

## Does Your Advertising Have a Point? Is It the Right One? 2009-08-11

*It's good to have a goal. It's not so good to have the wrong goal.*

Our local cable television/internet/telephone company has been running a TV spot to showcase



to their business customers how effective advertising with them is: a car-dealership manager (a real customer, as they say, "not an actor") brags that everywhere he goes around town, people see him and sing his commercial's jingle for him. That, he says in no uncertain terms, is how he knows advertising with, let's say, Acme Cablevision works for him.

Really? That's the landmark? Not increased sales, or increased traffic, or even increased phone calls? The number of people who can sing his little ditty? Does this businessman really gauge the success of his TV investment by how many people have memorized his jingle? Does that equate to business success? Sure, I believe in the power of music. But I don't believe it will pay the bills.

And it's not just small, local businesses that make this mistake; it's been common in

advertising for generations to focus on the memorability of a thirty- or sixty-second spot, as if the ability to simply blunt-object some string of characters into the public's brains somehow equates to money in the bank.

Remember the gerbils launched into a wall out of a cannon in a SuperBowl ad a few years ago? Sure you do. PETA sure does. People talked about it a lot. Remember the company that ran it? Not unless you're with PETA. They folded within *months* of that ad's first airing. (Their name was Outpost.com. No one remembers what they did.)

Advertising is a marketing activity. The goal of all marketing activities is to *bring in more business* - more sales, bigger sales, sales from new revenue streams, new customers, repeat customers, any of the above, *all of the above*.

And marketing is a core business activity. Just like any other core element of your business, like inventory or labor: if return < cost, it's a bad deal. If you decide traditional advertising is a worthwhile investment for your operation, then go into it for the right reasons, from the right perspective, and with the *right goal*.

