

What to do BEFORE you diversify your advertising program.

There's no question about it... you've decided it's definitely time to diversify your advertising efforts. Your competitors are doing it and it's been an ongoing topic of conversation at every internal marketing meeting for the last 6 months. Someone at your firm suggests that you simply translate a few of your existing ads to reach communities that are highly visible. Another suggests that you throw some sponsorship funds towards a cultural event to "make friends" in that community. That's where you put on the brakes and say, "Stop". To successfully implement a diverse marketing and advertising strategy that has longevity requires a lot of preparation. Here's what you need to consider BEFORE you diversify your advertising program:

1./ Research: Find out as much as you can about the market(s) you want to target. Use resources such as Statistics Canada and other third party research that is available on the internet. Gather as many media kits from the media in your target market as possible. They often have a lot of insightful information about that community.

2./ Market Share: Realistically, what kind of market share does this group you want to target represent? This will also help you to determine a justifiable budget.

3./ Get To Know Your Market: Find out as much as you can about this market: habits, like/dislikes, cultural differences and similarities, traditions, superstitions, etc...

4./ Market Your Product: What is appealing about your product for this particular market? Perhaps the features and benefits that you've been using to attract the community as a whole are not appropriate for this market. Is there another angle you can take? Is your product or service even desirable for this market?



5./ Consultant or Agency: Engage a consultant or agency that is well versed in this particular market and which has experience in this community. You will want to have a creative force behind you that is an expert and who isn't learning on the job.

6./ Adequate Infrastructure: Do you have what it takes to back up your advertising efforts? For example, if there's a call to action in a particular language in your ads, do you have a call centre that can respond in that language? If your ad shows a photograph of a South Asian salesman, do you actually have one at your location that speaks the language?

7./ Engage The Community: Really get to know the community and become a part of it. Is there someone at your firm that can champion the effort and become the point person in that community? Research which events are important and have that point person be present and get to know the people involved.

8./ Commitment To The Community: Are you prepared to show a true commitment to that community? Many diverse advertising programs end without ever having shown any sort of commitment to the target group. If you can't prove that you're committed to the community, your advertising efforts will undoubtedly fail.

9./ Creative: Once you've determined all of the above, you're ready to start crafting your strategy and creating ads. Do you modify or adapt your existing campaign(s) or do you create something from scratch? This is where the expertise of your consultants will become very useful.

10./ Measurement: Be sure to implement a measurement strategy that accurately measures your program. Work with your consultant or agency in determining the best way to determine the success of your program. ■

