

Print Points

No. 1

One message per ad, please.

When you buy ad space, do you immediately see how much copy you can cram in? Does it seem like real estate that needs high-density housing so you can make maximum profit? After all, you're paying for ad space, so why not make all the points you can?

Here's why not. Ad space isn't like an apartment building. It's like a single family dwelling. One tenant per ad. Any more and your ad will feel like all the neighbors are shouting at once, each with their own idea of what they want you to hear. In the end (which will probably come very quickly), your customer will understand little and remember even less. You've spent money to create noise, which will do the exact opposite of what you wanted—to get buyers' attention and make a point.

Instead of filling up your space, decide the most important thing you want people to know _____ from your ad or what you want them to do. The more powerfully you make that single point, the better use you've made of your ad space.

Give your message some a i r .

In any form of visual communication, it's critical that your message get noticed and read. It's your job to lead the reader's eye to your message and away from distractions. There are distractions everywhere, so your job is to create an "oasis" in your little corner of the world for your message to live in. You might call it "visual peace".

Miss me? Not likely.

How do you create visual peace? Easy. Leave empty space *around* your message. Does that seem like a waste of space you paid for? Exactly the opposite. Only by buying restful breathing room for your message can you get your customer to pay attention to what it is you're saying. So, you buy empty space for the exact reason of drawing attention to the space you *do* fill with words or images.

White space needn't be taken literally. It can be black, a color, or a soothing background image. The important point is, some kind of visual peace must be there for your ad to work well.

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Don't be so serious.

One of the problems we all face is boredom. Most of us eat pretty much the same foods, wear the same clothes, watch the same TV, listen to the same music, and work at the same job day after day.

An obvious but neglected way of getting attention is to make your message entertaining. Use humor. Advertising great David Ogilvy said, "The best ideas come as jokes. Make your thinking as funny as possible."

Another way to create intrigue is by telling your message in the form of a story, with characters, a plot, and drama. ***Still another way is to use unexpected imagery.***

Play a little. Don't take your message so seriously that your customers feel like it's life and death. Treat your audience to something different and you're likely to see results.



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