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How to Write "Call Me" Ads

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Are you curious about what a "Call Me" ad is? Actually, I made it up. But if I've caught your attention and you are reading this column then my intention worked. That is precisely what effective advertising does: It grabs your attention.

Keep reading and you will learn how to write effective, catchy advertisements that will increase your volume of responses.

If you've ever tried newspaper or telephone directory advertising to market your business, chances are you've received a mixed response, or no response at all. Don't feel bad, though; most advertising is ineffective. Some believe the specific placement of an ad can result in a poor response, or that a different day of the week can make a difference in the number of responses. Some also believe the larger the ad, the better the response. But bigger ads are not necessarily better.

So, what makes an ad effective? It's simple: the content. Let's pretend for a moment that you are a consumer looking for a massage appointment. Open up your telephone directory to the "massage therapy" section. You will notice display and in-column ads. Which business will you call first? Why did you choose this business over the other ones? For most consumers, making this decision would be easier if they just pulled out a coin and flipped it, because the ads are all the same. The ads typically mention massage and other services offered, and list the owners' names, addresses and telephone numbers. Some ads are fancy and list specific modalities such as CranioSacral Therapy and Neuromuscular Therapy, but to the average consumer, this means absolutely nothing -- it is foreign terminology.

After reviewing the ads, average consumers will typically resort to picking up the telephone and dialing each business until they reach a human on the other end who can answer their questions. The three questions consumers are thinking about as they view the ads are: "Is this a legitimate, professional business?"; "Can I

get an appointment today?"; and "Will the money I spend equal or exceed the value of the services?"

Revising your advertisement to address these questions will help your business stand out among the others, and you will dramatically increase your odds of the consumer choosing your business to call first. To improve your ad, the first thing you must do is list what makes your business better and different than your competitors. Here are some ideas to help you:

- same-day appointments
- emergency appointments
- weekend and evening hours
- heated massage tables
- deep pressure available
- money-back service guarantee
- friendly staff
- experienced therapists
- immediate pain relief
- neck and back specialists
- insurance acceptance
- free gift certificate delivery
- free consultations
- home visits available
- maternity massage care
- professional and safe environment
- visa/master card/AMEX
- massage parties
- specializing in disc problems

Depending on the size of your advertisement, choose a few or several of these features to place in your ad.

By now, you may be thinking that it would be great to increase the volume of callers, but what happens when the consumer calls and gets your answering machine? Good for you, for thinking ahead!

Add some of the features above to your voicemail message. Also, you can change your voicemail message daily to indicate the date and to inform callers that you are open, have appointments available that day, and will return their call within the hour. Again, answering some of these questions will increase your chances of receiving more calls and messages.

You can also add a one-line eye-catching slogan. This will be placed on the top portion of your advertisement instead of your business name (which you will place on the bottom of the ad next to your telephone number).

Here are a few examples:

- "If we can't help you, we'll make a referral!"
- "We offer unsurpassed professional service!"
- "Once you try us, you'll never leave us."
- And my personal favorite: "Caution: May be easier to live, work and play with."

With just a little imagination and effort, you can turn an average advertisement into an effective, high-response ad that far surpasses your competitors!

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