

Ad-quipping Your Business

Types of Advertising Media



Every day, you are exposed to hundreds—maybe even thousands—of advertisements.

Social media advertisements, TV commercials, magazine ads, radio jingles, billboards, and even signs on buses fight to get your attention and your brand loyalty. Undoubtedly, you don't take the time to read and consider all of the ads that come your way. You, like most of us, have learned to tune out most of them. On a personal basis, tuning out the clutter that ads create is often a good thing. But on a professional basis, quite the opposite is true. To be successful and stay afloat financially, your business's advertisements have got to get your market's attention.

So, how do you make your advertisements stand out and cut through the clutter? First of all, select copy and images that go together to create a quality advertisement. Second, and just as important, select the right advertising media for your product and market. You've got to determine the most effective ways to communicate with potential customers, and to do that, you've got to become knowledgeable about the variety of advertising media available to you.

Objectives

- A Describe types of advertising media.
- B Discuss trends affecting advertising media.

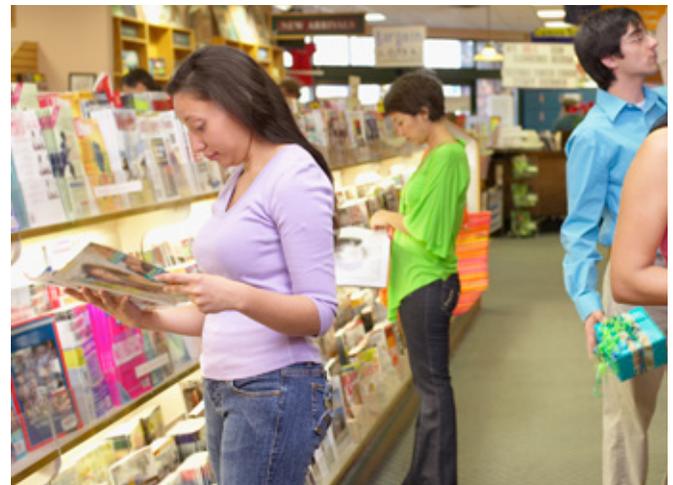
Making Your Message Heard

The average person spends several hours every day being entertained by media. They may watch a streaming service, scroll through social media, listen to the radio or a podcast, or read magazines. If the person is a multitasker, they're probably engaging with more than one medium at once! So, it's to your advantage to use these media to inform people about the products your business has to offer.

Smart advertisers select the **advertising media** that best suit their needs. Think of advertising media as channels of communication—information travels through them to consumers. Consumers might discover the must-have item for summer through their favorite websites or the latest smartphone via television. Make sense? Great! Now, let's take a look at several types of advertising media.

Publications

Publications are materials that are printed on a regular basis. Newspapers and magazines are good examples.



- ▲ When used effectively, magazines can be a powerful way to advertise.

Newspapers. Newspapers are a great way to get in touch with customers since they reach a large audience. When people want to know what's going on around them, picking up a newspaper is one way to get the information they need. But sharing news and information with the public isn't the only plus for newspapers. Just about anyone can place an ad in a newspaper, making this advertising medium popular among businesses.

Newspapers are frequently divided into sections that are useful in promoting different kinds of products. For example, movie theaters place display ads in the entertainment section, while fitness centers place them in the sports section. Sunday editions tend to be thicker, partly because they contain colorful preprinted inserts for stores such as Target, Macy's, and Best Buy. Also, the Sunday paper is full of classified ads for virtually everything.

There are thousands of different newspapers in print across the United States. They vary based on:

- **How often they are published**

Perhaps someone at your home subscribes to a daily newspaper. If so, it arrives at your doorstep every day. If you live in a suburb or rural area, you might also receive a weekly **community newspaper**. Imagine the benefits of spreading the word about your business on such a frequent basis!

- **Their size**

Did you know that newspapers come in different sizes? Most daily newspapers are broadsheet size (the size most of us associate with newspapers), but newspapers come in smaller sizes, too. If you've ever read the *National Enquirer*, then you're familiar with tabloid-sized newspapers.



▲ Daily newspapers show up at your doorstep every day, while community newspapers arrive weekly.

- **What geographic areas they cover**

Two popular national newspapers are *The Wall Street Journal* and *USA Today*, which are circulated across the country. The mix of advertisements in national newspapers varies according to where they are printed. You might find a snowblower ad in a *USA Today* printed in Minneapolis, but not in a *USA Today* printed in Dallas. However, both copies might feature the same full-page computer ad.

Unlike national newspapers, most newspapers focus on a smaller geographic area and are distributed locally. For example, *The Columbus Dispatch* is delivered to people who live in Columbus, Ohio, and its surrounding communities. This geographic area also benefits from several suburban newspapers, such as the *ThisWeek Hilliard Northwest News*. Suburban newspapers cover local events such as high school football games and community festivals. This makes them attractive to people in your area and your business's advertising dollars.

- **Whom they are intended to target**

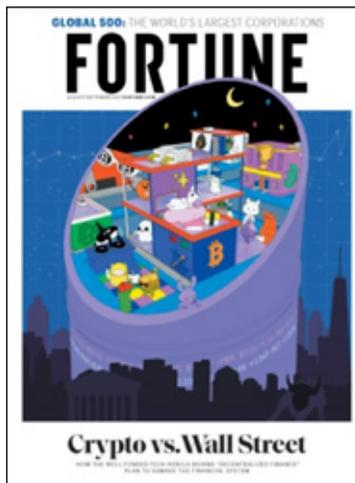
Newspapers usually try to reach a particular **target market** of readers. Your local newspaper probably covers a variety of topics that appeal to a general population. *The Wall Street Journal* focuses on business issues. The Spanish-language newspaper *El Nuevo Herald* is geared toward the Hispanic population, while *The Atlanta Voice* targets Atlanta's African American market. There are even **alternative-press newspapers** that serve younger, trendier crowds interested in the arts and entertainment.

Although the newspaper industry isn't as prominent today as it once was, there is certainly still a place for it, especially in advertising! Check out the article "Newspaper Marketing in 2021 Is Still Valid. Here's Why" by Dan Gartlan. You can find it here:

<https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/newspaper-marketing-2021-still-valid-heres-why-dan-gartlan/>.



www.people.com



www.fortune.com



www.adweek.com

Magazines. Full-page, glossy magazine ads can make quite an impression with consumers. In addition, magazines appeal to very specific target groups. As a result, magazines are a powerful way to advertise.

Magazines are similar to newspapers in several ways. Like newspapers, magazines are published periodically and distributed in different geographic areas. For instance, *Reader's Digest* is distributed to a national audience. Other magazines, like *Midwest Living*, serve a regional area. Still other magazines such as *Indy Midtown Magazine* are distributed within a relatively small geographic area.

Perhaps the most significant way to classify magazines is according to the audiences they reach.

- **Consumer magazines**

What magazines do you read “just for fun”? Perhaps *People*, *Sports Illustrated*, or *Rolling Stone*? These are all consumer magazines that people read for personal enjoyment. Consumer magazines often target a very specific audience, including people who enjoy reading about celebrities, sports, or music, for example.

- **Business magazines**

Business magazines appeal to individuals in all different industries. *Bloomberg Businessweek* and *Fortune* are aimed at a general population of workers, while trade magazines are aimed at specific areas of business or occupations. *Adweek*, *Independent Agent*, and *HR Magazine* are examples of trade magazines.

Broadcast Media

TV and radio are the two **broadcast media**. They are considered “time” media, as opposed to “space” media, because their advertisements last only as long as they are on the air.

TV. By now, you’ve likely spent one or more years of your life watching TV. You may even know some commercials by heart. The experience of color, sound, and action makes them easy to remember—and quite believable. As a result, TV is one of the most influential and best-selling types of advertising media.

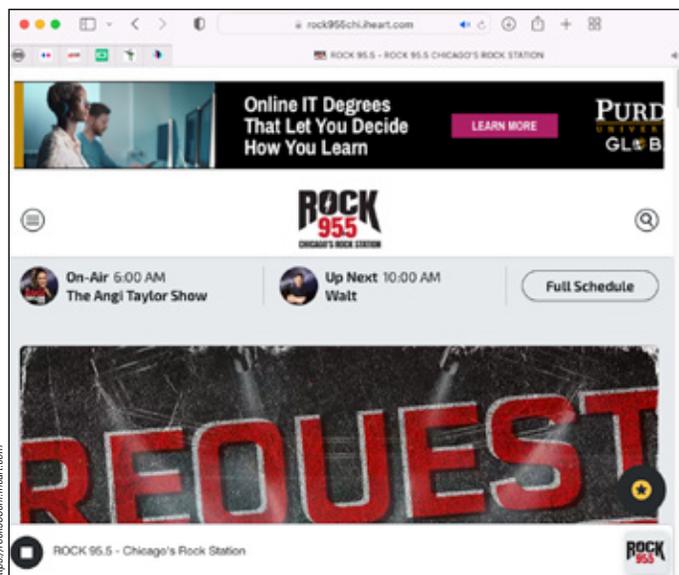
Color, sound, and action make television one of the most influential and best-selling types of advertising media. ▶



grinalds/iStock/Getty Images Plus vrn/E+

Making the decision to advertise on TV isn't easy. There are a vast number of channels to choose from, each with its own type of audience and cost. Network TV advertising (think ABC, CBS, NBC, Fox, etc.) can reach a very broad audience, but it can also be extremely expensive. Advertising on cable, satellite TV, or TV streaming services (such as YouTube TV or Pluto TV), on the other hand, allows you to target a more specific audience, and it's less expensive than network TV. If you need an even cheaper method to get your ads on the air, consider local TV advertising. Because it is relatively inexpensive and targets a small, highly specific audience, local TV advertising is popular among small businesses.

If money isn't an issue, you have several other options. You might consider an **infomercial**, which is essentially a 30- to 60-minute commercial instead of a 30-second one. You might advertise your products on a home shopping network such as QVC. You could sponsor a specific television program, much like the *Hallmark Hall of Fame* presentations, or you could even create your own TV channel, again following in the footsteps of Hallmark.



▲ Digital radio allows radio stations to reach very large audiences.

Radio. Another effective (and affordable) way to reach your target market is through radio advertising. Because each radio station specializes in a certain type of music or talk format, it's possible to target a very specific group of consumers in your area. Simply select a radio station with listeners who fit your market **demographics**, and choose the time slot that makes the most sense to you, financially and otherwise.

With digital radio, many radio stations are able to reach much larger audiences. iHeartRadio features many digital stations, such as 24/7 Comedy, American Top 40, and The Beat (hip-hop and R&B), that can be listened to anywhere. In addition, most traditionally local radio stations broadcast their programming over the internet as well as over the radio waves, which means that they can reach a much broader audience. So, if you want to reach out to consumers beyond your local area, consider radio stations that broadcast nationwide.

THE GRAY ZONE

Practically every year, the Super Bowl football game attracts more viewers than any other show on television. As an example, in 2015, a record 114.4 million people tuned in to watch Super Bowl XLIX between the Seattle Seahawks and the New England Patriots. In fact, that particular Super Bowl earned a place as the most-watched program in U.S. television history!

With viewership numbers like that, many companies jump at the chance to advertise their businesses during the Super Bowl. A 30-second time slot in 2021 cost about \$5.6 million, but some corporations—including McDonald's, Coca-Cola, and Nationwide Insurance—don't seem to mind. That type of expense is worth it to them if it means exposure to the largest audience of the year. So, here's a question for you to ponder: In difficult economic times, is it ethical for a company to pay \$5.6 million for a 30-second time slot during the Super Bowl at the same time that the company is laying off workers and cutting their benefits?

Direct Mail

Many potential customers have two mailboxes—one outside their home at the curb and another on a computer network somewhere. The basic difference between the mailboxes is whether they receive printed or electronic **direct mail**.

Printed mail. How many sales letters, catalogs, flyers, and postcards do you receive each day? Many small businesses have found that printed mail is good for advertising. It's relatively inexpensive, but you run the risk of someone throwing your ad away with the junk mail. The trick is sending your printed mail to the right people. You wouldn't want to send advertisements for your home improvement company to apartment dwellers, for example. Instead, you'd want to get your **printed direct mail** into the hands of homeowners.

Email. Email advertising is popular among businesses because it's quick, easy, and inexpensive. Just as with printed mail, though, recipients may not want the mail that you send them. Your email could land in a **spam** folder or, worse yet, be deleted. To avoid this fate, ask your customers to sign up to receive your electronic newsletters and advertisements. That way, you know that you have permission to send emails to them, and you know that they want to hear from you. This form of **electronic direct mail** is sometimes referred to as **opt-in email marketing**.



▲ If you ask your customers to sign up to receive your emails, you know that they want to hear from you.

Digital

As print media struggles and many newspapers and magazines go under, internet advertising has grown more and more popular in recent years. Today, digital advertising is one of the most influential types of advertising media. It's also the fastest growing (and changing!) media outlet. With digital advertising, you can target a very specific audience, and you can track user response (to find out who is responding to your ads online). Online advertising also helps you build brand awareness and extend your advertising reach beyond your local market. To advertise online, you can create a company website where consumers can learn about your business, find your contact information and locations, and place orders online. Many companies also advertise themselves by creating social media profiles on platforms like Twitter or Facebook, where they can promote their products and interact with customers.



▲ Many companies advertise themselves by creating social media profiles on platforms such as Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

By now, you're probably familiar with **pop-up ads** creating a new window in your browser and **bumper ads** playing before a YouTube video. However, companies can also place ads on other websites or on **portals** such as Google. Just check out the website of your local newspaper. You might see an ad for a local restaurant or business across the top of the page—this is called a **banner ad**. Or, that ad might be vertical, along the side of the page. In this case, it's considered a **sidebar ad**. But these are far from the only ways that companies can advertise online. In fact, the types of advertising that companies use online are almost endless and change rapidly. This article from Wix Blog, "Online Advertising: The Complete Guide to Internet Ad Types and Formats," explains many of the different types of ads you'll see on the web: <https://www.wix.com/blog/2021/01/online-advertising/>. However, by the time you read this, companies will likely have discovered even newer and more exciting ways to advertise online!

Remember newspapers and magazines? As circulation has gone down and printing costs have gone up, many publications have switched entirely to digital editions. Sometimes the content is offered for free on a website, while other times customers pay for digital subscriptions. Companies can reach wide audiences by advertising in these digital publications.

Then there's podcasts. Although radio is still popular today, people often turn to podcasts over radio for news, entertainment, and sports, among other things. Like in radio, companies can reach specific audiences by advertising in podcasts. For example, someone listening to a sports talk podcast may hear an advertisement for an upcoming game, a fantasy sports website, or even a sporting goods store. Check out Forbes's article "Podcast Advertising for DTC Marketers: Why It Works, and How To Get Started" to learn more about advertising in podcasts:

<https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2021/08/13/podcast-advertising-for-dtc-marketers-why-it-works-and-how-to-get-started/?sh=100291a03d43>.

Out-of-Home Media

Several forms of **out-of-home media** exist to reach people when they are away from home. **Poster panels**, or billboards, are outdoor panels or boards to which advertising posters are adhered. A variation on a billboard is a sign painted on the side of a building, often in downtown business districts. Such advertisements are large-scale—several stories tall—and designed for long-term use. Visit New York City and you'll see plenty of them. While you're there, check out the large, elaborate electrical signs, also known as **spectaculars**. Every bus and bus shelter is covered with **transit posters**, and the subway and office buildings are filled with indoor billboards. You'll also find **human directionals**, people wearing or holding signs to advertise a business or product, and the sky may be littered with aerial advertising on blimps, hot air balloons, and other airborne displays. New York City isn't just the city that never sleeps; it's the city that never stops advertising!



▲ Times Square in New York City is filled with several forms of out-of-home media.

Other Media

Think of other media as a catch-all term to include anything that has not been discussed previously. It consists of:

- **Specialty media**

Specialty media remind people about your business. An item must pass three criteria to qualify as specialty media: 1) It must have the business's name or logo on it, 2) it must be a useful item such as a pen or baseball cap, and 3) it must be given away.

Why do companies use specialty media (or, as it is sometimes referred to, specialty advertising)?

You can find out in the article "The Advantages of Specialty Advertising" at

<https://smallbusiness.chron.com/advantages-specialty-advertising-21076.html>.

- **Directory advertising**

Directory advertising informs people about how to contact a particular business, often with a phone number, street address, or website. One of the most popular directories, the *Yellow Pages*, is now more commonly used online. However, if you visit <https://www.yellowpages.com/>, you'll see that there are still advertisements featured, as well as more ways to promote businesses. Other directories may target specific groups of people, such as potential home buyers or students at a university or college.

- **Movie theater advertising**

It seems like there are 20 minutes of smartphone and soft drink advertisements before every movie nowadays. Movie theater advertising—on and off the screen—is increasing in popularity. So, if you decide to see a movie in theaters, you'll also see the on-screen advertising and the posters, standees, and other advertisements in the lobby.

- **Product placement**

Have you ever noticed that the characters in your favorite TV show drink Coca-Cola, use Apple computers or iPhones, or drive Fords—and always with the product labels and logos carefully displayed? Now that so many people stream their favorite shows online (often while using ad-blocking software), illegally download their favorite movies, or watch shows years later on Blu-ray or on ad-free streaming services, companies have become more creative—and persistent—with their advertisements. By inserting their products into your favorite characters' lives, companies hope that you will feel a sense of loyalty to those products—or simply crave a certain soft drink after seeing a character drink it over and over.

The article “Product Placement, Now Starring in the Streaming Era” by Kelly Gilblom goes into more detail about how product placement is being used in the age of streaming services: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2021-07-21/marketers-embrace-product-placement-in-streaming-tv-shows>.

Can you name examples of product placements you've seen recently?

- **Telemarketing**

Many people think of telemarketing as calling prospective customers on the phone, but telemarketing also includes providing a number for people to call. Many companies purchase 800 numbers so that customers can call toll-free, and most companies choose numbers that are easy for people to remember.

Summary

Advertising media are channels of communication used by businesses to reach consumers with promotional messages. There are six general categories of advertising media—publications, broadcast media, direct mail, digital, out-of-home media, and other media.

TOTAL RECALL

1. What are advertising media?
2. Describe four ways in which newspapers vary.
3. Describe how magazines are classified.
4. Discuss how network TV advertising differs from cable, satellite TV, TV streaming service, and local TV advertising.
5. How should you choose a radio station on which to advertise your company?
6. What are two types of direct mail advertising?
7. What are the advantages of digital advertising?
8. List the types of out-of-home media.
9. What are the five types of other media?

Help Me, Hurt Me

New technology seems to hit the market daily. Technology that was once a fantasy is now a reality, and more new technology is around the corner. These advances in technology help *and* hinder advertisers. On one hand, new media outlets are emerging for advertisers' use, but on the other hand, new technology is helping consumers avoid traditional advertising media.

A New Way To Talk

You're no doubt familiar with texting—in fact, it's probably the main way you communicate with your friends. But did you know that texting can also be an advertising medium? Advertisers can use **short messaging service (SMS)** as an inexpensive, easy way to send promotional messages to customers. Advertisers obtain the cell phone numbers of people who might be interested in using their products, and—*voilà!*—those consumers receive text message advertisements for the businesses' upcoming events, updates, and specials.



Ingram Publishing/Thinkstock

This new advertising medium has its drawbacks, however. Unsolicited commercial text messages are a good way to anger consumers since recipients may consider them an unwanted intrusion. In addition, some disreputable people have become good at **smishing**, similar to online phishing for information. Would-be thieves pose as banks and send text messages requesting victims' account numbers and passwords. To combat unwanted text messages and smishing, the federal government passed a law in 2005 to make sending unsolicited text messages illegal. So, if you want to send text messages to consumers, make sure that those individuals opt in for your ads first.

- ▲ Advertisers can use short messaging service (SMS) to send promotional messages to customers. Have you ever received a text message advertisement?



iStock/Thinkstock

Want to see some examples of how text message advertisements work? This article, "30 Text Message Examples for SMS Promotions," showcases how some companies use texts to advertise:

<https://www.tatango.com/blog/30-sms-advertising-examples/>.

Gotcha!

In today's marketing-savvy world, most customers can recognize ads from a mile away—and they'll do anything to avoid them. So, just as product placement has grown more popular, many companies have realized that they need to harness the power of the internet and viral videos to get their message out. If a company creates a video that sparks conversation, communicates an important message, or is just funny, viewers will share the content on their social media pages, forward it to their friends, and promote the company without even realizing they're doing so. Check out the article "The Best Commercial Ads of All Time, Ever" from Biteable to see some examples of ads that went viral: <https://biteable.com/blog/best-commercials/>. Can you think of any other examples?

Are You Trying To Avoid Us?

While some new technology helps advertisers reach consumers, other technology helps consumers stay away. **Do-Not-Call registries**, ad-blocking software, premium digital radio or streaming services, and spam email filters allow consumers to go about their day without the bother of advertising.

Now, you might ask, why aren't DVRs (digital video recorders) on that list? After all, your DVR lets you fast-forward through the commercials. That's true, but those commercials may have influence on you even at high speed. Don't you watch the screen pretty closely while fast-forwarding? You don't want to go too far and miss any of your show, right? You probably could even identify some brand names in the ads based on what you saw while fast-forwarding, couldn't you? Maybe DVRs aren't the death of television advertising, after all. Even at high speed, commercials can still reach their target audience.



▲ There are several different types of technologies that help customers stay away from advertisers.

Getting Social

Have you ever scrolled through your Instagram feed, only to notice an unfamiliar picture that definitely wasn't from one of your friends? Many companies already have their own social media feeds to promote themselves, but they can also place ads in other users' feeds. Promoted tweets, sponsored LinkedIn posts, and Instagram and Pinterest ads blend in with their surrounding content and look like posts from regular users. The social media advertising landscape changes quickly as companies—and users—adapt. The article “Three Reasons You Should Be Advertising on Social Media in 2021” by Jonathan Durante explains why it is important for companies to advertise on social media: https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbesagencycouncil/2021/03/12/three-reasons-you-should-be-advertising-on-social-media-in-2021/?sh=72349dd43f52&ab_channel=InboundExplained%E2%80%A2DigitalMarketing.

Summary

Recent advances in technology have the potential to both help and hurt advertisers. Text messaging and social media advertising are two new ways to reach consumers, but other technology helps consumers keep advertisers away. Some companies have begun advertising in very unconventional ways to reach their target markets.

TOTAL RECALL

1. Explain two advertising media that are the result of technological advances.
2. How can consumers avoid advertising?

Make It Pay!

Which advertising media are you exposed to on a regular basis? Make a mental list of the types of advertising media to which you are most likely to pay attention. Why do you think that these advertising media are especially effective in reaching you?

Now, focus on a particular business in your community. Think carefully about the product(s) and market for this business. What types of advertising media would be most useful in getting the word out about its product(s)? Also, which advertising media would best catch and hold potential customers' attention? Why?