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## 5.3: What makes an ad work?

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There are two principal types of ads in a print publication, *classified* and *display*. Classified ads are all placed into one section of the newspaper under a variety of classifications, such as “help wanted,” “cars for sale,” “homes for rent.” They are usually priced by the word or the line of type and are small. A display ad is larger, priced by the block or column inch, and can appear anywhere in the publication.

There are generally five parts to an effective ad.

- **Art/Photo**
  - Can be a drawing, a photo, or type used as a graphic element.
  - Use simple layouts: one art element is more effective than art in every corner.
  - Photos of the product are one of the most effective ways to sell it.
  - Put a caption under any photos
- **Headline**
  - Grabs the reader’s attention and interest
  - Headline idea should promise to deliver a benefit about the product or appeal to the readers’ curiosity.
- **Copy**
  - Presentation and support of product claims
  - Lets readers know WHY they need this product
- **Call to action**
  - Try to get the reader to do something: come to a store, select a particular brand, write for more information
  - Should include all the information necessary for the reader to act: name of store, hours, times, deadlines, phone numbers
  - Motivate the reader to act with a special offer or time limit or a special price
- **Business Identification**
  - Business name, address, phone, hours, directions
  - Use company logos
  - Avoid making business name your headline or dominant art. What you’re offering is usually more important than who is offering it.

The purpose of an ad is to increase sales for the advertiser. This is true whether the ad is placed in a slick colorful magazine or in a high school newspaper. An ad that consists of nothing but a business card will not increase sales for the advertiser...the ad must contain a “pitch” in order to be successful.

- The ad should be persuasive; it can help persuade people to take action
- It should be informative; it helps to inform people that goods and services exist.

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- It can be entertaining in its presentation.
- It is educational, telling people about things of interest and importance to them.

The ad needs to be constructed so that it attracts the attention of potential customers and holds that attention while it explains the benefits of using the product or service. Here are several ways you can increase the power of your advertising:

- Use large illustrations or pictures. Artwork attracts about 50 percent more readership than ads without artwork. Ads with photos of students attract twice as much attention as ads with artwork. The ads that have neither will probably go unnoticed. The illustration or photo should be large enough to be seen. Make it the focal point of the ad.
- Headlines attract attention, promise benefits.
- The primary headline should go at the top of the ad and should be in big, bold type which looks significantly different from the type used for the body copy. You might choose a bold sans serif for the headline, while using serif type for the body text. This headline should promise a benefit for the consumer, such as “Cleaner, fresher breath” or “Look younger instantly!”
- The secondary headline could be two or more lines which expand on the benefits promised in the primary headline, or it could be used to lead into the text. This is an optional, but effective headline.
- An optional slug head can be used to draw the reader’s attention to the body text. It will be in bigger, bolder text than the rest of the body copy.
- A tag line, generally placed near the company or product logo, follows the body copy and is a catchphrase or slogan that the consumer will remember. “The Real Thing.”
- The body text should be informal and informative. Give information on why this product is better than the competition’s version, statistics (but don’t sound clinical), reasons to buy the product, etc.
- White space lets the ad breathe. There should be at least a pica of white space between each element in the ad, and between the elements of the ad and the border.
- Keep it simple. Don’t use a lot of different typefaces that will fight with one another. A crisp sans serif type for the headlines and a good readable serif type for the body copy are good choices. The company/ product logo may be in a special font, and you don’t want to detract from that. Keep your border simple. A 1-point rule line is a good choice.
- Don’t be tempted to put clipart into the ad. Let the headline, illustration and body text tell the story of the ad. The more you put into the ad, the more cluttered it will appear.