

Ask This Question Before Your Client Doesn't Renew

By **Rick Fink** - July 17, 2023



(By Rick Fink) It's one of the most overlooked steps in the advertising sales process. Missing it can make the road to future ad campaign sales extremely difficult. Getting it right can set you up for a very rewarding, long-term relationship with your clients.

It's asking, "How is your ad campaign working?" or, "How is your event going?".

It's a simple question, but it scares the daylights out of the untrained, unprepared marketing rep and goes unasked. As the media reps handling the account, they must know if it's working or not. Finding out after the fact doesn't cut it and nearly always leads to another business owner saying, "I tried radio once and it didn't work."

Not asking the question, in the eyes of the client, is not caring. Asking the question and being prepared to answer it, regardless of their response, is powerful.

Keep in mind, before any ad schedule airing, regardless if it is a long-term branding campaign or a short-term sales event, we strongly suggest that clear expectations are set and agreed to by both the rep and the client.

Here is what we recommend after the client has agreed to the schedule, the creative, and the expectations:

Connect With The Client

the day of or the day before the ads begin and let them know..."Mr./Mrs. Advertiser, just letting you know that as planned, your schedule starts tomorrow/today." Sure, they should already know this, but I can almost assure you that the other media reps aren't doing this. You will be the professional, and while a subtle thing, at some point, it will get recognized.

Depending upon the length of the schedule, reconnect with the client to see how it's going a few days to a week into the schedule. This is when their fear and trepidation set in.

Start Asking Questions

Open a dialogue with your client. Don't know what to say? Try opening with these:



- "What are you seeing or not seeing?"
- "What are you hearing or not hearing?"
- "Why do you think it's not working as well as we hoped?"
- Then, ask questions of yourself:
- "Is the schedule strong enough to have an effect?"
- "Is the creative and/or offer compelling enough to move people?"
- "Are there factors beyond your control?"
- "Is the business owner or decision maker being honest with you?"

Heaven forbid a business owner should ever lie to us about the results, good or bad. It may be a case where the advertising is doing its job and creating traffic, but the leads aren't being called on, or sales are not being closed once they're in the store.

Note: Always look at creative and schedule first. If it's not working, this is typically, but not always, the problem.

There can be and are other reasons why an ad campaign sometimes does not work. To wrap your head around and get acquainted with the possibilities, we suggest you review Roy H. Williams' *12 Causes of Advertising Failure*, or his more recent list, *10 Most Common Mistakes in Marketing*. At a minimum, these will give you thoughts for discussion with your client and yourself!

Take Action ASAP

Once you have it figured out and know what the reason(s) might be, take action and try to fix it – IMMEDIATELY! I can assure you, Radio is not the problem. As sales managers, it's your job to train, and as media reps, it's your job to know how to ask this question, and equally as important, how to respond to the answers.

Clients want results, but equally as important they want a media rep that truly cares about their success. The difference between a good rep and a GREAT rep, and the difference between short-term business and a very rewarding, long-term relationship with your clients, sometimes comes down to this one little question, "How's the campaign going?"

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