

HANDY TIP:

Long Term Local Direct Contracts

Radio and television salespeople have a high failure rate in renewing short-term local direct schedules. We must help businesses realize that advertising on our stations is a long-term process, not a three-week flight. But we face two critical problems in getting commitments for more long-term schedules.

1. When clients balk at running long-term radio and television schedules what they're really saying is that they still have secret objections. They think that broadcast advertising is confusing, complicated and expensive. Or, they've "tried it once and it didn't work." At best, most business owners believe that advertising is a gamble, not a good calculated risk. So, why make a long-term commitment to something that "we're not sure will work"? Why not just "test" the station instead?
2. We in broadcast sales have trained ourselves to ask for short schedules. We're afraid to ask a client for long-term business. So, we go back month after month saying, "Well, you advertised with us last month. Are you doing anything this month?" This is a terrible strategy for several reasons. One, every time the client sees you you're hitting him up for money. Two, without the insurance of a long-term contract, as soon as your schedule airs every other hyena in media business is going to call your client. Three, short-term schedules seldom work well enough to meet the client's expectations about results.

Consequently, accepting short-term local direct business is risky...for both the media salesperson and the client. A better strategy is to always, in virtually every case, ask for long-term business. Remember that if you don't ask you don't get. So ask. And if your client says no this time, ask again the next time.

When skeptical clients tell you, "Well, I think we'll just do the two weeks this time," try this:

"When you signed your lease you didn't sign for just two weeks. When you hired employees you didn't agree to pay them for just two weeks. You didn't make a two-week commitment with your product supplier. You should think the same way about investing in mindshare. Long-term

advertising is an integral part of staying in business for the long-term. It's as important as your long-term investment in location, long-term investment in good employees and long-term investment in a better-quality product or service. How can people do business with you when they're not even thinking about who you are, what you do and how to get in touch with you?

'If I mention your product/service category to the average consumer, does the name of your company immediately come up? Or would it instead be the name of the national chain store down the street? Want to bet? How invisible are you? By advertising short-term you are investing in a bit of consumer awareness with a hard-sell technique. By advertising long-term you're investing instead in deep sell, building customer mindshare and customer loyalty in the process.'