

THE BEST WAY TO TELL WHICH ADS ARE PULLING THE MOST ORDERS

Every business must use advertising. Customers can't buy from you if they don't know you exist. But you must advertise smartly. You must keep track of which publications draw the most responses, as well as which ad copy is best. This can be done by KEYING your ads.

A key is the identification code you use in your ad. It shows you which publication, date, and ad copy brought in the response. Keying your ads is simple to do, and can be done in a few different ways.

The easiest and most common way to key your ads is to attach the key code to your address. For example, if your address is 123 Main St., your keyed address might look like " 123-PSSB Main St." The PSSB is the key, and could signify Popular Science, May issue, ad copy B. This method is used primarily by mail order dealers.

The addition of the key to your address should not pose problems for the post office, but it's still a good idea to contact your postmaster. Show him or her the keys you intend to use and get their opinion. They will know which formats will be disruptive to delivery.

If you use the phone for responses, you can put a "Department Number" in your ad, and instruct the customer to ask for the department when calling. You or your phone operators would then take note of the code and use it to tally your responses.

Finally, a good way to check which of your mailings or flyers are succeeding is to use different colors of paper. For example, if you are testing three different mailing lists, use three different colored papers, one to each list. You can then instantly tell when you receive order blanks which list the response came from.

Be sure to keep a list of your key codes and what they correspond to. By doing this, you can tell which publications are worth continuing your ads in, which should be cancelled, and which ad copy should be used. This will allow you to pour your ad funds into the most worthwhile places, and reap the benefits!