

Writing Winning Classified Ads

Advertising On A Shoestring
3rd Edition

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Introduction

When you need affordable advertising that works, think “CLASSIFIED ADS”! You find classified ads everywhere, from social media and search engine sidebars to national magazines and church pamphlets. Classified ads are used to sell used cars, real estate, and everything in between. They are used to sell both physical goods and services. However, most classified ads are not as successful as they could be. In this workbook, you’ll learn classified ad strategies that produce winning classified ads that can increase your advertising success and turn potential customers into buyers.



For business owners and eager employees who want their company to prosper, they have to recognize that sales are their company’s life blood. **And without life blood, the company dies!** Every department within a company needs money to get their job done. Information Technology needs system upgrades to stay up-to-date. Human Resources would like to hire qualified employees to remain competitive. Public Relations wants to sponsor a college scholarship to promote the company. The Sales Department wants to wine and dine existing and potential customers. Companies depend on fixed budgets to support their departments and other aspects of their business, whether they are as large as Apple Inc. or as small as an operation running out of a house. **And if sales stumble, so do the budgets that pay for everything!**

Even if you want to borrow money to support or expand your business, you need sales! Anyone you approach to borrow money from will ask about your revenue numbers, which is mostly derived from sales. No sales and they will slam the door in your face. But when you have \$10,000 coming in every month from sales, financiers become confident that you’ll pay them back, and **SURPRISE**, you qualify for a \$30,000 line of credit to get your taxes, property overhead, accounts payables, employee salaries, and other expenses paid on time.

Even outside of business, we see the hard reality of budgets in our daily lives. From weekly grocery lists and monthly expenses to unplanned costs to contend with, budgets play an important role. **Go outside our set budgets, we quickly find ourselves in financial trouble!** When national governments go off budget and find themselves in a financial pickle, they just print more money. You and I would go to federal prison if we printed money, so that’s not a solution for us.

The solution for us is found instead in **“Marketing and Sales”**. Getting more business means having the money to support and increase the budgets that sustain and allow your company to grow. However, it takes a sound strategy to generate more business without going broke in the process. One strategic approach which is cost effective is called **“advertising on a shoestring”**. A shoestring is old business slang that means **“with very limited financial means”**. Dictionary.com defines its origin when *“debtors in British prison would lower a shoe by its laces from a window to collect funds from visitors or passers-by”*.

Classified ads come in various sizes, costs, and styles. They can tactically be used to tell the market that you exist. When we say **“market”**, we don’t just mean your family members, close friends, and current customers. We also mean people you’ve never met before. People who do not know you personally or your company need to learn your name, your business style, how you’re different from others in your field, how professional you are, and much more! While large companies may survive a bad advertising campaign because they have large **“War Chests”** to fall back on, small and home-based businesses may not. Small and home-based businesses often fail when poor advertising becomes an **“expensive”** disappointment that does not result in enough sales that earn a clear profit.



Large Companies Have Large Advertising War Chests



Small Companies Have Limited Advertising Funds

Lack of a large advertising war chest can break a business

No matter how great your product, service, or business idea is, it will not make you any money if it is not properly marketed. **But marketing can be very expensive!** For example, Google Ads can cost you 1 to 2 dollars per click. And you must market to get the sales that allow your company to survive, grow, and advertise even more to keep the cycle going. **This puts every small and home-based business with limited funds in a dilemma.** So, the question is: **“How can you market your products and services to get the sales needed to turn a profit without having a large war chest to pay for the advertising in the first place?”** The answer: **Classified Ads!** **If done correctly, classified ads can provide you with a means to advertise on a shoestring successfully!**

Classified ads have two approaches: the **“Direct Sale”** and the **“Follow-up”**. If what you are selling is worth single dollar amounts, the direct sale approach will often get the job done. In a direct sale, the reader places an order right then and there by check, cash, or credit card. If what you are selling is greater than \$10, the follow-up approach is usually needed. In the follow-up approach, you use your classified ad to entice the reader to seek more information. This information can be delivered by way of a sales letter, brochure, catalog, email, or report. It could also be obtained by visiting your website, social media page, or brick and mortar business. \$100, \$500, and \$1,000+ sale orders are worth the effort and time of tying your classified ad to a well thought out and designed follow-up.



Should your classified ad generate a follow-up or direct sale?

On a personal note, classified ads are ideal to sell collectables, antiques, and garage items you want to get rid of. Online sites like Craigslist are nothing more than **“super”** classifieds. The things we teach in this workbook can be used to make your personal online listings a huge success!

You can also use classified ads strategies to better expose your postings (listings) on **“selling sites”** like eBay or Amazon Marketplace. The idea is to stand out from all the hundreds and hundreds of similar offers posted on these sites. **Implement winning classified ad elements to enhance your selling site postings!**

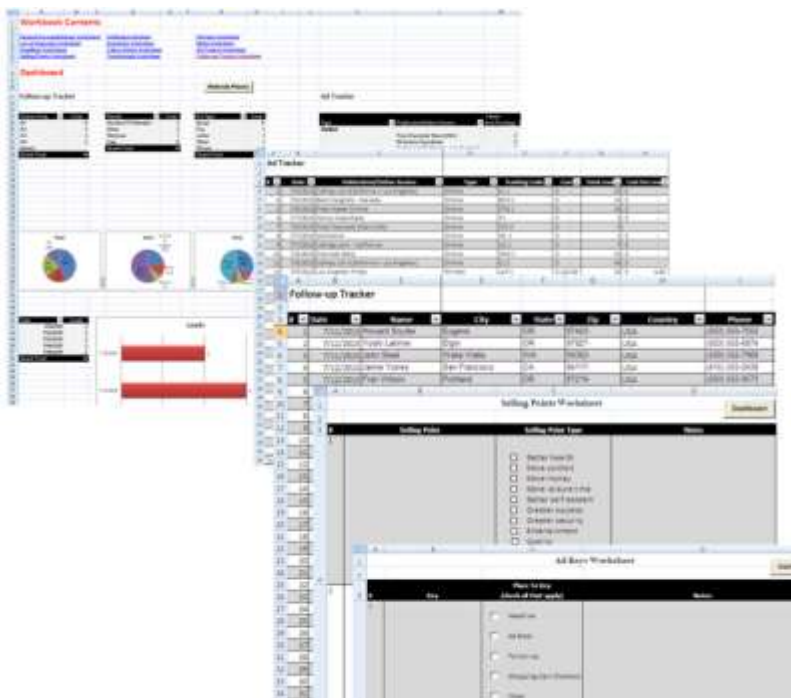


Use classified ad elements to better your exposure and improve sales on selling sites

Throughout the sections of this workbook, we break down the different parts of a well written and assembled classified ad. We give you tips and advice on how to make your classified ads really work! We then explain how you can also take what goes into creating a winning classified ad and apply it to selling sites like eBay.

At the end of each major section, we include worksheets to get your mental wheels turning. Don't just read this workbook, **APPLY IT** from the get go! Use these worksheets as models to tailor an advertising plan that suits you best. If you would like these worksheets in a Microsoft Excel format to make them easier to work with, you can download the Excel Workbook file called *writingwinningclassifiedads.xlsm* that goes with this workbook at <http://www.coroneldp.com/adbooklet.htm> or <https://www.easypassprep.com/product/b0007/>.

This downloadable Excel file has a dashboard with analysis features to help keep you on top of your advertising campaign. Since this is a macro-enabled file, be sure to **“enable the content”** when you open it to get the most out of it.



Downloadable Excel file with worksheets and dashboard from Coronel Data Processing