

# Six Print Ad Pitfalls

Social media has really exploded, but traditional print marketing isn't dead by any means. Are your ads as compelling as they can be? Here's a look at what *not* to do.

By Kerstin P. Ouellet

**Heat Up Your Sales**

The temperature's rising, and Athens Select™ has what you need to beat the heat. We're debuting a host of new plants hand-selected and tested for their power to stand up to the toughest heat and humidity.

The wildly popular Prince and Princess pennisetum series adds two new Princesses to the court for 2009/2010, plus you'll find a wealth of vibrant, vigorous varieties chosen for maximum impact in gardens across America.

**Don't miss your chance — heat it up with Athens Select's newest plants.**

Great Greenhouse, Irvine, CA	949-298-1200
Regent Nursery, Pleasanton, CA	925-434-2020
Beaverlawn Greenery, Norcross, GA	770-444-0000
Evolutionary Propagation, Norfolk, VA	800-222-0730
Wilder Greenhouse, Orlando, FL	321-480-0211
James Greenhouse, Citrus, FL	781-742-3600
San Diego Greenhouse, San Diego, CA	619-459-4200
Madison Valley Greenery, New Canaan, CT	958-278-0011

Request a 2009-2010 catalog today!

ATHENS SELECT™  
The Art of Gardening

Look for our new print tags!

A high-impact head makes your audience stop and take notice. Follow up with a strong call to action, and you're packing a powerful punch!

**W**hen it comes to print advertising — or any advertising — success takes more than pretty pictures and wonderful words. Response and return on investment depend on careful integration of graphics, message and media. In other words, it's not just the look; it's how and where you wear it.

Ramp up your chances for success by avoiding these common print advertising missteps.

## Too Busy

It's easy to fall into the "more is better" trap. Too many fonts, too many colors and too much information can combine to create an ad that's just too much.

Too much means the audience will do too little. Overwhelmed by information, they're paralyzed in their tracks, too confused to move off dead center. Not knowing which part of your ad to focus on first, they focus on nothing, and you're left with an ad that doesn't meet your objective of getting your audience to act.

Keep your ad in focus by choosing one element to emphasize. Whether it's a powerful font, a blazing color or a can't-

miss offer, that single sensation will get them to stop every time.

## The Me-Too Message

Take the "got milk?" ads — for a while, that's what everyone else seemed to be doing. Countless copies flooded the advertising universe, until they became so mundane they received no more than a "ho-hum" from the buying public.

While imitation is the highest form of flattery, in advertising real points come with innovation. Even if your message isn't unique ("Buy our stuff!"), your delivery can be. Get funky, get creative, and come up with a way to stop audiences in their tracks!

## Assuming Too Much Knowledge

Your company might have been specializing in one certain brand of merchandise for 30 years, but don't assume everybody knows that. Nobody is more familiar with your company than you, but just because something is a given for you don't assume it is for the audience, too. I've seen ads that don't even indicate what the company sells. Ads like that don't prompt people

## Powerful. Passionate. To the point.

In the green industry, getting noticed takes more than just showing your colors. Like their clients, the people at Pen & Petal are passionate about plants.

With horticulture as their specialty, Pen & Petal provides cutting-edge marketing with the technical know-how to back it up.

They put their dual powers of industry and marketing knowledge to work for you, facilitating communication that's powerful

and to the point.

Pen & Petal's full menu of services includes branding, strategic planning, collateral design, website development, e-marketing, event coordination and planning, and media and public relations. Check them out at [www.penandpetal.com](http://www.penandpetal.com), or e-mail [info@penandpetal.com](mailto:info@penandpetal.com).



These ads for growth regulators worked well because they brought a complex, technical topic into the audience's world. And catchy headlines to boot!

to call you, after all, what would they ask about if they didn't even know what you were selling?

Your ad doesn't need to say too much or drown people in information — it just needs to spur them to action, make them stop long enough to take note and make the call. Design your ad to speak to the majority of your target — and that means speaking their language.

take even more than that to get your audience to act. Studies reveal in 1992 it took three touches to reach your buyer — today it takes eight!

Keep your message and look consistent. Your potential buyer may flip past that ad seven times before finally stopping on number eight and saying "What's this?" Recognition rates shoot up with consistency, and recognition translates to returns.

(font, color, graphic template) and change up your message periodically. Five years is too long; five months is not long enough. Keep your message as fresh as your products, and you're sure to see the results!

**No Call to Action**

"You'll never get what you want if you don't ask for it." If Mom said it once, she said it a thousand times, and it's never more true than in advertising and sales.

Yes, you have a great product. Yes, your ad showcases it well. Yes, you need to ask people to buy it!

Your call to action can be as simple as "Call us today" or as involved as "To order, contact your favorite broker or find one near you by calling or visiting our web site." Whatever you do, call them to act!

Keep your message and look consistent. Your potential buyer may flip past that ad seven times before finally stopping on number eight and saying "What's this?"

**Inconsistency**

You'll get tired of your look long before your audience does. Yes, you've been looking at the same format over and over for what seems like years. But your audience may have only seen it once.

In advertising we've long lived by the golden rule that it takes three impressions to make an impact. But with today's splintered media and on-the-go lifestyles, it may

**Running the Same Ad for Too Long**

As important as repetition is, redundancy is not. Keeping your advertising in the same format shouldn't mean running the same ad for years and years. At that point, your ad fades into the background as current customers have already acted and potential customers have stopped noticing.

Use your consistent brand elements

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