



Steinberg On Creative

By Steven J. Steinberg

Creative Services Closes Deals

Three Ways To “Up The Bottom Line”

I am a huge tool. And no, it has nothing to do with what my 15-year-old daughter calls me behind my back. As a creative services director, I help close deals that increase both my company's profitability and my own sense of job security. Creative services helps to ink contracts in three ways:

THE MENTOR FACTOR

Training is an active part my company's support of its account services team. They learn that they're not just sellers of spot inventory — they are business growers. Part of my job is teach them to ask prospects the right questions. By asking the right questions, sellers can ascertain benefits instead of features and position the client in a unique way to their customers.

Nobody wants to buy advertising. Clients want to invest in a marketing relationship that has a reasonable expectation of profitable return. If our account executives create a working relationship that ensures clients that our company will tell their story in a way that connects with prospects' needs, in a way that will be heard, the chances of a signed contract vastly increase. If the marketing relationship has been established and the right questions are asked, the first contract has a very good chance of meeting our mutual expectations, which in turn helps close future contracts.

CLIENT CALLS: PRE-SELLING WITH CREATIVE PHILOSOPHY

When accompanying an account executive and/or sales manager on a visit to a new prospect, I share a very easy-to-digest creative viewpoint with the potential client.

I tell the business owners or managers that I will give them everything they need to know about advertising in the space of just a few minutes time. I offer the caveat that advertising isn't an exact science with a formula that, if followed, guarantees success. Rather, it is an art with guidelines that, if ignored, virtually assure failure. I then outline the four legs of a solid advertising platform:



QUICKREAD™

- Creative services can teach sellers to ask prospects questions that ascertain benefits instead of features and position the client in a unique way to their customers.
- On client calls, define a creative approach that outlines the four legs of a solid advertising platform.
- Hearing a professionally produced spec spot may be all the leverage needed to ink a deal.



1. Know thy consumer. Make sure you're talking to the right target audience.

2. Assess the consumer's needs, wants, and desires as they relate to your product or service.

3. Assert what your product or service does uniquely to fulfill those needs.

At this point, I note that these three legs form a tripod — stable, but not something you can balance a platform on. The fourth component is where creative services truly enters the picture.

4. Ensure the message is arresting/entertaining/interesting enough to be heard.

SPEC SPOTS CLOSE DEALS

When I was creative director for Hawaii's number one group of stations, a new AE brought me a copy request for a spec spot that was so complete, so carefully planned that I was certain it would result in a sale. Unfortunately, I learned later that the information on the request was derived from a flyer the sales rep had found under his windshield wiper while parked at the mall. He had never met with the client prior to stopping by with the spec spot. That's not how spec spots close deals.

For a prospect who is already straddling the fence, hearing a fully produced commercial is often all the leverage needed to ink the deal. My success rate with spec spots, presuming the prospect is open-minded to doing radio but needs some further convincing, is in the 75 percent range.

Spec spots rarely go on the air as initially produced. Chances are, the information gathered to create the commercial isn't as complete as it would be with a client who has signed a contract. But AEs relate to me that wonderful moment when a client who's never been on the radio before hears a professionally produced spot touting their unique benefits, in a way designed to break through the clutter.

Creative services is more than the department that writes radio commercials and sends them on to production. When used to maximum advantage, it's a tremendous resource for growing the company's revenues. So don't tell my daughter. I really love being a huge tool. 📺

Steven J. Steinberg is creative services director for Nassau Broadcasting Partners in Portland, ME. He can be reached at 207-272-5595, or e-mail him at ssteinberg@nassaubroadcasting.com for information on The Theater of Steve's Mind Consultation and Seminar Services.