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WASHINGTON BUSINESS JOURNAL

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B2G Insights

To say it like you -- not media -- mean it, pay for it

Washington Business Journal - March 30, 2007 by [Joyce Bosc](#)

I have a confession to make: I actually look forward to Mondays and the first of every month. Those days usually mean new editions of our favorite publications will come in the mail. All of us in the office battle to get our hands on them for a couple of reasons.

First, they give us an idea of who is saying what about which issue. Secondly, they give us a snapshot of who is creating or strengthening a brand in the B2G space.

It's imperative that business development folks know precisely which publications existing and potential customers read. Though recent surveys show that more people are getting their information from the Web, the fact is they're getting information from the online versions of print publications and other traditional sources.

Those avenues are the ideal forum to get your voice, story and brand in front of government customers and prospects. The most obvious communication method that publications can provide the B2G community is advertising.

Advertising, because you're paying for it, gives you total control of your message. You can decide what words to use, what colors to display and which section of the publication to run the ad in.

When choosing the publication for your B2G ad, consider several items.

Reach the right audience. It sounds simple, but this rule is often overlooked. As you know, a number of magazines cover the same space. The trick is to determine which ones reach the audiences you're pursuing.

The business development team needs to let the marketing department know which agencies and personnel titles they are going after. Business development and marketing groups can then work together to decide which publication is their best chance to reach those audiences. To be effective in generating contracts and sales, your ad has to make it the customer's desk.

Know your editorial calendars. Publications usually give advance notice of the topics they plan to cover on various dates during the year. The marketing team should get those editorial calendars for each publication you are considering -- and to be safe, so should the business development team.

If a publication plans to cover a specific government program, agency or person, the business development team will know if those programs or people are in their capture cross hairs. This knowledge will be a tremendous advantage in planning and executing your advertising campaigns.

Check on special distribution. Many publications let advertisers know if certain issues will receive bonus distribution, which means that extra copies will be passed out at special events or trade shows. Copies distributed at an event attended by your target audiences have a good chance of landing in their hands, or at least in their "read in the taxi or on the plane" bags.

Make it happen

When creating the ad, the business development and marketing departments need to cooperate on the message and design.

Follow your corporate brand guidelines with regard to logo size and placement, tag lines, colors and

other information required in every ad.

The business development team can provide great help in writing the copy because they know which words work best for their customers and prospects. From acronyms to jargon, it's important that your ad speak the same language as the audiences you want to reach. This gives them a sense of familiarity and comfort when they see your ad.

The business development team should also have input on the images that target audiences will see. From PowerPoint presentations to brochures to Web sites, your audiences have already shown what works for them. Business development gurus are keenly aware of this and should work closely with the marketing team to match the ad with the prospective customers' materials.

There's no escaping return on investment in this industry, and that includes your advertising campaign. Your ads should have built-in tracking mechanisms to determine whether they resonate with the intended audience.

Make sure your ad's contact information is not generic. Avoid toll-free numbers unless the number was created specifically for the ad. E-mail addresses also should be set up specifically for the ad, which makes it easy to track and evaluate the impact on your target audiences.

When you get responses from ads, you'll know your message and design has reached potential customers and struck a chord.

Responses from your target audience require action -- immediately. You now have the opportunity to personally show your brand at work. Remember: Your ad can pique the customer's interest, but only you can close the deal.

Whether your ad appears in a magazine, on a Web site or in a trade-show publication, those tips will help you make the most of the opportunity to reach -- and to motivate -- your B2G customers and prospects. With a better handle on the power of publications that cater to the government and industry reader, maybe you'll start looking forward to Mondays too.

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