

HOW TO WRITE AN ADVERTISING SUCCESS CASE STUDY

By Charles Warner



Most success letters published by the media (radio and television stations, magazines, and newspapers) regurgitate bland statements about how advertising in a media gets results, but there is rarely any useful information about how this wonderful situation came about.

Case studies are much more effective selling tools than advertiser testimonials. Case studies can give specific details on how a particular medium helped solve marketing and advertising problems. Case studies can be used by salespeople to demonstrate how a medium can marshal its resources and expertise to help customers achieve their specific marketing and advertising objectives. Case studies can also be used by salespeople to position themselves as problem solvers.

Advertising success case studies are also excellent tools for teaching salespeople the important elements of marketing and advertising.

Elements of an Effective Advertising Success Case Study

1. **The Marketing Environment:** A good case study describes the marketing environment: short-term and long-term developments and trends in the advertiser's external environment such as changes in the economy, competitive pressure, regulation, technology, culture, economics, or demographics.
2. **The Competition:** Define the advertiser's main direct and indirect competitors, both current and potential. Competitors should be described in terms of size, growth rate, market share and primary strategies. Competitors' major strengths and weaknesses should be noted. Competitors' positioning statements and advertising strategies should be outlined.
3. **The Marketing Objectives:** State the advertiser's marketing objectives such as "increase market share by two points" or "increase weekday traffic by 20%" or "attain a 30% share of mind (recall of stated benefits)," for example. Marketing objectives should be stated in hierarchical order and quantified so that progress toward them can be measured.
4. **The Marketing Strategy:** Outline the advertiser's primary marketing strategy (segmentation, differentiation or low-cost producer) and the critical success factors in the execution of their strategy.
5. **The Advertising Objectives:** Delineate the advertiser's advertising objectives such as "create awareness" or "reinforce brand loyalty" or "increase store or site traffic for next weekend's sale by 15% over last year" or "increase usage of dry cereal," for example. Some of the advertising objectives can be similar to the marketing objectives but they should also be more short-term and media and campaign specific. Advertising objectives should be stated in hierarchical order and quantified so that progress toward them can be measured.
6. **The Advertiser's Competitive Positioning Statement (advertising objectives put into the plain words of a consumer promise):** Express the advertiser's positioning statement, not just the current slogan, but a positioning theme that makes a definite promise to customers. A positioning statement clearly defines "who we are."
7. **The Problems that Advertising Can Solve:** Lay out the advertising problems from the advertiser's point of view. The problems must be stated in a manner that is objective and not biased to a particular point of view or does not imply an obvious answer.

8. The Solutions to the Advertising Problems: Give details about the specific solutions a medium and its salesperson provided for the client:

a. Creative: Ideas, strategy and execution.

b. Media: Strategy, plans and execution, including merchandising, promotion, vendor support, co-op coordination, research, copy testing, etc. Be sure to include details of the exact schedules purchased, including reach and frequency estimates. Reach estimates are especially important for planned-purchase products.

9. The Results: Summarize the results of an advertising campaign in specific, measurable terms. The results section answers the questions; "Did the campaign work?" "Were the marketing and advertising objectives achieved?" "Were the results attributable to the advertising campaign?" "Were the results attributable to the medium used?" Graphs and other visual presentations of results greatly increases their impact.

Make sure to secure the client's and agency's permission to use the case. In some cases clients are reluctant to give permission to use their names. They wind up and try to duplicate their success using fictitious names and or slightly in order to mask the identity of approximate results should remain the same. When salespeople use the fictitious case, they should tell prospects: "This case is based on an actual situation, but the real client doesn't want us to use his name--his results were so terrific that he doesn't want his com-

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are afraid their competition will get access. In such situations, write a case study that demonstrates how it solve a client's problem. A medium case studies in several categories. The principles, strategy and same. When salespeople use the fictitious case, they should tell prospects: "This case is based on an actual situation, but the real client doesn't want us to use his name--his results were so terrific that he doesn't want his com-

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Advertising success case studies can be written with a client or an agency as the protagonist.

