

# Advertising - How much is enough?

by Julie Rayner

There is a buyer for every property on the market. It's my job to make it easy for that special person to find my properties. This is where the killer advertising campaign comes in. But how much advertising is is enough? What are the best forums? Where can you reach the biggest audience?



The advent of the internet, email, text and the social media has totally transformed the way the real estate market advertises. In times not so long past, the first bastion of real estate information was to be found in the monthly *Realtor Magazine* (the on-line version is [www.realestate.com.au](http://www.realestate.com.au)), the weekend real estate supplement in the Saturday Courier Mail and the window of the local real estate office. With any number of real estate listing sites available (even sites like *Gumtree* and the *Trading Post* support real estate listings), traditional media types have declined in popularity. They still have their place in marketing your property, but are less popular and in comparison, are considered as an expensive option.

So what's the best strategy? Without trying to be deliberately vague, the right combination of media will depend largely on the property, the procedures and protocols employed by your agent and their office, and your budget.

We all advertise on the same websites; some agencies use standard listings and others prefer featured listings (like me). As more properties are listed on a website, each entry is superseded by the next. Featured listings take priority over standard listings and move down the list more slowly.

I still like to run ads in the local newspapers; they generally have a good distribution and readership and you never know where your buyer will come from; he could just as well be your next door neighbour or the guy up the street!

I also like to take advantage of my sister offices nationwide and overseas. The best part of this is that all of the emails I send to our associated offices are free!

OK, so back to the original question, "How much is enough?"

Internet. Most real estate websites are free to list (they don't charge the agency, so you don't pay either), with some exceptions. The larger and most popular sites do charge for advertising and traditionally, the charge is passed on to the seller. For example, my office uses feature listings for all of our properties and because of the volume of properties we list, we receive a 'bulk discount' on the fees charged, which we pass on to our sellers.

Newspapers. Advertising is charged at the going rate for the publication. It varies from area to area, depending on distribution and readership of the publication. Once again, my office receives a 'bulk discount' which we pass on to our sellers. Newspaper advertising is still an important part of a killer marketing campaign; ignore it at your peril!

Photographs. There are 2 schools of thought here. Pro vs agent. Keep in mind that the photos will create the first impression of your home to prospective buyers, so they had better be good!

1. An agent with a good camera and some imagination can produce some great shots of your property and they're free.

2. Packages are available from professional photographers starting from around \$125 for 15 daytime shots (night or twilight shots are more expensive). The advantage of using a professional photographer is you can utilise their knowledge and experience to style or stage your home to achieve the perfect 'Hero Shot'. (The 'Hero Shot' is the photo you choose to be the focus of your marketing campaign).

You can also invest in a 'virtual tour' of your home, starting at around \$195. Some properties just scream 'virtual tour' and I'll suggest it if I think it's a good strategy, however I don't think it's necessary for every property going to market.

Picture signboards. Starting at around \$99, they can be a great advantage in targeting 'Stage 3' buyers. These are buyers cruising their chosen area and actively looking for a property to buy NOW! If you have a picture signboard, a car parked out front with the occupant talking on a mobile phone, chances are they are wanting to inspect your property now. Start running around with the air freshener and put on a pot of coffee.

On the other hand, standard agency signboards contain all the contact details the 'Stage 3' buyer needs, and they're free.

Advertising copy. Hopefully, your agent loves desktop publishing as much as I do. I love writing original (and quirky) ads to get a buyers attention. (Get involved in the campaign with suggestions and ideas for that stand out text to accompany your 'Hero Shot'). So all the copy for the internet and newspaper ads, brochures and flyers (proofed by you before publishing and distribution) is free (and fun for me!)

So that's the basics. The generally accepted rule of thumb is to allow 1 - 2 % of your expected sale price to fund your advertising campaign. You can do the math. The object of the exercise is to get your property noticed and sold. Keep in mind that "**UNSEEN = UNSOLD**", and every agency has different policies and procedures when it comes to your marketing campaign. Your agent should be able to advise you on the best options for your sale. Remember, it's not a "one-size-fits-all" deal. All properties are different and the campaign to sell them should be designed to emphasise that individuality.