

# How to Write a Killer Car Ad!

By Tom Herald

The more things change in business, the more they stay the same. The things that worked in advertising fifty years ago continue to work today. Yes, times and technology has changed, but people haven't. At least, not the way we react to effective advertising. And an effective ad for a car dealer will have even more impact since there are so few well done ads out there. In the sea of auto advertising, a well done ad will stand out and be noticed.

When writing any type of advertising there are two critical points you must NEVER, EVER forget:

1. Most people don't make a buying decision based on logic. They buy based on their emotions.
2. People don't want to feel like they're being coerced or pushed into anything. They want to feel like they arrived at a buying decision completely of their own free will. They need the freedom of choice.

Now go back and read point number two again. There's a very fine line between the customer's choice and persuasion. But, if you are going to have success in special finance, you MUST learn the distinction and master the art of vehicle selection and re-selection. You must realize this distinction in your advertising and understand that the attention in an car ad is image. A vehicle says a lot about a personality. Even though a person needs reliable transportation, they want image. Looking good and feeling good are important emotional draws when writing effective sales material in the car business.

Writing an effective car advertisement is quite simple, really. In fact, you can learn all of the basics in this article today. If you consistently apply these basic fundamentals, you will see your traffic count rise and hear your phone ring more often.

You MUST write every single ad classic AIDA formula:

A=ATTENTION

I=INTEREST

D=DESIRE

A=ACTION

Let's break down each letter, so that you can understand the formula:

A=ATTENTION: The very first thing your ad must do is get your prospects attention. The very best way to do that is with an effective headline that answers this question: "What's in it for me"? That's all your prospects really care about. Period! What's in it for them?

What makes the title of this article an effective headline? Two things: First of all, I answered the "What's in it for me" question. Secondly, the headline made you read this article. And that is the whole point! You want your prospects to read your ads. If you offer guaranteed financing at your store a good headline would be:

“\$100 Credit Guarantee”

I= INTEREST. After you get your prospects attention, you want to get them "INTERESTED" in your dealership, your vehicles and your sales program. You do that by immediately telling them what your headline promises. Don't waste their time with a bunch of fluff and garbage that nobody but you cares about. Get to the point! Tell them what they want to know, starting with the very first word and continue to tell them throughout the ad. If you keep them interested, they'll keep reading and start building a desire to learn more about you. Continuing with our example the information/interest section would be something like:

“We guarantee real financing that will help you re-establish the strong credit you deserve. In order to qualify you must meet the following criteria:

- Two Weeks on the Job
- Take Home At Least \$200 per Week
- Qualifying Proof of Residence
- Valid Driver's License”

Be careful to stay away from the perception of a gimmick. These simple parameters let the prospects qualify themselves which brings credibility to your offer. If you claim that everyone qualifies for a loan, regardless of their credit, it will come across as a gimmick and not believable. Too many car dealers overpromise and under deliver, especially when it comes to special financing.

D="DESIRE". You have to make your prospects "DESIRE" more information about your dealership and want your vehicles. The way to do that is with benefits, benefits and more benefits! It's all about image. Now that doesn't mean to list options like PW, PL, Tilt, Cruise, etc... These mean nothing and do not build desire. Instead, use powerful image words to describe the vehicles. Describe the color with words like “Cobalt Blue Clearcoat Finish” instead of “Dk Blue.” Describe the image of the driver instead of the options “Perfect for today's busy family...” for a mini-van, or “Slide into the cockpit of this incredible machine, built for performance...” for a sports car.

The number one fear for customers who buy pre-owned vehicles is the fear of getting a bad deal. Realize this and do everything you can to build value in your image and

reputation to alleviate this fear and increase desire. Remember to keep telling them what your headline promised and push their emotional hot buttons. Let them imagine what they stand to lose, if they doesn't purchase. Use emotional impact words or Power Words like "new, save, amazing, free, guaranteed, security, no-risk, look younger, feel better, absolutely, Just In, enormous, etc!"

A= ACTION. You want to close your ad with a call to action! All effective ads need to do so. In other words, ask them to do something like "Call Today, Visit our website, Apply now for your instant approval... Don't waste another minute! Call our Finance Specialist NOW!"

Follow this formula faithfully and it will not let you down.

The fuel that ignites an effective ad is the message contained in it. This message must get through to your prospects one at a time – the individuals who read your offer, think about it, and react to it. These people react to your message once they connect with you and feel compelled to act. So the real key to your success is connecting with your prospects one-to-one. Take a look at your own buying behavior and you will realize that you buy from people that you connect with, people you trust. You feel good when you buy a product that you could have purchased from hundreds of different individuals but instead you chose to buy from someone you have gotten to know a little bit.

Effective ads capture a prospect's attention among the competition and create a desire for your product that leads prospects to act and become new customers; Advertising is an absolute necessity in business. But, don't expect it to do the job of your sales force. It will bring prospects to you usually in the form of a telephone call. But, you need trained people to do their job and actually sell and serve these "ready to buy" customers who call or visit your store or website after seeing or hearing your ads.

One last thought on writing ads is that many of the people who sell advertising know very little about effective advertising. They will offer to create your ads for "free" which is usually not a great deal. These are sales reps who make money by selling, not writing. Occasionally, you may find a fantastic writer who also sells ads. But, it's not very likely. My advice is to follow these simple guidelines yourself and get your staff involved in the process. Let the creativity flow and dare to be different.

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