

The Top Ten Advertising Mistakes Most Optometrists Make... and How You Can Avoid Them!

An *Eye Care Success*
Special Report

by Dr. Bill O'Shea

www.EyeCareSuccess.com

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Many optometrists often say that certain types of advertising just don't work.

They say that postcards or direct mail or their newspaper ads have little or no effect in bringing in new patients.

I believe this is incorrect — all of these forms of advertising are effective. Yes, some may work better than others, but often lousy results are due not to the form of advertising, but to the fact that the optometrist is running a lousy ad.



So let me discuss with you the **Top Ten Biggest Advertising Mistakes Most Optometrists Make**. Just by knowing them, you can make a huge difference in the success of your advertising campaigns.

1. Lousy Headline or No Headline At All

This is by far the most common mistake. The headline is the most important part of any ad. It will grab the reader's attention and pull them in to what you have to say.

Many optometrists will simply list their name or the name of their practice as the headline, but how does this differentiate you from your competitors? Will this help a prospective patient understand that you are the best choice to solve their eye-related problems? The answer is probably not.

Create a headline that will specifically address a particular problem your prospective patient may have. Create a headline that offers a benefit and provokes curiosity. If you're planning a special sale in your optical, instead of writing a headline that reads "Special 50% Off

Sale”, why not try: “Discover the Smith Eye Care Super Event That Other Optometrists Don’t Want You to Know About!” Now which one creates more curiosity? Which will get the prospective patient to read the rest of the ad? Stick with a headline that offers a benefit and provokes curiosity.

2. No Offer or a Lousy Offer

It can be very difficult to get a prospective patient to respond to an ad, but one thing is for certain: there is little or no chance of a prospective patient responding to an ad that features a lousy offer or, worse yet, no offer at all. If you are advertising a special sale in your optical, make your offer as generous as you can afford. Keep in mind the lifetime value of a patient. The real money in getting a new patient is in making them a “patient-for-life” by delivering outstanding, better-than-expected service. This way, you’ll reap the rewards when they return to you for eye care over and over.

3. No Deadline or a Weak Deadline

People are natural procrastinators. Unless you motivate them to respond NOW, they never will. They might look at your ad and want to take advantage of your offer, but unless they have to respond right away, they’ll often set it aside, planning to take action in the future, but often simply forgetting about it. A deadline is what makes them respond immediately. Deadlines create the fear of losing out on a particular offer or opportunity. How long should your deadline be? Typically, the shorter the deadline, the better the response will be. For best results, try to keep your deadline under two weeks. If you go longer than that, you may as well save your money.

4. Lack of a Guarantee or a Weak Guarantee

This is often a point of contention among the optometrists with whom I consult. They’ll refuse to promote a money-back-guarantee for patients who are unsatisfied with their glasses or the service. If you

feel this way, let me ask you a question: Suppose you see a patient for an exam, prescribe, fit and dispense glasses for him. A week later, the patient returns for a prescription check complaining that he can't see well out of the glasses. You check him over, decide to modify the Rx and remake the lenses. A week later, however, the patient is back again with the same complaint. You repeat the whole process again, maybe once or twice more, and still the patient isn't satisfied. Chances are at this point, you'd probably go ahead and refund the patient's money! Has this ever happened to you?

What you have just demonstrated is that you do have a money-back guarantee. Why not take advantage of all the additional business you can generate by promoting it? A strong, risk-free guarantee helps to lower the potential barriers prospective patients may have in choosing you for their eye care. Statistics have shown, time and time again, that the better the guarantee, the more people will buy.

5. "Me-Too" Appearance

Marketing expert Bill Glazer says his most successful ad was a 5-page handwritten letter on yellow legal paper. Why was this so successful? Because it didn't look like an ad! Since many optometrists aren't sure about how to write an ad, they simply copy what other optometrists have done. How will this help you stand out? Truth is, it won't. This is a "me-too" appearance. Don't be afraid to make your ads look original and unique.

6. Focus on the Business Instead of the Benefit to the Patient

Steer clear of the boring old advertising clichés like: "We've been in business since 1975" or "We offer the best service". Why? Because prospective patients just don't care about how long you've been in business or how wonderful you are. They want to know how you can solve their problem.

Prospective patients only want to know one thing: WIIFM (What's In It For Me?). If your ad can answer that question, you have a good ad.

7. Trying to Accomplish Multiple Objectives

Try to avoid promoting too many specials in one ad. Doing so will often tend to confuse the reader and a confused mind usually says "No". If you plan to advertise a "Back-to-School" promotion, devote all of your space in the ad to promoting this one event. Don't try to sneak in a mention of your "End of Summer Sunglass Sale".

Remember, an ad should have only one objective: to get the prospective patient reading it to respond. Ultimately, a response is the only thing that will lead to an appointment, which will lead to a sale, which will lead to a bank deposit. Everything else is irrelevant.

8. Failure to Provide Details

Make sure you tell the prospective patient everything about your business. Don't assume they know where you are located or that you take credit cards. Give them your address, with directions to your office, and your phone number. Let them know what forms of payment you accept. Give them your office hours and tell them about all the frame brands you carry. Also, if there is a particular reason why you are making a certain offer, tell them that too. One thing's for certain, everyone loves a good story.

9. Being too "Cute"

Why is so much advertising "cute"? There are two reasons: First, cute advertising is the type that wins awards and advertising agencies like to win awards to attract new clients. Second, advertisers like cute ads because they think they are easily remembered. Well, let me ask you: Can you give me the names of the advertisers that spent over one million dollars a piece to air their 30-second commercial during the last Super Bowl? Chances are you can't name more than one or two. That's

because cute advertising is remembered for being cute, but not for the product it was selling.

How often have you laughed at a particularly funny commercial and then, minutes later, asked yourself, "What were they selling, anyway?" Study after study has proven that the type of advertising that sells is still emotional, direct response advertising and not the "cute" brand-building type.

10. Becoming an "Advertising Victim"

How often does some advertising sales representative or agency contact you and argue that you need to advertise because ... you need to advertise? Many will try to sell you the same, old "traditional, image advertising" that everyone else uses instead of "direct-response" advertising. They promise you that when someone needs eye care, they'll think of you. Truth is, though, you can't measure your results. Traditional advertising only works for companies like Coca Cola, Dell Computers or General Motors, because they're the type of companies that can afford this kind of advertising!

If you fall victim to this trap, you'll spend thousands of dollars without having any clue as to whether or not your advertising efforts work. Focus on emotional, benefit-driven direct response advertising where every dollar you spend is measurable and accountable.

So there you have them, the top ten advertising mistakes most optometrists make. By recognizing any of these mistakes in your planned ad before you run it, you can generate a much higher response rate and a substantially more profitable return on your advertising investment.

Dr. Bill O'Shea is an optometrist and founder of **Eye Care Success**. Be sure to visit our website at www.EyeCareSuccess.com for more great practice-building resources.