

Create a list of businesses

Brainstorm and list all of the businesses that should be contacted about buying ads. If you sold ads last year, update the list by adding new businesses and deleting ones no longer in business. Divide this list among the staff – working in pairs is best.

Practice, then just do it

Using the scripts provided on pages 5-7, practice making the phone calls. Then make the calls and set up appointments. See page 4 for tips on setting appointments. Scripts for meeting with businesses are on pages 8-15.

Learn about your potential customers

Once you have set up an appointment, prepare for the sales pitch. Making a good sales pitch is all about *preparation*. Much like other planning done for your yearbook, the ad sales pitch must be carefully thought out and executed. Making a sale can be a tough thing to do, but the more you prepare, the more comfortable you will be during the meeting and the more likely you will close the deal. Here are five simple ideas for preparing for an ad sales meeting:

1. **Visit in person and online.** Go to the business as if you were a customer and find out what they sell that can be marketed to your readers. This is also a good way to know where the business is located, so that come meeting time, you are not lost or late. Visiting the business' website can also be a good way to learn about it.
2. **Research current ads.** Check to see if they are advertising in professional publications such as newspapers, magazines and phone books. If you find their ads, this will show the business values print ads and will also show the business that you did your research.
3. **Brainstorm and list why they should buy.** Make a list of simple reasons the advertiser should buy an ad from you. These can include value to the business for reaching a target audience of students, parents or faculty, or showing parents that the business supports the school. Be creative when brainstorming. Every business is different, so determine why buying an ad will benefit that specific business. It is also important to understand how to respond to objections, which will be discussed later.
4. **Determine useful statistics from your market analysis.** In the early stages of your ad sales campaign, your staff should have conducted a market analysis of your student body. Staffs often skip this step, but it can be an extremely valuable tool to use in the sales pitch. The more information you have on the spending habits of the students, the more likely a business is going to want to buy an ad. After conducting the analysis, determine which information will help your sales pitch the most and print them.
5. **Prepare your packet.** Organize your media packet and sales tools so you are prepared to answer buyer questions and get contracts signed. These tools should include:
 - Rate sheets
 - Sample ads
 - Copy of last year's book
 - Market analysis
 - Two pens
 - A calculator
 - Contracts