



PROVE IT! PODCAST

HOSTED BY DEBBIE ALBERT

Episode 125: Unusual Advertising & Marketing Ideas

Guest: Greg Star, Carvertise

This is Prove It. A podcast for impatient business owners overwhelmed marketers, and PR practitioners with no time for podcasts. In just 10 minutes they answer 3 questions and offer proof of what's working in marketing communications today. Here's Debbie Albert, President of Albert Communications.

Debbie: This episode of “Prove it!” is about unusual marketing and advertising. and I mean unusual! Our guest is Greg Star of Carvertise, get it?

He puts ads on cars in any market you choose, and if you haven't seen one of these cars yet, you must check out their site, at Carvertise. Com. You can find the link on our website. I saw one of Greg's cars at a local college campus, then I heard him speak, and I instantly invited him to be a guest on “Prove it!” So Greg welcome to “Prove it!”

Greg: Hey, Debbie! Glad to be here.

Debbie: All right, we have ten minutes, I ask three questions - and interrupt myself constantly - and then we're going to ask you for a proof point. So are you ready to get started?

Greg: Let's do it.

Debbie: Okay, so my first question is really two in one, so **why don't you tell us, why you got into this business and why you felt that this alternative type of advertising would work.**

Greg: Well, we started a company in college and it was kind of twofold right? Like on one hand, we're living in a time now, where if you own your own car, you essentially own your own company, right? With Uber and Lyft and all these kinds of side gig economy that were kind of rising up six or seven years ago, and the other side of it was just like cars always sit out, you know, like there was the Red Bull car or you know U-Haul is a great example.



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U-Haul does no advertising, but they're a brand name that everyone knows and it's just because they've had trucks driving around, you know, so our thought was like, you know, hey, like cars make an impact.

I mean in college I just knew that there was a lot of billboards out there and that I couldn't really remember who was on these billboards, but I knew there was just a lot of money being spent on them. So, I was like, well why not advertise on cars there and then after doing research, you find that cars have a super high recall rate, where people seen out on their car, they remember the message cars can go in areas, where other inventory for advertising isn't available.

So in suburban areas, they're called white spaces, like Cape Cod or the Jersey Shore, there's not a lot of advertising there, but cars can go there and then the idea like, you know, you're wrapping a car of a person and so like when people get involved in this.

There's this randomness and there's these conversations that start, where if your neighbor all of a sudden drives home with an ad on their car, you're going to be like what's going on? Why are you doing this? Or you know if you're getting into an Uber and you know you're calling Uber, hey, where's your car, and they're like, "I'm wrapped in the Independence Blue Cross ad," you're like what? And then you're going there and you're talking, so it's the kind of impression element, but there's also that like buzz element, that conversation element and all that just got it super excited and we were like let's just go for it.

Debbie: Well, because I want to tell our listeners that it's not just like a sign on the side of your car, these cars are completely wrapped; did you say you paint... what's the material you used?

Greg: It's a decal sticker. So, imagine like it's a giant sticker that gets heated on the either the entire car or about sixty percent of the car.

Debbie: Okay. It's unbelievable, you have to check it out to see it, so **Greg** tell our listeners about the growth, because I think when you give growth numbers, all of a sudden, the light bulb will go off.



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Greg: Yeah. So we started handing out flyers to everyday people who wanted to become drivers, and after our first three months, we had about a hundred people sign up, now we have around 450,000 people signed up across the country, we're getting about a hundred people a day signing up on our website, who want to put an ad on their car and then from the advertiser side, you know, we started with local regional clients.

The United Ways of the world, the local shop right, the local self-storage company and now we work with companies, like 7-11, Empire Today, eSports, Buffalo Wild Wings, running campaigns in 40 different markets right now, we just launched [inaudible 04:22] we have about a thousand cars wrapped on the road, so yeah, a lot of growth, we tripled from 2017 and 2018, we're on pace to double from 2018 to 2019.

Debbie: Okay. So, you tripled in one-year growth and are on pace to double?

Greg: Yeah.

Debbie: This is incredible growth, so let me ask you for my question number three, **what kind of companies are you most successful with?**

Greg: So our core base of clients is actually a higher education, we have the most quantity number of clients, so you know putting ads on Uber and Lyft cars makes a lot of sense for MBA programs, right?

Think about it. They're driving all over the city, the people getting in the Uber and Lyft cars are usually the type of demographic that are more likely to sign up for MBA program. So colleges have been huge, community colleges have been huge, where we'll get students and alumni of the school and pay them to wrap their cars for the school they attend; community colleges need to advertise in a geographically targeted area.

We do a lot of work in healthcare to your point about proving it, we did a campaign with Independence Blue Cross. They needed to sign people up for open enrollment and we put a text message on the car that said "Text this number to sign up for open enrollment," and we got 85 people to sign up, and out of those 85, 50 closed, which is a super high conversion rate for what they're looking for, so that was a big success and



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you know, we've done this campaign two years in a row with them about to go on our third.

So healthcare, higher ed, a lot of work with state agencies, a lot of work with, you know, supermarkets and then there's the national, there's the home remodeling industry, Empire Today, Window Nation. So, there's just, you know, I'm talking a lot right now, but you know, that's like our core base of businesses is these industries, but then again like 7-11, like that opens up convenience stores all over.

Debbie: Right. Well, are there any businesses or organizations that you're surprised that you've been successful with?

Greg: No. I'm honestly, I think this works for everybody. Maybe I'm biased, but I've always thought this can make so much sense for so many brands, one thing I've always wanted and I'm surprised this hasn't really been done yet, is sports teams. I've always thought it would be so cool, if you're a fan of the Sixers to get paid to wrap your car with the Sixers and then hand out tickets and coupons to people who want to go to games; like that's been my dream for a long time.

Debbie: Have you broken into that market yet?

Greg: No. The thing with like sports teams is they do a lot of trade, right? And for whatever reason, like we just haven't been able to get in the door well or have someone who really wants to kind of go with this, but I'm just envisioning the entire city of Philadelphia would be willing to put it out on their car for the Eagles or the Sixers and having a good time with it and getting their friends to come, and that's why I am surprised this hasn't taken off in yet.

Debbie: Okay. So, how do you see this kind of advertising evolving?

Greg: There's a saying in baseball that "small ball wins," and you have to walk before you run, right? And where a lot of companies, when they're starting to advertise, they make the mistake as they try to just start off by sprinting and by going straight to McDonald's or Geico and saying, "I have this great idea," like Geico would love this, but it doesn't work like that.



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So our strategy is keep serving our clients on a local and regional level and build a base of good relationships with our customers, show work that we've done in Philly the last four years, and now our focus is on doing this in other markets, so finding someone in DC to kind of build up with the local and regional companies there, to find someone in Detroit, to find someone in Tampa and once you do that, you keep hitting singles, you know, we think the home runs will come, right?

Debbie: Yeah.

Greg: So as long as you keep executing locally, keep doing well by your customers, we think that the more 7-11s will come into the picture, but our focus is very much regional and local and I love working small businesses, like I just like they're innovative, they really care and trying things and...

Debbie: Right, and it sounds like they can test the ROI, I mean they're definitely seeing it?

Greg: Yeah.

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Debbie: So, let's get to the "Prove it" point! **You've already given us a great example of Blue Cross, which had an amazing success rate with text messages on the cars. Are there any other clients or customers, who have seen great success with car advertise?**

Greg: Yeah. Well, this is, you know, funny stories, like our very first campaign, so funny, it was with Shop Rite, and we didn't really know anything about marketing. We were just getting clients; it takes us like a year and we were so happy and we were like, "Okay, now what do we put on the car?" And we knew we had to prove this kind of thing would make an impact. So we put a picture game on fifteen cars that said, "If you take a picture of this car and post it to Instagram or Twitter or Facebook, you could win a free iPad." We didn't know if it was going to work and we had to figure out how to design that on a car to make it stand out. And what if people take pictures when they're driving?



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We were like, “I don't know what's going to happen.” So we just did it and just kind of saw it happen and the response was of amazing, we had over 400 people post pictures of random cars on their own personal social media accounts with a hashtag and then we tracked how many people were seeing the cars on social media, and it was just a lot of fun, like some people would see the cars multiple times and post it twice and I had no idea like this type of reaction would happen for something so... like there was an iPad. I was like, “Is the gift good enough?”

Debbie: Then did Shop Rite see ROI on their investment?

Greg: Well, I think so; they've been working with us for four years now so...

Debbie: That's a good sign.

Greg: Yeah. I mean it's like how do you directly track if you're a Shop Rite that has literally like tens of thousands of customers coming in a day, like there's an incremental increase, can you directly attribute that to people seeing their cars and having fun and engaging with the brand? I would make the case that yes, but you know, you're not really asking people in Shop Rite when they shop there, how did you hear about us?

Debbie: When you talked about higher ed, and I know that you advertise for some smaller local colleges here in the Philadelphia area, have they seen an increase or of people even being interested in the school based on seeing a car that has the ad on it?

Greg: Yeah. Totally. We have case studies, you know, people directly hey, I sign up, I got an MBA program because you know, I was driving one day and I saw the car out there, I thought this my time and then I signed up for the MBA program. We advertised for a doctorate program, which is very targeted, right?

Debbie: Yeah.

Greg: You can only sign up for a doctorate program if you have an MBA, so their pool they have to choose from is very close and they've reported getting new students based on people seeing the cars and taking action, talk to the driver, so yeah, we have enrollment numbers boosting with Wilmington University, one of our clients, you know, Dell Tech, which is you know community colleges are traditionally, you know,



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stabling or declining Dell Tech has been gradually increasing, we've been a big part of that for them as well, so yeah, we have a lot of different case studies on kind of how enrollments been impacted and also just changing the brand perception, right? Like, you know, this is different and if you do the right way, it's cool. All right, you need cool creative to kind of back it.

Debbie: Well, I think you proved it, if you're able to change brand perception, especially, about something like a community college as you said, where their numbers are falling, but you've seen people react to the car because it is so unusual.

I mean the first time I saw it, I just stopped and laughed because I had never seen anything like it, so you know, unfortunately, we're out of time, but I think this is fantastic, I want people to go to your site to see it.

I want to also thank our listeners and remind them to stay tuned for other episodes, which will help them gain clarity in what's happening in marketing communications today. Thanks for listening.

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