

It's all in the details

Print ads need to work hard for you. They must grab your attention and then they must tell you something interesting. Lastly, they should motivate action. Generally speaking, this is the AIDA model (attention, interest, desire, action). It is not always easy to do all this within the constraints of a small space. If you are a small business, chances are you can't afford a full page, or even a half page. So you have to pack it in to small ads. The smaller the ad the more you have to think about what you write.

I came across an ad for a ballet studio in a local women's magazine. The headline says: "4 Week Introductory Sessions \$30." That left me thinking—does this mean four weeks for \$30? How many classes per week? Does the introductory session last four weeks? Already not clear.

The body copy goes like this:

Teen & Adult Classes

Jazz, Ballet, Pilates, Zumba, Musical Theater

Just for you! This wonderful program will ignite your passion for dance and exercise. Our extraordinary teachers will guide you every step of the way with a specialized curriculum in our lovely studios. Join us in class! (Telephone number and email address follow).

OK. What is missing here? LOCATION! From the phone, I know it is located in Maryland, but that could be anywhere in a 30-mile radius. No website either—I can figure it out from the email. Basically, missing key details.

What about the copy? Well, its like someone looked up adjectives and strung them all together in a sentence: wonderful, extraordinary, lovely, specialized. Those

meaningless (and overused) words take up valuable real estate. Also, the copy refers to a (single) program, yet they tell me they offer at least five different types of classes.

My conclusion is that this ad does not work. If you are a small business, and you are going to spend money on advertising, think about what you want to accomplish. Of course, a professional can help you with this, but using some common sense is always helpful.

UPDATE: I checked out the studio's website, and it turns out they have multiple locations. However, the website was not updated to reflect the aforementioned classes. If you are going to start running advertising, you better have information to back it up. Don't make potential customers work so hard to find out!!!!

