

Sometimes It's Just About Being in the Right Place at the Right Time

The *From the Lab* team was talking with an old pro in the direct mail business the other day. We were specifically discussing the mortgage business and how mortgage companies are applying some basic principles they learned in their direct mail experience to their DRTV advertising.

As you've probably noticed, mortgage companies don't particularly care about the production value of their spots and or shows. While often clever — and sometimes memorable — they wouldn't win any awards. But here is the interesting thing that they all know to be true: it's mostly simple statistics that apply to a refinancing customer.

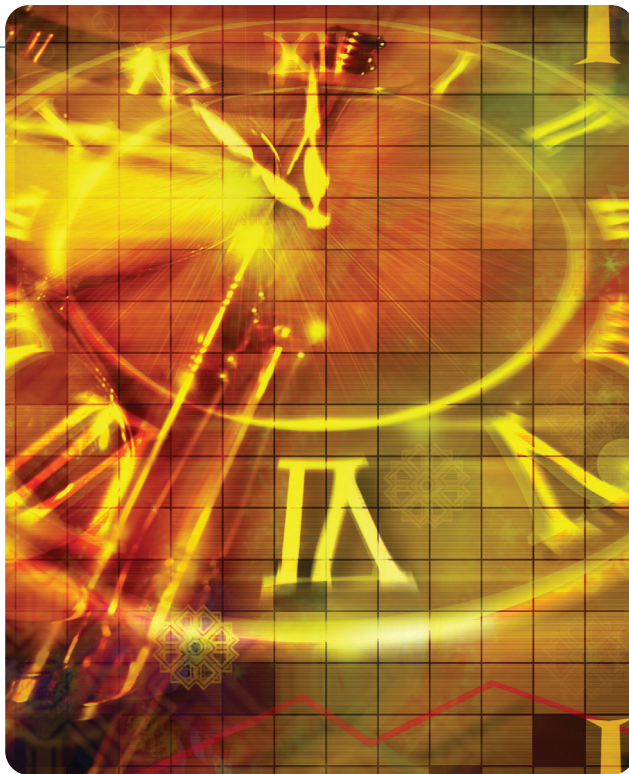
A refinancing — or “refi” — customer is anyone who has a home and a mortgage. Most potential refi customers procrastinate and won't actually attempt to refinance their homes in today's market until they finally get in enough pain — such as being unable to make their mortgage payment or getting a collection call or bill in the mail. Panic sets in, and the next refi letter or TV ad they see will be the call they make.

So the trick for mortgage lenders is to be there when refinancing is on a consumer's mind. This makes the creative less important and the media placement more important. People tend to panic more on Monday mornings — hence the increased number of mortgage spots on Mondays.

This isn't fair to the rest of us direct marketers, because the mortgage companies can afford to run a commercial on a \$200 cost-per-lead basis. Imagine how many infomercials we could get to work if we could afford to spend \$200 on one lousy phone call?

So what might we learn from the mortgage companies and how can it apply to selling your product? The next time someone's vacuum cleaner breaks while watching a Dyson commercial, will that be the vacuum the customer will buy? For diet-pill pushers, is it essentially just as easy as being on the air when someone is feeling fat?

Perhaps DRTV experts should do what time of day and what day of the week most vacuum cleaners break and air there first. Or is it just not quite that simple for the rest of us? ■



Take 2 Direct specializes in providing uniquely creative and highly responsive commercials and campaign management. If you want to sell your product and need a company that has the creative vision to drive the call, as well as the practical experience to manage the intricate back-end process, contact Take 2 Direct CEO Adam MacDonald at (714) 979-5555 or E-mail him at adam@take2direct.com.

