

Why Advertise in Trade Publications?

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Headline

Each month many of us read *TED* and *Electrical Wholesaling*, presumably to get a pulse for the industry, sometimes we learn something and other times we glance at the ads (what is the competition doing?)

Unfortunately, most of the ads are wasted money. Why? Think back to the last issue you read. Do you remember any of the ads? Were the graphics compelling? Did the copy share any information? Was the message in the ad positioned to distribution?

When I was the publisher of *MarketFocus*, IMARK Group's magazine, I was always amazed at manufacturers' advertising. Each issue I would either have to contact a manufacturer to have them change their ad, or have our ad agency do a touch-up. Why? The ad was directed at contractors...and said so in the ad. This is after telling our contacts that the message should be different – it should say "why should IMARK members buy from me (rebate aside)?"

Go back to the ads in *TED* and *EW*. Are they targeted at distribution. Do they differentiate the advertiser from his competition? No, well over 90% of the ads are focused on product (isn't that the role of your sales organization?)

Recently I was reading *VARBusiness*, a high-tech trade publication. Every advertiser in the magazine is targeting resellers/distributors. Take a look at it (their website is www.varbusiness.com to get a subscription). The advertising is compelling because it sends a message (and the high-tech industry is no less competitive than the electrical industry and no less commoditized.)

Many of the ads are product-oriented. Yes, same as in the electrical industry, however, many of

them include competitive positioning – and even compare the product to competitive product.

Other types of advertising include:

- ◆ Announcement of distributor and customer promotions (pricing and non-pricing promotions)
- ◆ Announcement of sales spiffs
- ◆ Sharing some of the details of distributor programs and the different benefits, and rebate amounts, at each level
- ◆ Feature/Benefit advertising

In essence, these are sales-oriented ads, designed to generate results.

While this type of advertising is not appropriate for everyone, where is the downside for companies with widely distributed products? Once you introduce a promotion, isn't it public knowledge, and doesn't your competition learn about it? And shouldn't your distribution/rebate program be a competitive difference?

Last month, Channel Marketing Group wrote an article describing different distribution strategies that manufacturers will take over the next five years. In the [article](#) we described a segmentative approach and an intensive/saturation approach. Both are for product categories where manufacturers need many distribution points. Obviously the challenge with widespread distribution is communication. And isn't that the role of trade advertising?

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