



Rural Health Care

Marketing & Education Consultancy

www.Trizzie.com

Television advertising is it right for you and your budget?

How to know if TV fits your health care marketing plan

We're pleased you're reading this article. **TV is often easily dismissed as being expensive or too difficult a media option for health care.** We'll be the first to tell you that **television advertising is not right for everyone.** However, contrary to what you may think television advertising may be affordable and effective if done correctly. So pick up a pencil and I'll help with the mathematics of TV advertising.

Here are questions to help you know if TV has a place in your marketing plan.

What are you planning to promote?

What makes any media an affordable option is not just the cost. It's the Return-on-Investment (ROI). In planning your TV message, the bottom line will be what does each new patient mean to your health care facility in terms of revenue? Ask yourself if the case size is big enough to generate a positive return-on-investment (ROI)?

In round numbers, we often target a 3:1 ROI goal. The math then becomes simple to understand.

Let's say for example you are considering targeting a procedure that nets you on average \$900 per patient. The TV rep wants you to invest \$2,700 in an initial test. That means you will have to generate 3 cases to break even, and 9 cases to see a true return a 3:1 ROI.

Another way to look at it is how many new patients in a selected area you are looking to try and bring into your facility. Knowing that each patient will require different services therefore, the income will be different. **Track your new patients over a selected period of time.** Trizzie will assist you in this option as it requires tracking methodologies.

Now you know the calculated risk so is it worth trying. Remember that if television does work for you, you can go back to what works over and over again.

What is your market area like?

There are usually three options in television: major network stations, independent local stations and the cable providers.

Trizzie will help you sort out any overlapping media options in areas. Contact us if you need help with this and we will be pleased to provide our services. Media advertising especially in rural areas can be confusing.

Large network stations are at home in large metropolitan population centers. Big broadcast outlets have big audiences and big rate cards. For our rural health care facilities, the coverage area will probably be too large and simply cost-prohibitive.

In addition, cable outlets often offer VERY local advertising, sometimes by zip code. You'll typically find buy packages of such stations as A&E, Home and Garden or the History Channel.

Among the options, local or area cable stations often stand out as the best choice for two reasons. First, the cable service area is local and is more directly aligned with your practice drawing area. And second, cable rates are cheap by comparison and many times they will produce the commercial for you at no or very little cost. (More about buying cable TV time in a bit.)

What about the production cost?

Your commercial message will play among the big-budget-movie storytelling of national ad agencies. Next to these, a poorly done commercial will either make your facility look bad or it will not grab attention and it will get lost. You don't want either option. So even though your local community college or cable station may offer to produce your "spots" for low cost (even free), make sure you have a well thought out ideas or you will end up looking unappealing.

Your script or story line should offer a compelling "story." It should begin with a problem and then offer a solution. It should also explain why the patient should come to you.

What's the budget for TV commercial time?

The unit cost per commercial play is low when even comparing it to radio. Remember the rate depends on the time of day, what frequency discount you might earn (the more airplay you buy, the less cost per unit), and what "program package" is available most of the time cost is effected by the show that is currently on. This is how they determine viewing rates. If the popularity of a show draws a large crowd then expect to pay a higher rate. Commercial time can also be sold on a "preemptable" basis-meaning the cable company will give you a lower rate but reserve the right to reschedule you in favor of a higher paying advertiser. This lower cost trade-off is usually worth the occasional inconvenience.

Now days each cable subscriber in a household may have 100+ channels, and the audience is difficult to quantify. So the media schedule that you buy in cable TV has to include a lot of repetition. Although the rate is low, you need to repeat your message frequently to be effective. You'll want some guidance in planning this. We recommend a mix of 60-second and 30-second spots.

What's the big picture?

We do not recommend using TV as a stand-alone promotional media. Typically we recommend television as an additional layer in the marketing mix. It needs to blend into a carefully considered marketing plan, and we can help with the overall strategy and tactics that support your goals. Television advertising requires careful consideration.

Do it right the first time. When it's done right and well, the personal and professional gains are satisfying and the value of a recognized authority will gain the respect of the community, patients and staff and is an effective marketing plan that is rewarding.

Trizzie understands that successful characteristics are developed over time and are an important part of any business. Let Trizzie assist you in evaluating and implementing the right strategies for your current and future success.

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