

# How To Make Your Print Advertising Successful (part 1)

Unsuccessful advertising will cost you dearly. Average advertising is simply a missed opportunity.

Whether in a publication or through direct mail, printed advertising is an expensive medium. So if you're going to use this kind of advertising, shouldn't you try to reduce your risk of failure?

By looking through real-life examples, we'll spot some of the techniques required for creating successful print advertising.

Let's start with this advert...



See [http://www.flyingkite.co.uk/free\\_tutorials/images/Ascent.jpg](http://www.flyingkite.co.uk/free_tutorials/images/Ascent.jpg) to take a closer look.

This ad for Ascent Technology was run in Third Sector, the UK charity magazine (circulation of 20,000). It ran for several weeks as a full-page colour advert.

If anyone from Ascent Technology is reading this, I'm sorry to say, this advert is pretty bad.

Actually it's dreadful.

Unfortunately, like many other IT businesses, this company has fallen into the trap of using one of the least effective forms of media advertising ever – Hucksterism.

**Hucksterism** is a name given to a certain type of advertisement. Hucksterism adverts have two common themes:

1. The visual in the advert will have absolutely nothing to do with the product
2. The headline will use a play-on-words to tie in with the visual, and the link between the headline and the product will be tenuous.

In this instance the advert uses a photo of basketball players jumping in the air. The headline - in a poor attempt to justify the photo - says "Reach out." This is followed by a smaller headline that reads: "Take your relationships to new heights."

Groan, groan, groan!

This type of advert always fails because it gives neither clarity nor benefit to the reader. What is this company trying to sell? For most readers, including me, there will be neither the time nor the inclination to find out.

OK. Let's assume for a second that someone IS intrigued by the headlines (maybe they're a big basketball fan?). When the reader looks down to the tiny, tiny body copy they'll either have one of two reactions:

1. Confusion and boredom
2. A mind-numbing attack of boredom followed by confusion

Words like "information, interactive communications, maximise, involvement, optimise and operations" are as formal and useless as a bear-skin hat on a Queen's guard. Even worse, these vague terminologies are followed by jargon terms: Integrated CRM and e-marketing. Why couldn't the acronym CRM at least have been expanded to Customer Relationship Management? Are they assuming that all their prospects will know what CRM is and its benefits?

### **How Could This Advert Be Improved?**

A better advertisement would create a headline that focused on a prospect customer's wants.

I would suggest a more effective headline would have been “We make your donor’s happy.” – with, for example, a visual of a smiling lady writing out a cheque. Or better still, “Increase your fundraising in 7 easy steps.” Followed by an explanation of how Ascent technology could do this (in 7 easy steps!)

The body copy should then be kept simple-to-read and easy-to-understand – NO jargon. And it must say something meaningful.

And lastly, the advert should provide a prominent response device to track the adverts’ effectiveness. I’d always recommend thinking about an extra incentive to help the reader respond quickly. Some examples of incentives may be a free brochure, discount with deadline, voucher, or a free gift.

In the following two parts of this tutorial I’ll be looking at examples of good response-driven adverts and fantastic personalised direct-mail.