



strategicmedia

Direct Response Radio: *Strategy • Media • Creative*

ARTICLE NUMBER 18

The Ten Key Questions In Direct Response Radio Advertising

The 10 Questions Asked By Every Successful Direct Response Radio Advertising Campaign

Introduction

Successful radio advertising campaigns require that certain fundamental pieces of information about the product (or service), customers, and business be clearly understood by everyone involved in the effort. Sales, marketing, customer service and the radio advertising agency should all have the chance to provide input from their perspective, and all of these groups should be operating with the same set of complete information.

Without this foundation of common understanding, the chances of your radio advertising campaign being successful are diminished. Why? Because you slip from a methodical, disciplined approach to building your business profitably with direct response radio advertising to a more haphazard and risky approach that relies on luck. Successful direct response radio advertisers earn their way to great wealth by taking a disciplined approach. The questions we'll outline

“Successful direct response radio advertisers earn their way to great wealth by taking a disciplined approach.”

below are to be answered as part of just such a disciplined approach and they are meant to be addressed during the pre-launch phase of building your radio advertising campaign.

In many respects, building a successful direct response radio advertising campaign requires a mentality akin to that of a researcher. Researchers uncover knowledge about a particular topic. The first step in research is identifying the problem you are trying to solve. In this case, the problem is how to achieve the highest profitability possible with direct response radio and solving this problem requires answering the following questions:

- Creative: which advertising appeals will result in the highest number of most qualified leads?
- Media: which target audiences are most responsive to the product's advertising appeals?

Answering these questions will minimize your media CPO, thereby maximizing your radio advertising (and overall business) profitability.

The list of questions that follows is aimed at guiding any potential radio advertiser down the road to answering the above questions. The answers to these questions are the input into creating and testing a hypothesis (again, thinking like a researcher) about which combination of radio advertising appeals and radio media targeting will result in the most profitable radio advertising campaign.

The 10 Key Questions

Note: we'll use the word "product", however the following thought process is

also applied to services, events, and other items that are promoted in direct response radio advertising campaigns.

Product Questions:

1. What benefits does the product provide to its users? What problems does it solve? In what ways does the product make the user's life better? Be sure to identify key claims that can legally be made about the degree of benefits to the product user.

2. How does the product work? It is important to note that this is input information only. One of the biggest mistakes in creating advertising of any type is an over-emphasis on features and not benefits. Discussing how the product works can lead advertisers astray, into the world of the "neat" factor and out of the world of what matters to your target customers – what the product does for them.

3. How is the product different? Be sure to compare the product to alternatives or substitutes, as well as to competing products. Also include information about any patents, trademarks or clinical test results.

4. What offers may be used in the radio advertisement? For example, is there a free trial, free shipping, or a bonus quantity with purchase?

5. What are the distribution channel(s) that will be used for the product? (Web, retail, direct)

6. Are customer testimonials, expert endorsements, or a corporate spokesperson available for use in the radio ad?

Customer Questions:

Answering the following questions requires at least some customer research. It may be primary research (for example, conducting a qualitative focus group or a quantitative survey), or secondary research (reviewing qualitative or quantitative research compiled by others about your product category that you can apply to your specific situation). Don't overlook your current customer base and results from prior tests as a source of valuable customer information, but be aware that this data will not be randomly collected (i.e. to some degree your current customers will be a reflection of the advertising that brought them in). In any case, research will not spell out the exact appeals that will be successful for your specific direct response radio advertising campaign, which is why in-market testing occurs in the next phase.

7. Who is the target consumer segment? Describe them in terms of age,

sex, socioeconomic, demographic, geographic, or other relevant dimensions.

8. What are the strongest motivations for this customer segment to buy this type or class of product? What does the customer hope to gain by purchasing, and what loss would the customer avoid by purchasing?

“It almost always turns out that more than one creative approach seems to make strong sense.”

9. What objections or excuses might the customer use to delay or avoid buying the product? What is the answer to each of the objections or excuses?

Business Question:

10. How will you measure success? This is a very important question and the one most often unanswered going into the testing phase. Ideally, you will know exactly what media CPO (cost per order) is required for you to achieve break-even profitability. Armed with this information, you'll have a context with which to view the results of advertising tests. Without it, you are in danger of either pulling the plug on a profitable campaign or rolling out an unprofitable campaign.

Conclusion

Once you've answered these questions, you're ready for the next step. It's time to pull together a well-rationed hypothesis about which set of appeals, distilled into a creative approach that ultimately ends up as a radio ad, is likely to work the best. This is a challenging phase because it entails dealing with a large amount of information and a large number of alternatives. Additionally, identifying appeals is only the first step—articulating those appeals is also very important and nuanced. Most often your radio advertising agency will conduct this exercise because they're experienced in dealing with these challenges, but it should be iterative with the client team.

It almost always turns out that more than one creative approach seems to make strong sense. This is appropriate because you will ultimately test a minimum of two approaches (two different radio ads) since what we are trying to learn is which approach works best. As this is a comparative exercise, it requires comparing two ads. For more information on how to conduct a successful testing phase in building a direct response radio campaign, see our article on that topic. It's located in the Article Library on our web site (www.strategicmediainc.com).



strategicmedia

Direct Response Radio Advertising

Strategy • Media • Creative

Visit the Strategic Media [Radio Sage Blog](#).

Discover more [Radio Advertising Articles](#).