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The following article was written by Mike French in the Auto Recyclers Toolbox Magazine. Mike French is President of Mike French & Company, Inc., providing advertising and marketing products to the auto recycling industry since 1982.

Your advertising is competing with others

HOW TO GET CHOSEN FIRST?

When I was a kid, my school had a simple method for creating teams for ball games. Two captains took turns selecting team members --one at a time, back and forth, until every kid was chosen to be on a team. Kids waiting to be chosen jumped up and down, waving their arms and yelling, "Choose me! Choose me!"

I hated this! I was always the last kid chosen. Even then, neither side wanted me on their team. It was probably because I was smaller than all the other kids. I also had vision problems and couldn't see the ball very well. I actually handicapped any team that was forced to have me. It was humiliating!

As the years went by, I worked hard to not be the last kid chosen for a team. I practiced playing better and got glasses to help me see the ball. And I grew bigger. Eventually it paid off and I wasn't the last kid chosen for a team anymore. Although this was an improvement, I really wanted to be the FIRST kid chosen!

When I got into the advertisement business, I brought this "choose me first" attitude along with me. I wanted the advertising I created for companies to work better than anyone else's. I did research to find out what made consumers choose to buy products and services from one company over another and what made one advertisement stand out above the rest. I wanted to know what would cause the advertisement in the same marketplace.

I discovered two things in my research.

I thought cost or money would be the biggest deciding factor in buying decisions. But that wasn't it! It was other things, such as the item's popularity, or its availability in the marketplace, or how attractive it was in the ad, or how well it was described that figured way ahead of its cost. If the consumer was persuaded by the ad copy and illustrations –price didn't matter! That explains why so many Americans have so much debt for buying things like fancy cars, expensive smart phones and big TVs. They wanted the items, no matter the cost.

Sometimes consumers will make buying decisions for ridiculous reasons when they are not given solid reason to respond to an advertisement. By ridiculous reasons I mean, they may buy one item over another because it costs one penny less.

Auto recycler ads, especially in groupings like in magazines or Yellow Pages, tend to look alike. So consumers can't decide who to call. I have written about this many times in the past, but the problem still persists. Most recycler ads have the name of their company, such as "XYZ's Auto Parts" at the top. They may have a picture of an engine or transmission, their address, phone number, and logo. That's it! There are no selling headlines or offers to respond to. There is no call to action or reason to call. When someone looks at the page of ads, they don't know who to call. This is unfortunate because when someone goes to the yellow pages, they are ready to buy and don't know who to buy from.

How can you get people to respond to your advertisement first? The answer is really simple. Give them clear reasons why they must respond to you first. The more reasons you give them, the more powerful your ad will be! Each reason should clearly tell a customer "What's in it for me?" List as many of them as you can. Tell them boldly to call you first! Say something like: "These are the reasons you should call us first!"

To get your creative juices flowing, here are some things you can include in your ads to get people to respond to you first.

Show that you are EASY to do business with!

Convenience trumps price when it comes to what consumer's value. Here are some ideas: You are easy to find. It's easy to buy from you. It's easy to pay. You are open longer hours. It's easy to find parking. It's easy to get repairs, updates, and modifications. It's easy to get delivery or installation. It's easy to get related parts, supplies, and answers. It's easy to get expert advice or assistance. It's easy to find products or to select what you want.

Show clearly what you provide

List clearly the products and services you provide. List the benefits of doing business with you. Here are some ideas: You provide free parking. You provide free pick up or delivery within a certain area and time frame. You provide multiple ways to deliver. You have a secure, guarded location. You accept competitors' coupons. You are open 24-hours a day. You never close. You are open weekends. You have a round the clock mechanic on site. You have express check-in or check-out. You have a frequent buyer program. You make walk-ins welcome. You give free demonstrations. You offer free on site assistance and free technical support. You offer a list of convenient locations. You offer a free newsletter and easy online 24/7 shopping. Your staff is certified and/or trained – list what kind.

Identify yourself to those who require EXTRA ATTENTION or have SPECIAL NEEDS

You have a smoke free environment. You have someone on staff to pull all your items for you. You have elevator access. You have sign language available. You have staff who speak the following languages (list them). Your facilities are wheelchair accessible. Pets are welcome. You have senior discounts. You have rides available upon request. You have motorized scooters available.

List CAUSES you support or care about

Your products are made in your country. You give a percentage of every sale to (list cause). You collect for charity; all proceeds to (list charity); you support the local high school band (or other cause).

There you have it! Now you can put together an ad that will get people to respond to you first!

Automotive Solutions LLC
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