

by Mark Hoxie

90 Days to SUCCESS

Marketing and Advertising Your Small Business

Empowers small business owners with a practical plan
of action to achieve successful results from their
advertising and marketing efforts

Provides techniques that are applicable to any business owner,
regardless of industry

Examines and explains all forms of advertising
(e-marketing, radio, newspaper, television, magazine, and more)

90 Days to Success Marketing and Advertising Your Small Business

Mark Hoxie

Course Technology PTR

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Your Small Business

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*In loving memory of Raymond Hoxie
July 21, 1922–September 15, 2010*

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About the Author

Mark Hoxie began his professional career as an advertising sales representative for the Yellow Pages in Los Angeles. Within his first year, he was one of the top salespeople on the entire West Coast. After finding similar success in print, newspaper, radio, television, Internet, and direct-mail marketing, he returned to his hometown of Syracuse, New York, to save his family's ailing business. Using his newfound expertise, he brought the business back from the ashes.

Currently, Mark is helping small and medium-sized businesses develop marketing strategies through his company, Hoxie Consulting. He has real-world experience sitting on both sides of the table—as an advertising sales representative and as a small business owner. Drawing from these experiences, he has helped hundreds of businesses grow and prosper. Mark also holds workshops and seminars for small business groups, schools, and advertising sales teams. To learn more, visit www.HoxieConsulting.com.

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Introduction

To get a better understanding of the purpose of this book, let me tell you a bit about its creation. Almost 10 years ago, I moved to Los Angeles and got into the world of advertising sales. It was my first sales job of any kind, so I was excited to soak up any knowledge I could find along the way. I quickly learned to uncover the needs of my potential customers and provide them with solutions. This kind of honest sales approach led me to become one of my company's top salespeople on the West Coast.

I developed an obsession with advertising. Have you ever had a Yellow Pages sales rep tell you, "No one ever just picks up the Yellow Pages to read them for fun"? They haven't met Mark Hoxie.

My thirst for knowledge led me from one advertising medium to another. I worked in television, radio, direct mail—you name it, I've sold it. Each time I changed positions, I would consult my sales team on how to sell against and, more importantly, in unison with other products. I had old customers calling me with marketing questions on a daily basis. I had several begging me to work for them full time as some version of a marketing director. Needless to say, I developed a bit of an ego.

My ego was quickly put in check when I learned my father was going to close down the family business back on the East Coast. He'd been in the painting business for almost 30 years and simply was no longer able to make ends meet. The market had changed, other businesses began to undercut him, and he was ready to hang it up. Without much hesitation, I gave up my life as an advertising sales executive in Los Angeles to try to save the family business back in Syracuse. Using my experience selling advertising and growing other people's businesses, I knew I could turn the company around.

After a complete marketing overhaul, I was able to raise the business from the ashes and bring it back to its former glory.

The advertising itch quickly caught up with me. There's nothing I love more than helping businesses grow through effective marketing and advertising, so I decided to turn the painting business over to my brother and get into consulting.

It didn't take me long to realize that I was out of my league. Most of the advertising consultants I could find had extensive resumes littered with Fortune 500 experience and high-end degrees and MBAs from some of the country's top universities. Others wrote books.

Because I don't have a fancy degree or experience with multinational corporations, I decided to take a shot at the latter option. I began to search local bookstores in an attempt to see what kind of books existed for small business marketing. Looking at the authors' qualifications, I felt like I hit another wall. These guys all had similar qualifications to the other consultants I had researched. They worked in marketing for huge national companies, and all of them had spent years obtaining various degrees and certifications.

And then it hit me like a ton of phonebooks: What do these guys know about marketing and advertising for *small* businesses? How can they draw any comparisons between marketing a national fast-food chain or automobile brand and the needs of small businesses operating solely in their own backyards?

As it turns out, they can't. The marketing strategies of a national electronics manufacturer have nothing to do with a florist trying to make a living. I've helped florists grow their business. I've also helped mechanics, lawyers, roofers, accountants, restaurants, and all kinds of other businesses have great success in local and regional markets. Most importantly, I helped saved my family's business.

I pitched this idea to an acquisitions editor at Cengage Learning, and she was sold. Cengage has an excellent series of books dedicated to helping businesses and professionals take on real-world challenges in 90 days, and a marketing and advertising book was a good fit.

The book you're holding in your hands does not have any get-rich-quick options. I'm not going to tell you how to advertise for free, and I'm not going to spend the whole book telling you how to create a pretty logo. This book is designed to give you the tools to make educated marketing decisions that can help your business weather the tough times and even grow to new heights. Within 90 days, you will be able to implement a more effective marketing strategy and be certain that you are getting the most bang for your buck. You will learn the ins and outs of various mediums and how to determine which advertising routes are best for your business.

Although this book is laid out in a linear, 90-day fashion, I encourage you to read the book thoroughly before making any decisions. After you have completed this book, hold onto it as a handy reference piece. Also, you will find that some of this book speaks to specific businesses or circumstances. Please consider them all. An accountant may learn something from the advice I give to restaurants. A well-established company could still pick up a few pointers from the new business section.

Just like investing in the market, investing in your own business requires certain financial risks. Please use this book as a tool to help you make more educated marketing investments. However, as you will hear me say throughout this entire book, always use your common sense.

I hope you learn a lot from this book and you are able to bring your business to a new level. Also, I've tried to keep this book upbeat and entertaining so that it doesn't drag on like some of the other books penned by far more worldly marketing "experts" sitting up in their high-rise offices. Growing your business doesn't have to be tedious—it should be an enjoyable experience.

So, enjoy!

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Chapter 1

Why Advertise?

- What Is Advertising?
- Why Should You Advertise?
- New Businesses
- Objections
- Action Plan

Advertising makes the business world go round.

In a capitalistic free market society, every single business can benefit from proper marketing of their product or service. No matter how many referrals or repeat customers you have, no matter how obscure or mainstream your company is, advertising should be an integral part of your business plan.

Without any kind of marketing or advertising, it would be extremely difficult for consumers to make their buying decisions. Something as simple as getting your carpets cleaned would become a tedious task. Phonebooks wouldn't exist without advertising, so there goes calling a bunch of carpet cleaners. Much of the Internet would be non-existent without advertising, so forget about finding carpet cleaners there. Without any signage advertising businesses, you couldn't even wander the streets in search of their service! Consumers rely on advertisements to introduce and direct them to businesses that can fill their buying needs.

You've likely figured out that businesses rely on advertising to compete with their rivals. You might be the finest jeweler in town, but you're not going to capitalize on the Valentine's Day season if you're not out there advertising with your competition! All forms of advertising operate like salespeople by amplifying your message to the masses. More often than not, advertising can reach far more people for far less money than a salesperson can. Advertising then maximizes your salespeople's abilities because leads have been warmed up by your marketing reach.

What Is Advertising?

Anything that promotes your business can be considered advertising.

Advertising is simply anything that promotes your business. Most people understand that newspaper ads and television commercials are forms of advertising in the traditional sense. However, your signs, business cards, and even word-of-mouth referrals can be considered forms of advertising. It's important to balance a healthy mix of mediums to get the best results for your business.

Some advertising is used simply to keep your name out there at the front of people's minds so that when they are ready to make a buying decision, they think of you. This is called *branding*, and it can deliver long-lasting results. Other forms of advertising

incite people to come in right away with an offer. These call-to-action ads can give your business an immediate boost in clientele.

Why Should You Advertise?

Customers and clients are the lifeblood of any small business. As a new business owner, you must do things to drive people to your business. Word of mouth is a great way to drum up business, but if you have not been around long enough to build a referral base, you need another source of customers. Advertising is quite simply the only way to drive new clients to your business. If all you had to do for the phone to magically begin to ring off the hook was open a business, everyone would be doing it.

People who have been in business for some time can still benefit greatly from a marketing program. They may want to expand and may need extra sources of income to do so. Some existing business owners may want to focus on one of their primary goods or services. An effective marketing strategy can help them reach those goals.

Some people are reluctant to advertise because it is not a tangible purchase. When you buy a printer, you end up with a machine in your office that can print out documents. When you cut a check to the utility company, it's for the amount of energy your business consumed.

Advertising is different. When you buy an ad in a newspaper, what are you really getting? How many people look at your advertisement? How many come right in for a purchase? How many visit you way down the road? How many totally ignore it?

It's extremely difficult to quantify what you're getting when you purchase an ad. There are many ways to track your return, but this variable scares many business owners out of taking the advertising plunge. Worse yet, some people decide to just get their feet wet, which usually leads to weak results and the assumption that advertising doesn't work.

The more educated you are about marketing your type of business in your area, the more you can erase some of the uncertainty that comes with buying advertising. What works for a mattress dealer in Manhattan may not work for a dog groomer in a suburb of Minneapolis.

If you're a new business owner, advertising is the only way to bring new clients to your business.