

# The Art Of Writing Classified Ads

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## The Art Of Writing Classified Ads

Yes, writing classified ads is an art, one that can be learned, developed and perfected in a relatively short period of time. Depending on the nature of your business, a well written classified ad can bring in business and subsequent sales of \$10,000 to \$25,000 annually, or more!

As with any business tool (and a classified ad is most assuredly a powerful tool) you must first become aware of the effective use of these little business builders, then understand exactly what can be expected of them and what cannot be accomplished.

First of all, forget about any notion of selling merchandise from a classified ad. Some of the "experts" will tell you that a classified ad can bring cash orders for 50¢-up to \$3 or more, but this is the exception rather than a general rule. Even in cases where small amounts of cash are received, total results usually are considerably less than if no money had been requested.

Instead of wondering, speculating and experimenting with your advertising budget, concentrate on offering free information to attract as many interested prospects as possible for what you have to offer. Realize from the beginning that your ad should serve only one purpose: to target a specific audience consisting of people who need and want what you have to offer.

You want inquiries: letters, notes, postcards---anything on which might be scribbled the words, "Send more information." When you start receiving them, quickly reply with professionally prepared sales material to tell your story and make your sales pitch. The standard material will consist of a sales letter, descriptive circular or flyer, and a return addressed envelope for convenience in you the order.

### ZERO IN ON YOUR MARKET

Unlike display advertising which must attract, reach out from the printed page and grab the reader, your classified ad is placed under specific heading according to subject. Readers interested in your subject will scan the heading in much the same way they would scan the Yellow Pages of the phone directory. They are looking for something. You have what they are looking for, or what will help them achieve what they want. Tell them!

No deception, please. What you want are quality names of prospective buyers... not a large quantity of names. It would be easy to promise the moon in your ad, but if it can't deliver it in your followup advertising, you will not only lose the initial

sale, you will have alienated your prospect by deception and he/she will not be receptive to anything you say in the future.

Place your ad under the most appropriate heading. If you're offering something appealing to sportsmen, the heading would be probably SPORTING GOODS. If you're aiming at a specific type of sportsman such as hunters, fisherman, or bowlers, you might find such a heading. In some cases you can have the publication create a new heading for you for an additional charge. It could be worth the extra cost.

#### BE STRINGENT WITH WORDING

The best way to write your ad is to disregard size and cost at first, writing everything on paper that might attract readers. Tell it all. Stress the need for what you have to offer, what it will do for readers, how they will benefit, what they can expect by using your product, how easy or more pleasant life will be for them.

When you have finished writing, you might have a long paragraph or a full page. Now is the time to think of size and cost. You will pay by the word, so you will have to be selective in your choice of words in the final ad.