

HOW TO GET FREE RADIO ADVERTISING

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HOW TO GET FREE RADIO ADVERTISING

The greatest expense you're going to incur in conducting a successful business is your advertising.

You have to advertise. Your business cannot grow and flourish unless you advertise. Advertising is the "life-blood" of any profitable business. And regardless of where or how you advertise, it's going to cost you in some form or another.

Every successful business is built upon, and continues to thrive, primarily, on good advertising. The top companies in the world allocate millions of dollars annually to their advertising budgets. Of course, when starting from a garage, basement or kitchen table, you can't quite match their advertising efforts - at least not in the beginning. But there is a way you can approximate their maneuvers without actually spending their kind of money. And that's through "P.I." Advertising.

"P.I." stands for per inquiry. This is a kind of advertising most generally associated with broadcasting, where you pay only for the responses you get to your advertising message. It's very popular - somewhat akin to bartering - and is used by many more advertisers than most people realize. The advantages of PI Advertising are all in favor of the advertiser because with this kind of an advertising arrangement, you pay only for the results the advertising produces.

To get in on this "free" advertising, start with a loose leaf notebook, and about 100 sheets of filler paper. Next, either visit your public library and start poring through the Broadcast Yearbook on radio stations in the U.S., or the Standard Rate and Data Services Directory on Spot Radio. Both these publications will give you just about all the information you could ever want about licensed stations.

An easier way might be to call or visit one of your local radio stations, and ask to borrow (and take home with you) their current copy of either of these volumes. To purchase them outright will cost \$50 to \$75.

Once you have a copy of either of these publications, select the state or states you want to work first. It's generally best to begin in your own state and work outward from there. If you have a money-making manual, you might want to start first with those states reporting the most unemployment.

Use some old fashioned common sense. Who are the people most likely to be interested in your offer, and where are the largest concentrations of these people? You wouldn't attempt to sell windshield deice canisters in Florida, or suntan lotion in Minnesota during the winter months, would you?

At any rate, once you've got your beginning "target" area decided upon, go through the radio listings for the cities and towns in that area, and jot down in your notebook the names of the general managers, the station call letters, and the addresses. Be sure to list the telephone numbers as well.

On your first try, list only one radio station per city. Pick out the station people most interested in your product would be listening to. This can be determined by the programming

description contained within the data block about the station in the Broadcasting Yearbook or the SRDS Directory.

Let's say that you're listed 250 different radio stations. It's best to list the stations you want to contact alphabetically by the city or town they're licensed to serve, with a tab separating each state. The next step is either a phone call or a letter to the station manager of each of the stations.

This first contact should be in the way of introducing yourself, and inquiring if they would consider a PI Advertising campaign. You tell the station manager that you have a product you feel will sell very well in his market, and would like to test it before going ahead with a paid advertising program. You must quickly point out that your product sells for, say \$5, and that during this test, you would allow him 50% of that for each response his station pulls for you. Explain that you handle everything for him: the writing of the commercials, all accounting and bookkeeping, plus any refunds or complaints that come in. In other words, all he has to do is schedule your commercials on his log, and give them his "best shot." When the responses come in, he counts them, and forwards them on to you for fulfillment. You make out a check for payment to him, and everybody is happy.

If you've contacted him by phone, and he agrees to look over your material, tell him thank you and promise to get a complete "package" in the mail to him immediately. Then do just that. Write a short cover letter, place it on top of your "ready-to-go" PI Advertising Package, and get it in the mail to him without delay.

If you're turned down, and he is not interested in "taking on" any PI Advertising, just tell him thanks, make a notation in your notebook by his name, and go on to your next call. Contacting these people by phone is by far the quickest, least expensive and most productive method of "exploring" for those stations willing to consider your PI proposal. In some cases though, circumstances will deem it to be less expensive to make this initial contact by letter or postcard.

In that case, simply address your card or letter to the person you are trying to contact. Your letter should be positive in tone, straight-forward and complete. Present all the details in logical order on one page, perfectly typed on letterhead paper, and sent in a letterhead envelope. (Rubber-stamped letterheads just won't get past a first glance.) Ideally, you should include a self-addressed and stamped postcard with spaces for positive or negative check marks in answer to your questions: Will you or won't you look over my materials and consider a mutually profitable "Per Inquiry" advertising campaign on your station?

Once you have an agreement from your contact at the radio station that they will look over your materials and give serious consideration for a PI program, move quickly, getting your cover letter and package off by First Class mail, perhaps even Special Delivery.

What this means is that at the same time you organize your "radio station note book," you'll also want to organize your advertising package. Have it all put together and ready to mail just as soon as you have a positive response. Don't allow time for that interest in your program to cool down.

You'll need a follow-up letter. Write one to fit all situations; have 250 copies printed, and then when you're ready to send out a package, all you'll have to do is fill in the business salutation

and sign it. If you spoke of different arrangements or a specific matter was discussed in your initial contact, however, type a different letter incorporating comments or answers to the points discussed. This personal touch won't take long, and could pay dividends!

You'll also need at least two thirty-second commercials and two sixty-second commercials. You could write these up, and have 250 copies printed and organized as a part of your PI Advertising Package.

You should also have some sort of advertising contract written up, detailing everything about your program, and how everything is to be handled; how and when payment to the radio station is to be made, plus special paragraphs relative to refunds, complaints, and liabilities. All this can be very quickly written up and printed in lots of 250 or more on carbonless multi-part snap-out business forms.

Finally, you should include a self-addressed and stamped postcard the radio station can use to let you know that they are going to use your PI Advertising program, when they will start running your commercials on the air, and how often, and during which time periods. Again, you simply type out the wording in the form you want to use on these "reply postcards," and have copies printed for your use in these mailings.

To review this program: Your first step is the initial contact after searching through the SRDS or Broadcasting Yearbook. Actual contact with the stations is by phone or mail. When turned down, simply say thanks, and go on to the next station on your list. For those who want to know more about your proposal, you immediately get a PI Advertising Package off to them via the fastest way possible. Don't let the interest wane.

Your Advertising Package should contain the following:

1. Cover letter
2. Sample brochure, product literature
3. Thirty-second and sixty-second commercials
4. PI Advertising Contract
5. Self-addressed, stamped postcard for station acknowledgment and acceptance of your program.

Before you ask why you need an acknowledgment postcard when you have already given them a contract, remember that everything about business changes from day to day - conditions change, people get busy, and other things come up. The station manager may sign a contract with your advertising to begin the 1st of March. The contract is signed on the 1st of January, but when March 1 rolls around, he may have forgotten, been replaced, or even decided against running your program. A lot of paper seemingly "covering all the minute details" can be very impressive to many radio station managers, and convince them that your company is a good one to do business with.

Let's say that right now you're impatient to get started with your own PI Advertising campaign. Before you "jump off the deep end," remember this: Radio station people are just as professional and dedicated as anyone else in business - even more so in some instances - so be sure you have a product or service that lends itself well to selling via the radio inquiry system.

Anything can be sold, and sold easily with any method you decide upon, providing you

present it from the right angle. "Hello out there! Who wants to buy a mailing list for 10 cents a thousand names?" wouldn't even be allowed on the air. However, if you have the addresses of the top 100 movie stars, and you put together an idea enabling the people to write to them direct, you might have a winner, and sell a lot of mailing lists of the stars.

At the bottom line, a lot is riding on the content of your commercial - the benefits you suggest to the listener, and how easy it is for him to enjoy those benefits. For in stance, if you have a new book on how to find jobs when there aren't any jobs: You want to talk to people who are desperately searching for employment. You have to appeal to them in words that not only "perk up" their ears, but cause them to feel that whatever it is that you're offering will solve their problems. It's the product, and in the writing of the advertising message about that product are going to bring in those responses.

Radio station managers are sales people, and sales people the world over will be sold on your idea if you put your selling package together properly. And if the responses come in to your first offer, you have set yourself up for an entire series of successes. Success has a "ripple effect," but you have to start on that first one. We wish you success!