

# SELLING SPACE

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## Selling Schedules Not One-Timers

By Carl Landau

Joe Sales Rep is in a celebrating type of mood. After 6 long months of hard work, Joe has convinced a new client to advertise in his magazine. Joe dances into the publisher's office to tell him the good news: he's booked a full page, four-color ad to a brand new advertiser. The publisher asks, "What kind of frequency?" Joe says, "Well, one time - they want to try out the magazine." The publisher frowns. The problem? Joe only did half of his job he didn't sell them a schedule.

I drill this idea into all advertising salespeople I work with ... SELL SCHEDULES! The additional effort it takes to sell a schedule as opposed to a one-timer is minimal. And you can receive 6 to 12 times more revenue.

### Why schedules are so important

If most of your accounts are not on long term contracts, that means you have to re-sell them every month to advertise. This will take away from the time you can spend with new clients. The real growth in advertising pages for your magazine is new business.

Also, if an advertiser is not on a contract, it is very easy for them to skip an issue if there is no commitment on their part. But if someone is on a 12-time contract, they are far more likely not to skip an issue. There are several reasons for this. Advertisers don't want to lose their frequency discount. Or, say their new artwork is not ready. If you are on contract, it is very likely they will just re-run the old ad. If they're not on a contract, forget it - you're stuck in "waiting for new artwork" purgatory. It's not a fun place, believe me.

You also should avoid the three-month syndrome. If an advertiser places a one-time advertisement with you, they are normally reserving

the space 6 - 8 weeks in advance of the issue date. Once the advertisement appears, it takes a minimum of 4 - 6 weeks to evaluate the results. Even if the advertisement is pulling like gang busters you've missed out on three Insertions by the time they place another advertisement. And your client has missed out on a lot of sales.

Finally, advertisers need to be on schedules for their own good. Many advertisers are naive and unsophisticated marketers. They will hop around from magazine to magazine chasing the eternal "special issue" carrot. If your magazine's readership is truly appropriate for an advertiser's product, you are doing them a service by locking them into a contract. It is to their advantage to go into the best magazines with frequency.

### How to sell schedules

You should have "schedules on the brain" in every sales situation. Obviously, you first need to sell an advertiser on your magazine's editorial, circulation, readership, etc. But, you can use the issue of frequency as a probing question. For example, "What sort of advertising program were you thinking of? A six- or twelve-time schedule?" This immediately gets the client thinking of an advertising program instead of simply a one-time shot. And if they are just thinking one-time, it is better to know this information in advance so you can prepare for it at the close.

You can use the frequency question as a close, too. For example, "Can I book your full page at the 12-time rate?" Even if they were planning on only running one-time, you should start with a high frequency. You can usually work out a compromise of three or six times.

**Here are eight additional arguments you can use for selling schedules:**

**1. Not a Fair Test** - A one-time ad is not a fair test of a magazine's effectiveness. The results an advertiser receives from one ad is not valid. This is true not just for your magazine, but for any magazine. I tell the advertiser that he might notice his ad the first time but he is not the typical reader. The average reader is not hunting for a specific ad. He is flipping through the pages and may notice a headline and nothing else. By the second time a reader sees the ad, he is much more likely to read the copy. But it usually takes a third insertion to stimulate action on the part of the reader. The bare minimum for a fair test is to run three issues in a row.

**"If most of your accounts are not on long term contracts, that means you have to re-sell them every month to advertise.**

**2. Momentum** - By running one time an advertiser will probably miss three issues before he can evaluate your magazine's performance. Explain the early reservation deadline problems with magazines. By skipping three issues the advertiser will kill any momentum that their first ad started. The bottom line is that they will be losing sales for three important issues.

**3. Discount** - Point out how much more reasonable the rates are for high frequency advertisers.

**4. Short rate** - Tell advertisers not to worry about going onto a schedule. If they have a budget problem later in the year, you can always short rate them.

**5. Every other issue** - If they can't afford to run every issue, put them on an every-other-issue schedule. At least they will show some consistency to the reader. And you don't have to call them every month.

**6. Reader's trust** - Explain to advertisers that it is important to your readers that they know a company is going to be in business for a long time. Readers

don't have much trust in advertisers that are not consistently in the magazine.

**7. Advertisers already on contract** - Point out to potential advertisers that 50% (or whatever the figure is) of your advertisers are in every issue of the magazine. They stay in every issue because the magazine works great as an advertising vehicle.

**8. Frequency, frequency, frequency** - You need to convince advertisers that frequency is the most important strategy in advertising. They need to figure out which magazines read their audience (of course, your magazine is best) and run lots of space in the few that are right!

One of the best ways to sell schedules is to offer a rate protection plan at the beginning of the year. I offered old rates to all full page advertisers who will commit to every issue of the magazine. The first full year of publishing COMPUTER LANGUAGE I sold 35 pages of rate protection by myself. With 35 pages guaranteed every issue, it was not hard for us to run over 50 pages an issue and eventually over 80 pages an issue.

So next time you sell some space, think schedules!

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