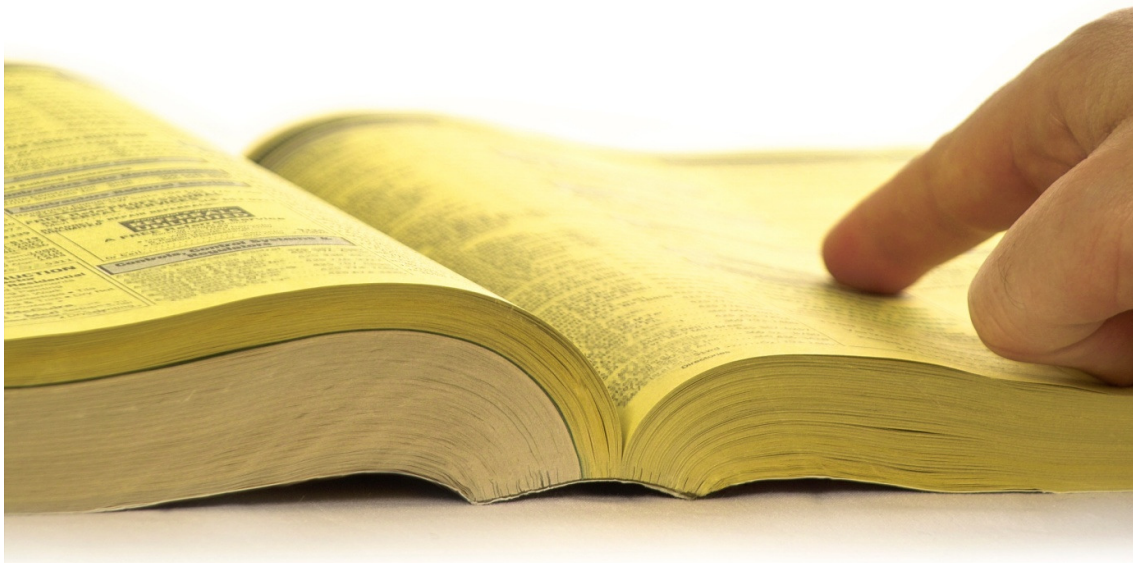




CHAPTER 6:

ADVERTISING





YELLOW PAGES ADS

When most small businesses start up they automatically think: *“If I get a Yellow Pages ad all will be well”*. The challenge is that over the past few years the way people search for businesses has changed. It used to be that whenever anyone wanted to find a business they went straight to the big yellow books. Now the majority of people will go to their computer first.

The main strength of the print version of the Yellow Pages is that you can find local businesses easily and quickly. However, Google Maps has improved their offering to make finding a local business much easier on the net and are starting to eat away at the local advantage Yellow Pages had.

What does this mean for small business? Should you turf your Yellow Pages ad? Yellow Pages are just one part of your overall marketing strategy. You need to consider your total marketing plan for the year to make a sensible decision about what to do about the Yellow Pages.

In my opinion, even though their importance is declining, for some industries Yellow Pages for the next few years will still be a good source of leads and customers. So, how do you determine if the investment is a good one for you?

Step 1: Research

Before you make any decision on running a Yellow Pages ad, pick up a copy of the big yellow books for your area and look through your category listings. If there are only single line ads in your listing, you can pretty much bet that Yellow Pages are a waste of time for your industry.

The sort of categories that still get a solid run from Yellow Pages are local services like computer repairers (people’s computers will be not working when they are looking for a repair technician), and tradespeople. If you are in a service based industry then generally Yellow Pages are not as relevant. The main ways people select service businesses is through referrals and personal contact with you.

Step 2: Look at your own statistics

Look back over where your leads came from in the past year (you do ask people how they found you don’t you?) Many businesses are finding a declining trend in leads from the Yellow Pages and an increase in the internet referrals. If you have statistics – review them and use them to help make your decision based on fact not gut feel.

Step 3: Look at Return on Investment

Yellow Pages are an extremely expensive form of advertising. Even just the addition of your website address to your line listing can cost you hundreds of dollars. Display ads run to the thousands of dollars. Just like any form of



advertising you need to look at your return on your investment – how much do you need to earn to cover the cost of your ads? Are you getting sufficient sales to cover the cost of your ads?

A number of smaller businesses are scaling down the size of their ads and are investing this money back into Search Engine Optimisation or website content rewrites by SEO copywriters to help them get better positions on search engines like Google.

Step 4: Display ads are better than in column ads

If all of the numbers add up from your research, know that display ads are more effective than column ads. They grab attention and are not lost in a series of black lines. To choose the right display ad for your business, go back to your initial research. Go for the biggest display ad your ROI tells you will work for your business.

Step 5: Get your words right

Writing a Yellow Pages ad is an art form. If you make a mistake in your words, you have to live with the consequences for a full 12 months before you can change them.

Step 6: Get your design right


As lovely as the Yellow Pages designers are, if you are serious about getting results you need to invest in professional graphic design rather than have Yellow Pages do it for you.

Professional designers get the right font, make your number very clear and readable, will not overload the design and know what colours work when printed on yellow pages to give the best impact.

Many photos look blurry when printed on yellow newspaper, so you have to get it right the first time or your whole ad will be an expensive waste of money.

Step 7: Use your content for other purposes

Once you have your Yellow Pages ad sorted, use the same content and drop it into on-line community directories and Google Maps. Make sure your website reflects your ad content so when people check you out online, there is no disconnect between what they read in your ad and what they see online.



*Yellow Pages ads work well for people
looking for an instant solution like a 24hr
plumber.*