



Tried & True Techniques

There are no magic formulas, but there are proven techniques that can greatly increase a direct-response marketing campaign's odds of success:

1. START WITH A PROBLEM-SOLUTION OPENING

Start with a problem-solution opening. All good DRTV products solve a problem. Making that problem seem as painful as possible helps create the impulse to purchase and positions your product as the hero of the commercial. The classic line for this part of the commercial: "Oh no! Not again!"

2. SHOWCASE UNIQUE FEATURES AND BENEFITS

The idea that you need to explain a product's "features and benefits" is as old as advertising itself. Making those features and benefits seem as unique as possible – i.e. differentiating the product from other potential solutions – is what really makes the difference.

3. DEMO THE PRODUCT REPEATEDLY AND FEATURE A 'MAGIC DEMO'

Explaining isn't enough: DRTV buyers need to see for themselves. That's why the most successful DRTV products are the ones that have great demos. As for the "magic demo," a classic example is the late, great Billy Mays putting a scoop of OxiClean into a giant tub of red iodine, giving it a swirl and turning the water clear. Now that's magic!

4. EXPLAIN HOW THE PRODUCT WORKS

If your prospects don't understand your product, they are much less likely to buy it. Confusion is a sales killer, and DRTV buyers must be able to justify their purchase with logic. One of the more common ways to explain a product these days is an animation. The classic lead-in to this part of the commercial: "Here's how it works ..." or "The secret is ..."

5. PROVE THE PRODUCT WORKS BY COMPARING AND CONTRASTING

A typical method of comparing is the side-by-side demo, which pits your product against a competitor or older method. A typical method of contrasting is before-and after photography (often shown in a split screen).

6. ESTABLISH CREDIBILITY WITH TESTIMONIALS OR ENDORSEMENTS

The master infomercial marketers at Guthy-Renker call testimonials "social proof." They are the experts at creating a "word of mouth" feel in a commercial format. (Watch a Proactiv commercial to see this firsthand.) Scientific studies, seals of approval (e.g. Good Housekeeping) and other third-party endorsements are also highly effective at generating credibility.

7. RAISE AND ANSWER OBVIOUS QUESTIONS/OBJECTIONS

Marketing is all about getting inside the mind of your prospects and trying to understand what they'll be thinking about when watching your commercial. Master direct marketer Joseph Sugarman said that part of this process is imagining what their objections and/or questions will be, and then addressing them the moment the thought occurs. But he added a word of caution: Never raise an objection or question you can't answer satisfactorily!

8. PRESENT A POWERFUL OFFER AT AN INCREDIBLE PRICE

DRTV producer Fred Vanore calls this the "mooch factor." DRTV buyers are price sensitive (read "cheap"), and they live for a great bargain. The classic way to build up the value of an offer is to include one or more bonuses. Master DRTV marketer AJ Khubani has shared four criteria for selecting a bonus: 1) It must be relevant to the product; 2) It must be instantly understandable; 3) It must have a high perceived value; and 4) It must be low cost (since you're giving it away). The classic lead-in to this part of the commercial: "But wait! There's more!"

9. INCREASE PERCEIVED VALUE WITH A VALUE COMPARISON

This technique is another DRTV cliché. But going back to #8, it's critical to show DRTV buyers how much money you're going to save them. A great way to do that is to call their attention to the priciest alternative possible. The classic lead-in to this part of the commercial: "You could pay up to \$100 dollars ..."

10. MINIMIZE RISK WITH A SATISFACTION GUARANTEE

At a minimum, there should be a money-back guarantee. However, money-back guarantees are so commonplace these days that people tend to ignore them. That's why Sugarman advocated an "over-the-top guarantee." He believed the guarantee should be so good, your customers would wonder how you stayed in business. The classic line for this part of the commercial: "If you aren't completely satisfied, send it back for a full refund of the purchase price."