

WE'VE ALL SEEN THEM – VAINGLORIOUS and badly written 'advertisement promotions' in trade magazines, though the chances are we've none of us bothered to read many. Do they work? No. Poorly-crafted marketing communications always fail, regardless of the medium.

The irony is that paid-for editorial in a b2b environment can bring with it several *huge* advantages. People read consumer magazines because they want to be entertained, but (and I mean no disrespect to the many first-class writers and editors working in the trade press) they turn to b2b magazines and websites primarily for *information*. If you have information that's of genuine use and relevance to them, readers won't care whether it's been paid for or not. That's because trade media operate in a commercial environment, which itself revolves around businesses need to buy and sell. It's an ideal shop window, although one that often limits product mention to smaller news items



Does paid-for editorial work?

Sponsored articles and advertorials may lack the advantage of independent endorsement, but if well targeted, well-written and relevant can still play a key role in any marketing strategy. Andy Sivell offers some practical guidance on exploiting the advantages of paid-for editorial and avoiding common pitfalls

or dedicated product pages, neither of which help if your product is unknown, or complex, or hard to differentiate from others. Advertorials and sponsored articles work best when selling a product of service that requires explanation. When paid-for editorial fails it's usually because it lacks imagination or flair. People don't mind being sold to. They mind being sold to badly.

Keep your messages simple. Frame your main selling points succinctly and at the start of your copy. Only after you've done that should you go in to any detail. Always present your offering in

terms of the problem that it solves for your reader.

Advertorial is more sensitive to editorial nuance than advertising. Take time to understand exactly who your audience is before matching your product to their specific needs. Mirror the tone of voice of the publication or medium you're using. Remember that what attracted it to you in first place was its success at communicating with your target market,



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so acknowledge that it may have adopted a certain style for a reason. Don't think you know better.

Use short words and sentences. Not because your audience isn't clever, but because they're busy. Most articles get scanned first. Avoid rhetoric and slang, and don't try to be funny unless you have a British Comedy Award nestling on your mantelpiece.

If your product is technical then the most practical option may be to write the copy yourself. If you do, hire a professional writer or editor to polish your language and ensure that

it flows. Be sure to include a simple call to action which can be measured and which is directly related to the specifics of your subject matter.

Finally, your copy will, by its very nature, be 'keyword-rich'. If you can extend your coverage online (through your own or others' websites) it will perform well in search engines.

Andy Sivell is a writer and editor at Working Titles.

Some useful paid-for editorial options

Select is a monthly product alert emailed to over 9,000 construction industry professionals, including architects and engineers.

It has the overwhelming advantage that its whole focus is on product information – and that every recipient has asked to receive it. Prices start from £270 a month for up to 200 words plus one image.

All sponsored articles on theNBS.com are featured on the Home page for one week followed by the relevant category page for three, providing a targeted platform, associated SEO benefits and, of course, access to the site's 52,000 unique visitors each month. Prices start from £800 for up to 1,000 words, three images and ten web links.

For more information

For you'd like to know more about how to maximise the impact of your press release or product literature email bulletin@ribaenterprises.com or complete the faxback form.

RIBA Enterprises | 15 Bonhill Street | London | EC2P 2EA

T +44 (0)20 7496 8300 F +44 (0)20 7374 8500

E bulletin@ribaenterprises.com W www.ribaenterprises.com