

How to Write a Really Boring Yellow Pages Ad that Nobody Will Notice and Will Get No Results Whatsoever

By William Howard Horrocks

To begin, show a picture of yourself that looks more or less like any other dentist. Make the photo the biggest thing on the page so it will communicate that you are the most important thing, and that the patients concerns are secondary.

Then, print the name of your practice, ensuring that the name sounds more or less like every other dental practice. Better yet, name your practice with your own name, guaranteeing that it will mean next to nothing to your public. As a finishing touch, if you're a DMD, put this sleep-inducing abbreviation after your name. (Surveys reveal that only small % of adults know that a DMD is a dentist.)

Now, don't forget to prominently feature the words "root canal" and "important", since we don't want the prospective patient to think you're a wimp, and can't perform some really awful-sounding procedures.

In large, bold print, proclaim that NEW PATIENTS ARE WELCOME, because we don't want the prospective patient to think you're one of those practices who have a sign on their door which reads, NO NEW PATIENTS. GO AWAY.

We're rolling now. Ensure you use at least 4 or 5 different typefaces throughout the ad, to let everyone know that you are hip enough to use Microsoft Word. Then, in a really arty font, say, Olde English, print the words "We Care", which will cause readers throughout your area to turn to their spouses with an amazed look on their face and say, "Honey, there's a dentist in town who ACTUALLY CARES ABOUT HIS PATIENTS!" and immediately call for an appointment. You could follow this up with a press release to your local paper, which boasts, "Local Dentist Actually Cares About Patient's Dental Health."

In the center of this vast expanse of white space, list out the services you deliver, such as general dentistry, cosmetic dentistry, teeth cleaning, etc., because it is vital that prospective patients know that you are exactly like every other dentist in the United States, Canada and Third World countries.

Do whatever you can to include the word "gentle" in the ad at least 64 times. This may sound challenging, but start with changing your name to Dr. Gentle of Gentle Dentistry, then adding the slogan "Gentle Dentistry from Gentle People." Ensure you do not accidentally use the words "Gentile" or "Genital." Try to work in a few rhyming words, such as rental, mental or Yentl.

In order to maintain a large measure of professional dignity, include, right under your address, a phrase like "Across from the U-rent-it, next to Mr. Raincoat's Video Arcade."

Don't forget the LOGO! This should be the second-biggest thing in the ad. Stylized mountains and pine trees are nice for the northwest (or the Space Needle in the Seattle Area!), a big palm tree fits in fine for southern California or Florida, a flaming rocket for Houston, and you get the idea. Just make sure that it has no visible connection to dentistry, and you'll be fine. And, if your practice's name is Gentle Dentistry; for example, shorten this to "GD" in the logo, so it will take readers longer to figure out that you're a Dentist.

Now get a hold of some pictures of the best-looking models you can find who bear no resemblance whatsoever to your actual patients. Cindy Crawford would be nice. They have to be smiling, of course. How about Cindy walking on the beach with some hunk guy? This will tell prospective patients that not only can they get a great smile at your place; they will also be transformed into truly gorgeous people with perfect make-up, hair, figure and clothes, too. They'll swallow this hook, line and sinker.

Now call your yellow pages rep and sign up for a huge ad that costs a bit more than medium-sized aircraft carrier, and you're ready to advertise!