

Advertising and your communications strategy

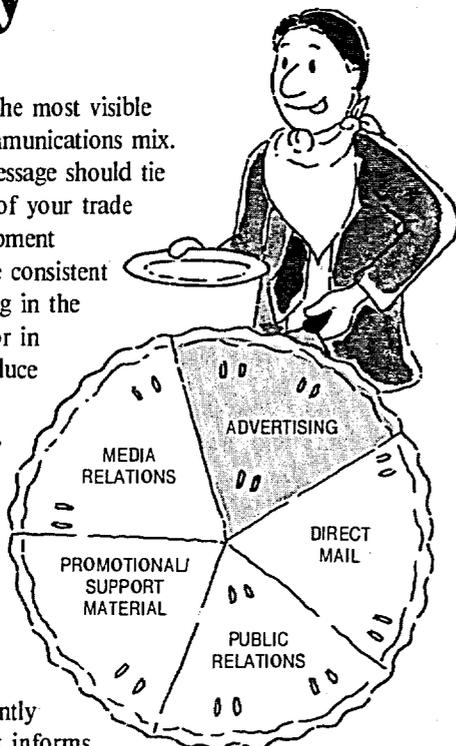
Advertising is one of the most visible ingredients of the communications mix. So your advertising message should tie in with the objectives of your trade and investment development programs. It should be consistent with what you're saying in the field, to your clients, or in any materials you produce to get your message across. In other words, your advertising must complement all the other aspects of your communications program.

Good advertising puts the message simply, accurately and consistently to specific audiences. It informs and stimulates.

But advertising can be a great way of wasting money unless you know ahead of time what you're trying to achieve and where you're going. **That's why you should prepare a communications plan before you advertise.** You may also be wasting money if you're better off doing other kinds of communications activities or if you don't have enough money to advertise properly. Talk to the *Trade Communications Bureau* people in *BTA* and *BTC* — they'll give you helpful advice on how you can best achieve your goals.

Your communications plan is a formal statement of your objectives and keeps you on track throughout the project. It:

- describes the message you wish to convey and relates it to your overall goals;
- assures that your goals are consistent with the department's objectives;
- helps you develop, on paper, the strategies to reach those goals;
- helps you identify target audiences;
- forces you to define what is special about the product or message you are promoting;



- helps you determine which communications activities will best meet your needs — advertising, promotional materials, media relations or other forms of public relations;
- allows weaknesses to be remedied; and
- permits management to see progress.

Your advertising plan should flow from your communications plan. For a step-by-step outline of how to reach your advertising goals, read on.

Sample advertising planning forms are provided at the end of this guide.

Preparing the advertising plan

Whether it's domestic or international trade advertising, a single event or an extended advertising campaign, a good plan is essential. And we're talking about a full advertising plan, not a media campaign that just lists the magazines or media you want to use.

Your goals must be clearly defined and your single most important point emphasized.

A whopping 80 per cent of your advertising dollar is spent by the time the advertisement's headline is read.

Make sure your unique selling point — what makes you or your program and service better than all the rest — gets across immediately.

Preparing your plan is probably the most important step in the entire advertising process. When you "fill in the blanks", you're providing the details for effective advertising that will get your message across clearly and efficiently. The sample planning forms at the end of this guide will help you put together all the information that's needed.

Your completed advertising plan will tell us such things as:

- what exactly it is you're promoting;
- program objectives;
- details about the program, service, industry, or event;
- booth numbers if you're advertising a trade show;

