



# How to write a Yellow Pages advertisement that gets your phone ringing hot!

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## How to write a Yellow Pages advertisement that gets your phone ringing hot!

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## How to write a Yellow Pages advertisement that gets your phone ringing hot!

### Introduction

- Increase the ROI on your Yellow Pages <sup>TM\*</sup> Advertising costs
- Increase quality of leads
- Increase number of calls
- Reduce number of price shoppers
- Increase sales arising from Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> advertising

### Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> advertising explained

A MASSIVE expense! That's what many businesses see Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> and other telephone directory advertising as. And for most it is, because the ads are ineffective and they have very little idea how well the ads are working.

Yet – depending on your industry, Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> advertising can be a no-fuss and massively lucrative source of sales for your business.

Inside this guide you will discover how to write a telephone directory ad that stands out from your competitors, gets your phone ringing a lot more often and dramatically increases your sales.

### How to create a successful Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> ad

#### 5 Biggest mistakes people make

There are some common mistakes that most businesses make when advertising in the Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup>. The reason why these mistakes happen is because they have often been fed wrong information by well-meaning but misinformed people.

So check out these mistakes so you know what to avoid:

#### 1. They craft their ad based on the advertising sales representative's advice

Sales representatives (as well meaning as they may be) are paid to sell advertising space. They are experts at selling that space but they aren't experts at creating ads that sell. Invariably, they will tell you to put your business name or logo in the headline, splash around a lot of colour and feature a large image.

In fact, they'll tell every one of their customers the same thing. These initiatives DON'T work so PLEASE don't use them.

#### 2. Being a copy-cat

As advertising deadlines roll around and ad reps start applying the pressure to submit your artwork, many people start to panic. They then flick through the directory and look at what their competitors are doing.

They see that this year their major competitor now mentions X or Y feature in their ad. They see that they

have started using a picture of a woman in their ad. Or a drawing of a big crane.

So what do they do? They copy it. And what's the result? An ad that isn't very effective but looks exactly like their competitor's ad. Copying initiatives that work is a great marketing strategy but copying ads that don't work, or ads that are mediocre, doesn't make great business sense, does it?

#### 3. Spend too much money on colour and too little money on size

The best investment you can make in Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> advertising (assuming there are a number of competing ads in your classification) is to run a large ad. It's far better to invest your money running a large ad than it is to run an ad with spot or full colour.

Thorough research shows that colour doesn't significantly increase your responses yet size most definitely will.

Here's another thing to consider ...

If every ad is full colour and uses colour abundantly, which ad will stand out? The ad that DOESN'T feature colour or perhaps just features two colours instead of the whole range.

Having said that, if going colour gives you a position advantage in your classification (if they bump you up closer to the front if you go colour) THEN it's worth considering.

\*Yellow Pages <sup>TM</sup> is a trademark of Telstra Corporation Limited



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### 4. No point of difference

Buyers who look at your ad are in the market to buy now. All they need is information to give them a reason to call your business ahead of the competition. Yet very few Yellow Pages™ ads truly differentiate themselves from the others in a classification. In most cases they all say the same thing but with varying graphics. Many ads even have identical bullet points.

Here is an example of a Yellow Pages™ group of advertisements, where each ad is basically identical to the next. Notice how none of the ads really stand out?

**Bridal & Evening Wear Retail & For Hire B 347**

<p><b>Bridal Emporium</b> Bridal Gowns, Bridesmaids, Formal &amp; Accessories</p>  <p>PH: 3841 2900 3 Ferguson St Underwood 4119 (Springwood Motorway Bypass, Near DNR of Logan Rd)</p>	<p><b>FERRARI</b></p>  <p>IPSWICH Level 1, The Arcade &amp; Market St 3281 7929</p> <p>MT GRAVATT 1171 Logan Rd Upper Mt. Gravatt 3343 2786</p> <p>BRIDAL GOWNS • BRIDESMAIDS DEBILTANTES • AFTER 5 • FLOWER GIRLS</p> <p>www.ferraribridal.com.au</p>	<p><i>Elizabeth de Varga</i> Exclusive Fashions</p>  <p>Level 1 Broadway Mall Queen St Brisbane 3210 0355</p> <p>13/12 Norval Ct Maroochydore 5443 3006</p> <p>www.devarga.com.au</p>	<p><i>Andrea's</i> BRIDES &amp; GROOMS</p>  <p><b>RETAIL &amp; HIRE</b> Weddings &amp; Formal Expert Personal Service</p> <p>3283 2993</p> <p>Car Azzae Ave &amp; Adelaide Rd Hippa-Hippa</p>
<p><b>BRIDES</b> BY THE BAY</p>  <p>3823 3600 225 Pitt Cleveland Road, Caperside</p> <p>www.bridesbythebay.com.au</p>	<p><i>La Bella Moda</i> A new concept in bridal and formal services Tailored made and ready to wear gowns</p>  <p>Brides Bridesmaids suits and Formal dresses Beauty therapy Nails - Atterctions Make-up - Lip styles Accessories</p> <p>Shop 2/1401 Logan Road, Mt. Gravatt (Opp. Photo Continental) 3219 1418</p> <p>www.labellamoda.com.au</p>	<p><b>ANNA MARIE</b> &amp; MR JOHN</p>  <p><b>RETAIL &amp; HIRE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bridal</li> <li>• Bridesmaids</li> <li>• Formal Gowns</li> <li>• Men's Suits</li> </ul> <p>Level 1 Bank Old Building 315 Queen Street Mall BRISBANE</p> <p>3221 2644</p> <p>sales@annamariebridal.com www.annamariebridal.com</p>	<p><b>Mother of the Bride</b> &amp; Formal Wear</p>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mother of Bride &amp; Groom</li> <li>• Bridesmaids</li> <li>• School Formals</li> <li>• After Five</li> <li>• Sizes 8 - 34</li> <li>• Designer Labels</li> </ul> <p>Open Monday to Saturday</p> <p><b>3841 1712</b> Cnr Harris &amp; Logan Rd Underwood</p>

### 5. Just bullet points, no sales message

If your ad is just a list of bullet points featuring the makes and models you sell or other the boilerplate features like “open 7 days”, “servicing all suburbs”, “all credit cards accepted” and/or “free parking” you’re wasting valuable advertising real estate. Sure, it’s important to include these points but they ARE NOT what will set you apart from the competition.



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### 4 Important factors to consider

#### 1. Everyone competes on an equal footing

One of the benefits of Yellow Pages™ advertising is that it levels the playing field. In other words, multi-national companies are competing side-by-side with mum and pop businesses all with the same size ad. All on an equal footing.

Anyone who buys the largest ad can automatically move to the front of the directory listing. And the businesses that have been in a certain category, at the largest size for the longest period of time, are the ones that appear at the front of that category. As you can imagine then, securing no.1 spot in a major category is worth big money.

Many fortunate small businesses have had lucrative buy-out offers from multi-nationals purely because they hold the coveted no.1 spot in their category.

#### 2. Qualified buyers

In most situations, people who have taken the time to look up your ad in the Yellow Pages™ are in the market to buy your type of product or service either right now or in the near future.

All they need is information that helps them choose between suppliers.

#### 3. The ad lasts for a year

The ad you place in Yellow Pages™ or in any other annual directory is perhaps more important than most any other form of advertising.

The reason for that is that it lasts an entire year. That means once it's in there you can't change it.

If it flops, it flops for an entire year.

And that's why it is vitally important to ensure your ad follows a powerful, proven advertising formula. You'll discover what this formula is inside this guide.

#### 4. Competitive YES but once you know how, it's EASY to shine

- Most ads in Yellow Pages™ are ineffective.
- The double edged sword
- All your competitors but also an opportunity to shine

### X Factors to Maximise the Impact of Your Ad

#### 1. What size?

Have you ever been told by your Yellow Pages™ advertising representative that it's a must to have the biggest ad you can possibly afford? And ever think that was a sales pitch designed to squeeze more money out of your pocket?

Unfortunately for advertisers, it's true.

With normal newspaper advertising you can double the size of an ad but your responses won't double.

With Yellow Pages™ advertising on the other hand, your responses more than double. In fact, according to independent research there's a 1-4-7-11 rule.

That is, if the smallest ad, for example a '1 Unit Display Ad,' generates 1 call, the next size up will generate 4, the next, 7 and finally the last, 11.

So – you can experience as much as 4 times the responses, just by doubling the size of your ad.

#### 2. White space is useless

If anyone has ever told you to make sure your ad has lots of "white space" please forget that you have ever heard that.

White space doesn't sell. Too much white space is unnecessarily costing you money.

Obviously, it's very important that your ad can be read and white space does play a role in helping maximise the readability of your text but don't go overboard.

#### 3. The layout

The most important part of your ad is the copy but the layout still does have an impact on whether or not your ad gets read and acted upon. Here are some tips to help you create an eye-catching and readable layout.

Creating an eye-catching layout DOESN'T mean featuring fancy graphics, ultra-hip designs, in-yourface borders or illustrations.

- The headline should span 1/5 of the height of your ad. It should be up to 4 times the size of the body copy
- Feature body copy that is 9 or 10 point or 8 point if you have a very small ad. Any smaller and it's too difficult to read
- Ideally, use a serif typeface for your body copy as studies show that these types of fonts are the easiest to read
- Place your logo at the bottom right of the ad
- If you offer a personal service and your business is all about you, feature a headshot of you above the logo
- Run your body copy in two columns down the left hand side of the ad
- Watch out for borders



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Theoretically, a thick bordered ad will stand out. BUT – if every other ad in a classification has a thick border, all the ads look the same. If every ad in a classification has a squiggly, odd shaped, thick, eye-catching border, the page looks like one big mess. Nothing stands out.

In many cases it's far better to run an ad with a thin border because doing that will sometimes make your ad stand out amongst the ads with thick borders.

### The advertising formula

In this section I'm going to show you a winning formula for Yellow Pages™ advertising. This formula is similar to other types of advertising but there is a big difference.

Because the target market reading a Yellow Pages™ directory will be different to the target market of a newspaper, the wording of the ad you run in Yellow Pages™ would be different to the wording you run in a newspaper ad.

Here's why ...

As mentioned earlier in this guide, people flicking through a Yellow Pages™ directory have already identified that they want to buy the type of product or service that you have to offer. All they need to do now is make a decision about which supplier to choose.

The aim of your Yellow Pages™ ad is to sell them on "why you" not on the benefits they'll experience using the product.

With that in mind, let's look at the formula in detail ...

As with other forms of advertising, follow the AIDA principle:

#### Attract Attention

- Feature a headline that either offers advice or features your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

#### Create Interest

- Build on the benefits in the headline and focus heavily on the benefits or WII-FM

#### Maintain Desire

- Mention guarantees to reverse the risk in the minds of your buyer
- Feature a testimonial or two to offer proof that the product works
- Summarise the key benefits

#### Inside Action

- Tell people to call or visit
- Make it easy for them to do that
- Feature a special "Yellow Pages™ only" savings offer

- Offer a FREE report on the "11 Vital Things to Consider Before You Buy Your Next Widget" valued at \$37 - Featuring a free report gives a reader an added incentive to call.

For more information on advertising formulas refer to the Member Strategy Guide on "Winning Advertising Formula".

### 3 Main types of ads

There are three main types of Yellow Pages™ ads and the first step in creating a punchy ad is to identify which one is most likely to work best for your business, based on the industry you are in, and the needs of your target audience.

#### 1. Flags your unique selling proposition

Remember how it was earlier mentioned that you're competing on an even playing field with every one of your competitors? This is your opportunity to shine.

Here's how to do that ...

Spend a minute or two thinking about who your buyers are. They have decided that they have a need for a product or service that you sell. Now, what is going through their mind?

- Do they normally get frustrated about dealing with people in your industry?
- What fears do they generally have about the quality of product or service that people in your industry offer?
- What information, offer, strategy or service would instantly overcome those frustrations and ally those fears in the most powerful way possible?
- And – how can you do that in a way that is totally unique?

Once you know the answer to these questions you have a Unique Selling Proposition (USP) that sets you apart from your competitors. Now it's time to put that USP into words with a punchy headline.

Here are some examples of headlines that feature Unique Selling Propositions.

#### "6 Vital Reasons to Choose Brian's Landscaping to Turn Your Lawn Into a Garden"

This type of headline promises the reader that there are at least 6 reasons why they should choose this company over the others. When scanning the Yellow Pages™ ads that's exactly what the reader is looking for - reasons to choose a particular company over another. That's why this type of headline works - because it promises reasons.

- "The Best Prices In Town ... Guaranteed" and...
- "The Most Amazing Facial You've Ever Had ... Or Your Money Back"
- "Delivered to your door in 30 minutes or it's FREE"



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Yellow Pages™ headlines featuring guarantees are great for giving you a point of difference. It makes your business stand out head and shoulders above the competition by showing that you back up your claims by offering risk-reversal measures.

So – if you have a strong money back guarantee in place, it makes sense to mention it in the headline.

If you are one of the only companies in your industry to offer a money back guarantee, and that guarantee would be a big benefit to customers, shout it from the rooftops in your headline.

### 2. Gives information

If you're in an industry that has a long buying cycle and the type of product or service that you sell is either expensive or complex, an information-style ad could be the best solution.

You see, if someone is about to purchase something expensive or complex, they want to be absolutely sure they make the right decision. And more often than not, there is a lot to know about the right and wrong product to buy, which features are likely to work best, what's the most effective format for the customer's needs, what could go wrong with the product, what mistakes they should avoid and so on.

Likewise, if you're in an industry where a lot of things can go wrong for customers, consider running an ad that warns people about the dangers of what can happen to them. The ad would then go on to show how your company is different.

You may have seen the ads run by real estate guru, Neil Jenman

#### **“Before You Choose a Home Builder Here are 7 Vital Questions to Consider”**

This headline promises information on what to look for when making a purchasing decision. This is really important because (depending on the product) buyers want to choose the right product/service for their needs. Giving them helpful information that helps them make the right decision, helps them fulfil a need.

It also positions you as an expert in the industry.

“Don't Choose a Home Builder Until You Read This”

This headline is similar to the headline above in that it offers information, what it also does though, is relate to fears that some consumers have. If you're in an industry that is plagued with an unsavoury reputation (whether deserved or not) consumers tend to be wary and they sometimes have concerns about being ripped off. This headline addresses their fears and promises a solution.

The ad would then go on to share the warning signs of what to beware of when choosing a service provider.

Other variations of that headline are ...

- Pool Buyers Beware: Don't sign anything until you read this! (real estate)
- 7 Costly Mistakes People Make When Building a Pool And How To Avoid Them
- FREE Pool Buyer Guide (worth \$37) ... Shows You How to Avoid The Common Mistakes And Save \$000's

### 3. Makes a strong offer

The right offer can really make your phone ring hot!

The only catch is because the ad runs for 12 months, the offer you promote will need to be valid for 12 months also.

Actually, this “catch” means that hardly any businesses promote offers in the Yellow Pages™ so if you can come up with a great offer that you can run for 12 months, do it. You'll find that when you do, it instantly makes you stand out from the crowd.

It has been shown that the simple act of featuring an offer in your ads boosts the response to your phone directory advertising by up to 300%.

So what can you offer?

It doesn't need to be something of value. It just needs to be something that your potential customers would perceive as valuable.

Here is an example:

- Packaged information. This includes “How To” booklets or ‘12 things you must know about your [product or service] before you begin’ guides or ‘what everybody needs to know about [your product or service]’ eBook or a ‘Special Report’.

Over the years there's a great chance that you have accumulated valuable technical information relating to your business. And while this information may not seem that profound to you, it could be very valuable to someone who is considering your product or service. So offer them that information in the form of a free report or DVD.

It might be:

- FREE 14 point selection guide SAVES you \$000's on baby products and furniture
- FREE Pool Buyer's Guide (worth \$37)
- FREE 10 Point In-Home Design Consultation (worth \$250)
- FREE Hidden Profit Consultation with FREE Dossier Tailored to Your Business (worth \$575)

Another type of offer is special savings or a value-added offer that you can run for at least 12 months.

Maybe you can get bulk quantities of a certain product at a fraction of retail (purchasing them for, say, \$30 each



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with a RRP of \$90). If you can promote them in your ad and in your headline at a rock bottom price you'll attract a flood of interest. Some of these people will purchase the heavily discounted items and then go on to purchase other products from you at full price.

Or – simply identify a product that you know you can do a great deal on for a 12 month period and promote that.

It might be ...

- FREE \$850 Widget ... with every wigwam purchase
- SAVE 25% ...mention this ad and receive 25% off ALL widgets
- Buy One Widget Get One FREE!

### The body copy and 'what's in it for me?'

When people are in buying mode they have specific needs they want met.

All they want to know is how a particular product or company is going to meet their needs. They want to know "What's In It For Me" (WII-FM).

If your ad can answer that question for them in clear, straight-forward terms, in a way that truly excites them about what their life will be like after they buy from you, your phone will ring hot.

Your headline needs to scream "WII-FM" and so does your body copy.

Remember that the sole purpose of your Yellow Pages™ ad should be to get people to call you. Ensure then, that the body copy of your ad states reasons why doing business with your company is such a great idea. And reasons why calling you is a great idea too.

For more ideas on talking in benefits refer to the Member Strategy Guide on "What's In It For Me".

### Make it EASY to buy

Studies prove that the easier you make it for someone to buy from you, the more sales you'll make. So – feature:

- Payment methods – if you offer a variety of payment methods including credit card and EFTPOS, and if that's important to consumers
- Address details along with instructions and parking details
- The geographic areas that you operate in
- Opening hours
- How to order online

### Call to action

Once you have excited your reader about the benefits of what you have to offer, take that one step further and tell them what you'd like them to do next. In other words, tell them to call but go one step further than that. Give them a reason to call.

As mentioned earlier, offer a free report, a free needs analysis consultation (worth \$275), a free 14 point building inspection (worth \$250) or something similar. This tells your reader that the simple act of telephoning you will reap big rewards.

If you want them to visit your website tell them what to do ...

- Visit our website at [www.website.com](http://www.website.com) and download your free report.

or ...

- Order online at [www.website.com](http://www.website.com)

or ...

- Visit our showroom at [www.website.com](http://www.website.com)



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### D. Action plan

What	Why	Who	When
Check your budget and see what size ad you can afford	Capitalise on the power of the 1-4-7-11 size rule.	You	
Think about what the biggest frustrations people have when dealing with people in your industry. Think too about the kinds of questions that run through people's minds when they are considering purchasing.	Understand the needs of your buyers which helps formulate an ad that hits their hot buttons	You and your team	
Identify what your Unique Selling Proposition (USP) is	Gives you a way of articulating your uniqueness and standing out from your competitors		
Craft a headline then body copy that allay customers' fears, dissolves scepticism or promotes your USP.	Communicates your uniqueness	You and your team	
Add a guarantee, if possible. Proves to potential customers that your product can deliver	You and your team		
Develop a special offer that you can run in your Yellow Pages™ ad	Makes your business stand out, and offers buyers another incentive to call you first.	You and your team	