

ECONOMIC PERSPECTIVES



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Marketing Communications in a Digital Age



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In last month's column, I noted that we are in the latest phase of an evolving industrial era. Economic growth – global, nationally, statewide, and regionally – still relies on traditional industries. Marketing enables these companies to leverage this growth and enter new markets or broaden their customer base.

Peter Drucker, the father of modern management, maintained, "Because the purpose of business is to create a customer, the business enterprise has two – and only two – basic functions:

marketing and innovation. Marketing and innovation produce results; all the rest are costs. Marketing is the distinguishing, unique function of the business." In his view, marketing is not a tool to generate profits. It is the driving force of business that defines, captures and enriches customer opportunities.

We are in a digital age, which is good news for companies investing in marketing communications for growth and expansion. Integrated campaigns can effectively combine traditional and digital media to achieve a customer reach and frequency of message not possible via a single medium. Radio, print, digital, and television media can be strategically employed in a myriad of ways to maintain the consistency and effectiveness of messaging across all channels to best support the accomplishment of business objectives.

NNDA works with two great media partners. Reno Media Group and Sierra Nevada Media Group (SNMG) are helping us to promote and showcase the Sierra Region as a business and lifestyle destination. This includes getting the word out about the region's booming economy, business opportunities, workforce development, and company successes.

The emergence and proliferation of digital communication technologies and smartphones have led many to believe that radio stations will eventually become extinct. However, a recent study by Nielsen tells a much different story. Radio is thriving. It reaches 93% of all adults age 18 and older every week, compared to 87% for television and 70% for smartphones. According to analyst Michael Kassan on the Media Village blog, "In 1971, about 90% of the population listened to the radio regularly. Today, that number is about 90%. This is an indicator that we still love to listen – while other media habits have ebbed and flowed, radio has remained a regular part of our daily media diet."

Radio has three advantages for marketing communications. It is cost effective and budget friendly. Strategically combined with other media, it can maximize advertising reach and ROI. Because of its short lead time, typically three weeks or less, radio is time efficient. Radio has measurable results that can be tracked quickly and accurately. Customized messages can be tested in target markets and cities, and refined before deployment through other media or a national campaign.

Reno Media Group combines websites, radio broadcasting, video, Internet audio streaming, social media, and other related services. Its radio stations include: KRNO 106.9 MoreFM; KLCA Alice 96.5; KLCA HD-2 SWAG 104.9 and 93.5 in Carson City; KODS 103.7 The River; KOLC Ten Country @ 97.3; KLCA HD-3 The Rodeo 96.9 FM and 97.7 FM in Carson City; KSGG Power 1230 AM and 92.5 FM in Reno; KBZZ 96.1 FM & 1270 AM The Buzz; and KLCA HD-4 Juan 101.7 FM (Spanish-language station). The stations also have mobile-responsive websites and active social media pages. Most stream live on their websites and mobile apps to computers, tablets and smartphones, combining the strengths of broadcasting and the Internet.

Despite reports to the contrary, consumers are still drawn to newspaper ads. Recent studies of newspaper audiences found that 63% of American adults read a newspaper in an average week; 56% of customers find print marketing to be the most trustworthy type of marketing; readers retain more information when reading print; and, newspaper advertising typically makes online display ads four times more effective.

Print ads offer three advantages for marketing communications. Print media provides unlimited exposure. Unlike television and radio who have scheduled advertising times, print ads are available any time. Readers can view ads, repeatedly, whenever or as often they choose. Print ads are not perceived as intrusive as other media. A reader has control over when and if an ad is viewed. Print media tend to have long-term, loyal readership. This can reinforce key messaging and add to a campaign's effectiveness. Advertising in publications who have been in business for many years can lend credibility to an advertiser's message.

SNMG encompasses a broad portfolio of newspapers, magazines, and websites focused on Lake Tahoe, Carson Valley, and Reno. Part of Swift Communications, Inc., SNMG has nine divisions – Nevada Appeal (Nevada's third largest newspaper), The Record-Courier, Lahontan Valley News, Northern Nevada Business Weekly, Tahoe Daily Tribune, Sierra Sun, North Lake Tahoe Bonanza, Everything Nevada, and Blue Sky Mining Company – which serve 11 counties within California and Nevada, along with a nationwide online presence. SNMG distributes over one million publications every month, coordinates with social media, and attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors to its websites.

Radio and print advertising are alive and well! Anyone with a smartphone can listen to radio or read the e-edition of a print newspaper. For more information about Reno Media Group services, please contact Bob Hastings, bob@renomediagroup.com or 775-771-9848. Those interested in SNMG services can contact Brad Bancroft, 775-881-1234 or bbancroft@sierranevadamedia.com.



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