina Trattoria on the corner probably is not your best prospect. A world famous Chicago Pizzeria that ships their pizzas worldwide packed in dry ice...maybe. Let's take a look at some things to consider before you approach a prospect about advertising regionally or nationally:

- Network advertisers sell something that can be shipped (Furniture) or is a "destination" that consumers will travel to see (Retirement property) or experience (Resorts) Services that can be done remotely

- Network customers either can handle a large demand or sell a big ticket highly profitable product. They can handle the response generated by a large reach and whose return on investment justifies an investment in a national program. A network program wouldn't work for an artist who sells one painting a month for \$250 but it would be great for an artist who can sell hundreds of prints for \$20 each
- Network Ads is an excellent way to drive customers to a website or to a call center. With improvements in SPAM filters and with so many homes on the national do not call list, these firms must find a new way to drive a heavy volume of calls/clicks in order to maintain their business. Many firms need this volume to keep their prices low and their profits high. A mirror company used Network to drive orders for large installed mirrors at a discounted price. The volume of responses to their ads allowed them to have trucks on the road continuously doing installations throughout the country. They would schedule the jobs when they had enough orders in a region to cost justify a truck and the driver's time. NANI response rates meant that no customer had to wait too long for their mirror.
- Network ads are a way for businesses in rural areas to do big city volume. A business can locate in an area that offers low overhead and labor costs but use our network to reach millions of potential customers.
- In summary a potential network advertiser is a business that wants to throw out a big net (ergo—NETwork), who sells a portable or destination product/service, and who

can and needs to do a high volume of business. They also need to have the resources to invest in the program.

Selling network ads

Selling network ads is not rocket science, in fact selling a network program is much like selling an advertising program in your own publication. The key to selling network ads is to identify customers who like to think out of the box, customers who like to think big. You also have to step out of the box and set your sights on wider horizons. Here is an approach that has worked for some of the network ad selling champions around the country:

- Prospect for potential clients, look in local dailies, phone directories, and other advertising for customers who seem to fit the profile of a network advertiser. Read local business publications and search classified databases for leads.
- Research the prospect, check out their website, call and request information. Use this information to formulate some good questions to ask the customer.
- Call the prospect and identify the person who handles their marketing.
- Use a benefit laden opening to your call.

Mr. Jones, My name is _____ and I represent a large network of publications across the (state-region-nation). Many businesses much like yours use our network to drive traffic to their sales desk. I'd like to ask you a few questions to see if we might be able to help you achieve your marketing objectives"

- Use good probing skills to learn as much as you can about the customer's needs. Focus on how the customer does business (shipping, products etc.), where their customer's come from or their service area, and on goals and challenges. Find out what

their marketing goals are and what is their most profitable product or service

- Research the best package for the customer, if they want to advertise nationally Network can give them what they want, if they want to reach the Mid-Atlantic States, MAC-NET is an appropriate buy. You can contact the various regional associations and they will be happy to get you the information that you need. Firms specializing selling network packages are also a great resource. You can either place the ads through them letting them do the research or you can use their websites as a guide to what is available.
- Prepare a proposed plan for the customer and present it to them. Your presentation should concentrate on the coverage, circulation and especially the value in the program. Remind the customer of how little they have to pay for each home reached.
- When closing a network sale it is imperative that you carefully and thoroughly explain the program to the client. Before you explain the program to the customer you need to understand it yourself. Each network has its' own policy, be sure to read these very carefully. If there is something you don't understand pick up the phone or shoot off an e-mail and ask. Like every other part of our business you'll find the people who administer the networks are friendly and very helpful.
- Close the customer, work with them to develop an effective ad, submit the ad through the appropriate channels.

Some final thoughts on selling network ads

- It is up to each of us to police the advertising sold on the networks. While the networks have rules to exclude the

“scam-artists”, the person selling the program is in the best position to judge the legitimacy of the prospect. A good rule of thumb, if you wouldn't want this account in your publication...don't sell them into anybody else's paper.

- It is said that “there is never much traffic when you go the extra mile”. Selling network ads is not easy, but I can't really think of anything that is truly worthwhile that is. If you are willing to go that extra mile, educate yourself about network programs, identify the right prospects, do the homework necessary to develop good programs and then use good selling techniques to present the value of network advertising programs you will be successful. Not only will you reap the rich financial rewards from selling the programs but you will also have the satisfaction that comes from helping your clients achieve their goals and the satisfaction that comes from succeeding at something that many others won't even attempt.

For more information I suggest you contact the National or the Regional Associations, they have great information on their websites and you'll find that their staff will bend over backwards to help you.