



Live in the Now

Read about our New Zealand brand expedition on our site's **updated Now Section**.

feel the **bzzz**

How to set the right ad budget

Far and away, the question we most often hear from our clients is “how much should I spend on advertising and marketing?”

The short answer: it depends.

The long answer: most businesses base their ad budget as a percentage of gross sales—not last year’s sales, but the sales goals you’ve set for the upcoming year. (The philosophy is that you base it on the sales you want, not the sales you’ve gotten.)

Defining the percentage is the tricky part. Most use average industry standards, which you can obtain from associations or trade magazines devoted to your industry. A few examples:

- Many business-to-business advertisers spend 2-3% of revenue on advertising.
- Most service businesses (such as consultants) spend 5-6%.
- Retailers spend far more, as much as 10%-12%.
- Image-driven industries generally aim higher: fashion brands spend around 25%, while perfumes and alcoholic beverages reach up to 35-40%.

Your ad budget may be affected by your profit margins, location and market size. It also depends on whether you’re launching a new company or product, with one-time branding elements like logos, business cards and websites generally grouped with “start-up costs” rather than “marketing”.

Remember, the goal of advertising and marketing is to help your numbers and stature grow—so if you plan strategically and execute boldly, your advertising becomes an investment, not an expense.

Shoot us an email or call us whenever you’re ready to work out a budget. We can help get you started by finding your industry averages and defining your other factors.



Olive’s in season this spring

Anyone we’ve talked to in the past year has likely heard plenty of excited banter about Olive, our organic clothing client in Wisconsin (just north of Milwaukee). This luxe boutique—which we sometimes refer to as “the Whole Foods of apparel”—is opening its doors at the end of April, with a launch event scheduled for mid-May.

The Olive founders excel at letting professionals do what they do best. They got us involved from the start: first came the brand strategy (“green is a luxury”), name and logo, followed by business cards, hang tags, an ad campaign and the website. We’ve even helped them select a store location, participated in the interior design and rolled out a complete PR campaign to maximize buzz.

And here’s the catch: everything had to be eco-friendly, right down to printing on recycled paper with soy-based inks. You’ve got to hand it to them for practicing what they preach—these guys are the real deal.

Learn more at **OliveOrganic.org**, and stop by if you’re ever in the Milwaukee area!



Search Engine Optimization

Millions of consumers use search engines to find what they’re looking for—Google alone registers over 80 million searches a month (and growing). So how do we get more of them to end up at your website?

The art of directing web traffic through Google is known as Search Engine Optimization (or SEO), which can be extremely helpful but is often misunderstood. Though most of our clients don’t get much business from random searches, there are ways to get your site higher on the list when someone is looking for your type of work.

One tactic involves programming “meta tags” into your code, which are the descriptors that search engines pick up on when scouring the web. When these keywords accurately define your company, they help bring traffic to your site. When they’re irrelevant or excessively repetitive, they don’t help at all, and can even get your site classified as spam. The key to developing helpful meta tags is to get in the mindset of a searcher looking for your type of business and entering words that you believe they may type in.

In the world of SEO, meta tags are only the tip of the iceberg. Don’t hesitate to **email us** to get an idea of what constitutes smart meta tags and what more advanced techniques we use.

