To advertise or not to advertise

Yesterday, somebody on Twitter asked me whether she should advertise on Facebook. I asked what she was trying to accomplish. Her answer was to get more readers to her blog. Is that enough information to decide whether it is worth it to advertise? Not at all.

Let me preface the following by saying that I don't believe that you should do advertising on a case-by-case basis. It is much smarter to look at your overall marketing communications goals and have a plan to meet them. **Advertising is a tactic** that you should use to bolster your strategy.

Goals (measurable is better)

First, you have to figure out what your goal really is. In this case, the blog owner could say she would like to increase her readership by 10% (that is, if she has the numbers for her current readership). But the real question is why? Why does she want more readers? What will having more readers mean? Depending on your type of organization, it could mean increased sales or donations or votes.

Target audience

Second, you have to figure out exactly who your audience is and where you can find them.

Budget

Third, you have to figure out your advertising budget. Throwing a few dollars here and a few dollars there is not a budget. Advertising is an investment in your business. How much are you able or willing to invest?

Trial

Fourth, once you have done your homework (if you know your audience, you have a target, you have budgeted a certain amount) then you are ready to try advertising.

Tracking and measurement

Lastly, once you are running a campaign, you will need to pay special attention to your metrics. Where are people finding you from? How will you track it?

Figuring out how to do advertising is not a science. There is art to it. I know, I was a media buyer eons ago, and I learned that some things look great on paper but don’t work out. You can analyze CPM (cost per thousand) all you want, but sometimes, you have to let your instinct guide you. Also, just because something is affordable, doesn’t mean you should include it in your advertising plan. Sometimes, you don’t know until you try it!

If you want help figuring out your advertising plan, contact me. Advertising planning is a process, which should be part of your overall communications plan.