

From the Lab

Blue Screen 101

The main objective of a call to action (CTA) and accompanying blue screen is to build urgency for the viewer to pick up the phone and call to order. However, the creative science behind a blue screen is not always a given. This month, TEST offers tips for maximizing results by testing the most important elements of your blue screen.

Price Point

The lower the price point, the greater the response. The question to ask is: does it pencil out? It is almost always true that having the lowest price point that product cost can bear will create the greatest volume of response, and ultimately the best profit at the bottom line.

COMMON MISTAKES:

Forcing the price point. *You're not in control of what the consumer will pay for your product. The consumer is.*

Waiting too long to drop the payment. *If you're dropping a payment, don't give the "original" price. Move on to more voice-over (VO), and then come back to the price to slash it — right after you present it. The buyer might make a decision not to buy and change the channel before the payment drop.*

Shipping and handling cost on the blue screen. *Don't display this cost — it doesn't help the buyer make a decision, and if you want to change it, it means retrafficating tapes.*

Offer

The combined offer configuration is the second most likely place to impact response. The two most important elements of the offer are the premium and the product quantity. More often than not, a 2-for-1 (or "Buy one, get one free") offer elicits the best response. To make a 2-for-1 offer work, the product cost is vitally important. You must make the revenue to cover the additional cost. Also, the product category must make sense for such an offer. Premiums will almost always substantially strengthen your offer — look for something with a very high-perceived value and a very low product cost that enhances your original offer.

COMMON MISTAKES:

Not enough visual emphasis on the 2-for-1 offer. *If you're going to double the offer, double the product shot as well. Don't just increase the size of the bottle, display an additional bottle and split the screen to show two distinct units.*

Product Shot

Building your product shot is essential to building urgency. Make it look as impressive as possible. Separate the elements of your offer and display all of it. For instance, if you have three separate booklets or manuals, spread them out. Take the videos out of the covers and display them together. Also, after building your product shot, go to B-roll to reiterate the product benefits, then back to the product shot.



COMMON MISTAKES:

Using a graphic or low-quality product shot. *The product shot is not the place to skimp. Your product should look as high-end as possible. This is why the product shot is also called the "glamour shot."*

800 Number, Web Site and Credit Cards

The blue screen is all about telling the viewer to pick up the phone, call now and order. If your offer and product shot are building the urgency to call, then the 800 number, Web site and credit card symbols are telling the

viewer, "Now is the time." The Web site should read just below the 800 number — don't make the viewer search elsewhere for it. Putting the symbols of the credit cards you accept tells the viewer that when they call, they are actually going to buy. Lastly, be sure to read the 800 number in the VO, don't just put it on the screen.

COMMON MISTAKES:

Neglecting to leave enough time for the 800 number and offer to be read. *You need eight to 12 seconds at the end of the CTA for the 800 number to be read. Read the 800 number and reiterate the offer: "Call now, 800-555-5555, for the Amazing Widget and your FREE gadget! That's 800-555-5555! Call now!"*

Vanity 800 numbers for TV offers. *Vanity numbers are good for radio, but not for TV. Vanity numbers not only hinder the tracking of media, but the message to the viewer is, "You don't have to call now, because you can remember this number for a long time." Where's the urgency in that?*

Supers and Computer Graphics

A compelling blue screen will have computer graphics that will emphasize the main points you're making without confusing the matter. Graphics should be simple and punchy, and they can also make a subliminal impact. For instance, if you have a low price point, the graphic should be large; if it's \$29.95 or higher, it should be smaller. Also, if you're inserting a "Guaranteed" stamp graphic, include the point of the guarantee (e.g., "Lose 10 pounds in 2 weeks! Guaranteed!") When considering a "countdown clock" graphic, remember that in most cases, it makes a slight difference in call volume because it definitely helps build urgency. Exceptions might be commercials intended for branding or long-term marketing campaigns.

COMMON MISTAKES:

The busy blue screen. *When there's too much stuff on your blue screen, it means the viewer really isn't seeing any of it. Keep the price in one color, but make the word "free" stand out.*



Test Marketing Group

Founded by Adam MacDonald, TEST Marketing Group operates a "Test Laboratory," where campaigns are developed by experts in a controlled environment. The TEST Laboratory is a specialized inbound/outbound phone center. The center is staffed with a group of specially trained marketing agents working on a state-of-the-art platform designed specifically to develop and measure the most profitable sales strategies for DR campaigns. Once determined, the strategy is "rolled-out" through the primary inbound and outbound telemarketer. The preferred result of this process: massive increases in net profit. TEST can be reached at (714) 546-5555. For Adam MacDonald, TEST CEO, dial ext. 202. For Chris Walshe, TEST president, dial ext. 201.