



Matt Baker

WHERE THERE'S URGENCY, THERE ARE CUSTOMERS

Effective brand advertising has an appropriate time and place. Unfortunately, given today's economic conditions, this brand-boosting initiative may not result in the drive of traffic that one might expect.

Today's buyers aren't just looking for a deal; they are looking for the deal of a lifetime. While advertising focused on brand building is important, it is not what will get buyers off their couch and into your dealership in today's tough times. Why not? It all comes down to urgency, which is created through an immediate call to action, fear of loss and the deal of a lifetime.

The Power of Urgency

People in general are excellent at the art of procrastination. For many, the easiest decision to make is no decision at all. The stresses brought on by a gloomy economy makes buyers feel increasingly paralyzed, which contributes greatly to consumer procrastination. As Michael Fortin, President and CEO of SuccessDoctor.com expressed in a recent blog post, the key isn't in pressuring people to make the purchase. Instead, it's using pressure to give your consumers a compelling reason to stop procrastinating. By supplying your customers with a logical reason for why they should buy now, you are replacing their purchasing objections with a need to act on your proposed offer.

So just how successful can this approach be? Marketing Experiments Journal took it upon itself to test the effects of urgency on sales conversion rates. By offering special event savings for consumers who purchased between the dates of May 8 through June 15, 2006 Marketing Experiments noted a 992.68 percent average increase in sales over the course of the offer period. Long story short – limited time offers create urgency and urgency drives sales. However, as the Marketing Experiments study is quick to point out, the urgency you create must be genuine in order to be effective. Promotional gimmicks like continuously extending offer

expiration dates will only result in a loss of credibility and a lack of return.

Making It Work for You

While there is a lot to be gained from urgency-driven advertising efforts, many often aren't sure of exactly how to use this theory to generate the highest return. Here are a few different options to consider when developing an urgency plan that works for your dealership.

Utilizing Promotional Events:

For many dealers, staffed events or "SuperSales" can help to create an ongoing training program or provide a shot in the arm during a good economy. Yet when times turn tough, these events often become an integral part of a dealer's business plan. As the dealership staff stops believing they can move markets, these promotional events become even more effective as they "stir up the pot." This opens the dealership employees' eyes to develop effective ways to create their own market, even when everyone else doesn't believe one exists.

These staffed events sales offer an excellent opportunity to create genuine consumer urgency with an effective time-sensitive offer. Whether your staffed event ad plan includes direct mail, newspaper, TV, radio or all four, promotional sales offer a unique opportunity to communicate a logical reason why consumers in your market should buy now and most importantly, why they should buy from you.

Direct Mail:

Whether you handle your own direct mail campaigns or rely on a marketing agency to help you get your message across, make sure your approach is geared towards driving home that much-needed urgency factor.

As the Marketing Experiments study went on to show, simply adding an "offer expires on this date" starburst to your advertising may seem like the easiest way to increase your sales return. However as they came to discover, better results were received by

those special offer promotions that were produced through careful and thoughtful planning.

For instance, consider developing a direct mail campaign that includes both implied and direct urgency. While direct urgency gives the consumer a straight forward reason to act, such as through noting a deadline for special savings, implied urgency uses creative verbiage to help suggest that acting now would be in the consumer's best interest, without expressing it directly.

As Marketing Experiments came to find, the combination of these two approaches in one special offer lead to an increase in sales conversion rates by 508 percent.

Additionally, consider steadily building upon the urgency your copy creates by staggering direct mail send dates to the same customers. This method will not only repeatedly remind those consumers why they should buy and where they should buy from, it also motivates these buyers to make the move out of the house and onto your showroom floor, before it's too late.

In The End...

No, unfortunately not every prospect will choose to buy from you now. However, by capitalizing on the power of urgency advertising, you are putting your dealership at better odds to see that influx of traffic.

Remember that creating effective urgency is not a one-step process. Instead, it's a series of well-planned steps from a number of angles. Your goal is to give your consumers a compelling reason to stop procrastinating and make the purchase. Provide your customers with a logical reason why they should buy now and chances are that more will do as you say.

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