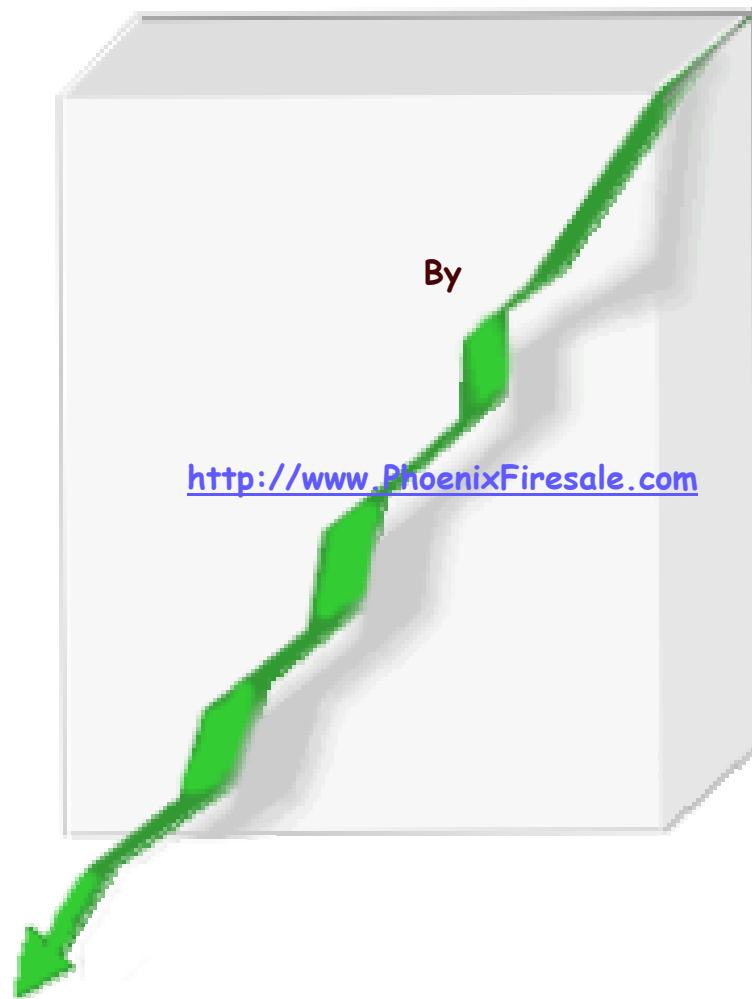


THE MARKETING GUIDE TO SUCCESS
(HOW TO MARKET YOUR WEBSITE/PRODUCT LIKE THE PROS!)



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What is Marketing ?

A ccording to Dictionary.com "Marketing" means

1. The act or process of buying and selling in a market.
2. The commercial functions involved in transferring goods from producer to consumer.

Elaborating a little and considering practically

Marketing is defined as -

means to make a communication about a product or service

↳ a purpose of which is to

↳ **encourage** recipients of the communication

↳ **to purchase or use** the product or service.

The above seems to be 'near perfect' definition of Marketing which I could find on the net.

Do not confuse marketing to selling as

"Selling is the direct interaction between the seller and the buyer, whilst marketing is the interaction between the company and the markets - including, of course, the selling action. "

So the end of Marketing is Sale in a rough sense.

Nowadays marketing also include After Sales and Customer Relation.



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You have a product or a service and need buyers. Do not Rush...Go Step by Step like the pros have done.

Rome was not built in a day nor was Taj Mahal, and even this book was not written in a day.



There are 3 most important firsts you should start with...

Plan, Plan and Plan..... Plan before you Plunge....

Planning as you know is very necessary.

When you are going on a holiday do you not plan?

You need to know the answers to the following before you even start marketing :

- Who will be your customers?
- What are their characteristics, likes and dislikes, and purchasing habits?
- Do they presently purchase the kind of product or service you offer?
- How often, where and how?
- Are they brand-loyal?
- What product or service features will induce them to switch?
- How much will they pay?
- Which promotional programs will have the greatest appeal?
- Which product names, slogans and packaging do they prefer?
- Where do they learn about products and services like yours?

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The following are the important P's which you should include in your **Market Plan**.

PRODUCT - find out how many people will want to buy your product or service.

PRICE - getting it right is essential to your business success.

PPLACE - how you are going to get your product or service to your customers.

PPROMOTION - advertising, PR and other promotional activities can drive your business forward.

PPEOPLE - good people can be great for your business, and there is lots of support from Scottish Enterprise and others to help you develop your staff's potential.

PPROCESS - the way you do things will influence the way people look at your business.

PPHYSICAL EVIDENCE - the way you appear, from your offices to your vans, can send signals to existing and potential customers.

No let us go into some detail of each...



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PRODUCT

You may find your product to be a runaway hit but that is your personal opinion you need to find out what do people in general think about it. Moreover it will also give an idea about in what way you could present the product, price etc...

Find out how many people will want to buy your product or service. Conduct market research to find out whether there are enough potential customers out there for your goods or services. This is crucial for someone launching a business - or for a business launching a new product or service.

Market research can help you decide how you're going to find them, how to persuade them to buy from you and how to make them loyal.

Many large companies employ market researchers, but smaller firms can conduct the research themselves. Lots of free information is available from local libraries.

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Other sources can include your local chamber of commerce and trade associations.

Carry out general research; you'll need to take a more detailed look at your product, customers and marketplace.

Conducting detailed market research yourself means you'll get a real feel for what your would-be customers think and it avoids the mistake of basing your business solely on your "gut feeling" and some general statistics.

If you can afford it, you could bring in an expert. Financial assistance to help with the costs of fees may be available.

Aim to find a representative sample of potential customers to help you with your research.

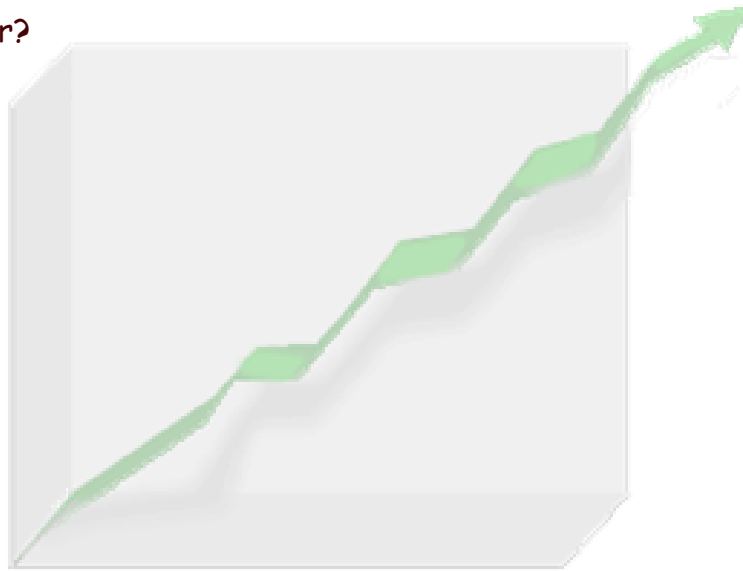
Who you approach, how many people you talk to and where you find them will all depend on the nature of your product or service.

However, including real material on the market for your business will make your marketing strategy much more realistic. It will also give comfort to potential funders looking for evidence that your business has a future.

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Ask your sample group of potential customers the following kinds of questions:

- What are they looking for in a product or service like yours?
- Do they like the product or service you're going to offer?
- What are they prepared to pay?
- What improvements would they suggest to what you have to offer?



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PRICE

Price may not be just cost price + markup but it actually stands for the perceived value of the product or service.

Software is the best example of this. Making of the software might have taken some months and then you put it on CD. The pricing then is based on the usefulness of the software not the cost of making it.

Successful marketing also relies on getting your price right, and it's a delicate balancing act.

Have a look at your competitors' prices and talk to potential customers, but remember, pricing isn't all about what customers want to pay.

Your prices need to generate sales and a decent profit.

Consider introducing special offers, such as bulk discounts or reductions for prompt payers, free trials and money back guarantees.

Competitors and market leaders are good places to find ideas.

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PLACE

The next important consideration in putting together a successful marketing strategy is how you are going to get your product or service to your customers.

The most direct methods are via retail outlets, through one-to-one meetings between sales staff and customers, or by mail order, direct mail and the internet.

You can also sell wholesale to other retailers, or via exhibitions and fairs. Which options you pick will depend on the nature and price of your product, and the number and profile of your customers.

Direct methods tend to produce greater profits, as they don't have to be shared with intermediaries in the distribution chain but products can establish credibility more quickly by retailing through well-known outlets.

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The key is to strike an appropriate balance between the distribution method most suited to your product or service, the resources you have available and what your competitors do. How you get your product or service to your customer can be your chance to innovate.

Companies that make it big often do so by introducing a new method of selling or delivering a product or service so it will pay to consider this aspect of your marketing strategy carefully.



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PROMOTION

The fourth 'P' is promotion and it's all about making potential customers aware of your product in the most effective and cost-efficient manner possible.

Without a big budget, you'll need to work harder and be smarter than your bigger rivals in order to make an impact.

Apply some simple ground rules:

- Indirect approaches, such as PR, can be more effective than 'above-the-line' activities like advertising. Coverage in the kinds of publications your customers read is worth its weight in gold, so don't be shy about approaching newspapers and magazines. Most journalists are keen to hear good stories, particularly if you make it easy for them by supplying photographs with a press release.
- For many new businesses, local coverage may not only be easier, it may also be more effective at generating sales.

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- Knowing what works is critical. Look at how others in your field do it to see what kinds of promotions have been successful.
- Don't underestimate the effectiveness of small-scale advertising in local papers, bulletin boards, and directories such as the Yellow Pages. It helps to come up with a catchy slogan that customers can recall easily, and there's plenty of value in getting involved in community activities. Also consider direct mail, telesales and the internet to win new customers.

Remember: you don't need to have a big budget to promote yourself. A lack of resources can force you to be more creative in getting out messages that catch the customer's eye and generate a response.

Good planning and a clear vision of what you're trying to achieve should help you get the right 'promotional mix' of advertising, direct marketing and public relations. You can learn a lot from looking at how leading players handled promotion in their early days, but don't just copy other people. Being different may be the secret of your success.

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PEOPLE

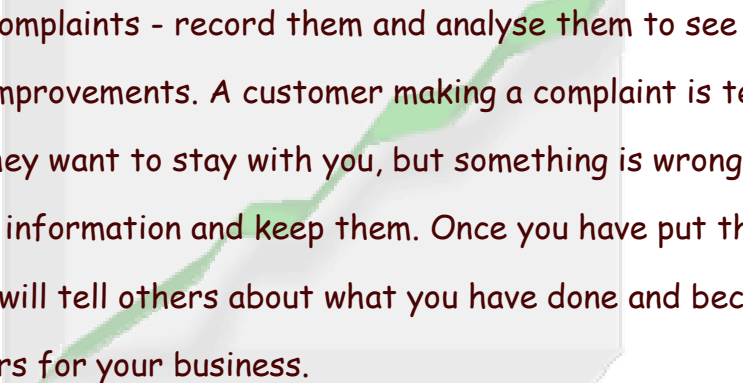
People are any business's biggest asset. Your staff's attitude to customers and the service they provide has a major impact on the way your business is perceived. Many businesses spend millions on promotional activities, such as public relations and advertising, but fail to get customer service right.

Remember: it costs between three and ten times as much to replace customers who have gone to a competitor than to keep them.

The best way to retain customers is to give them what they want and need in a way that is better than your competitors. It is easy to make the mistake of lowering your prices to win customers. Most customers value personal and excellent service and are willing to pay for it.

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Measuring customer satisfaction levels and conducting research on an ongoing basis will help you to keep in touch with what your customers want from you and how those needs are changing. Doing this can be as simple as sending out regular questionnaires to customers, to employing polling organisations and buying sophisticated customer relationship management (CRM) software systems.



Welcome complaints - record them and analyse them to see how you can make improvements. A customer making a complaint is telling you that they want to stay with you, but something is wrong. You can act on this information and keep them. Once you have put things right they will tell others about what you have done and become ambassadors for your business.

But don't rely on just being reactive. Be proactive by measuring customer satisfaction and try to give yourself some early warning if things start to go wrong.

You can also invest in training, development and mentoring programmes to get good advice on how to give the very best customer service. Find out more about [improving performance](#).

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PROCESS

The way you deliver your products and services can have an impact on the way you are perceived. Smart businesses set out processes and set themselves targets to ensure a high quality of service to customers.

Your processes should do more than make life easier for you - they must be set up to meet the needs of your customers.

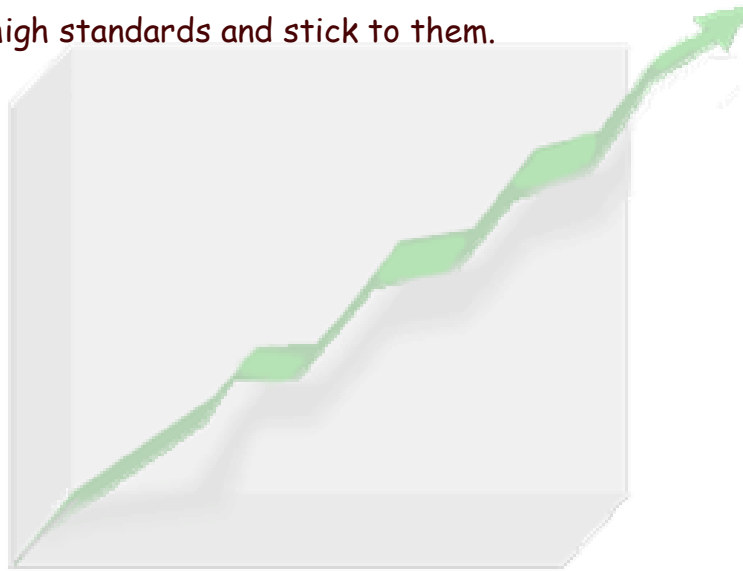
Try putting yourself in the shoes of your customers or prospective customers.

- How would they like you to deal with them?
- For instance, what kind of after-sales service have you set up?
- If someone places an order, do you keep your customer informed of expected delivery times?
- Do you have procedures in place to deal with any delays?
- If you, or one of your staff, promises to call a customer, do they always do it?

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- Do you have set timescales for the time taken to respond to inquiries?
- And, when things go wrong, are you able to deal with complaints and act on them?

Often computer software and outsourcing some of your activities can help you keep on top of things - but its important to set high standards and stick to them.



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PHYSICAL EVIDENCE

The look of a reception area, leaflet, or letterhead can often be the first point of contact a prospective customer has with your business. It can also help shape their overall impression of your organisation. That's why many businesses call in designers to help them.

Some designers cover a range of disciplines, whilst others specialise. But using them effectively can have a big impact on the way your business is perceived - and its future profits.

In marketing terms, there are three types of design that can have an impact on your business:

- **Graphic design:** this covers everything from branding and logos to the type of fonts your firm will use. Graphic designers can also help you develop packaging, stationery, leaflets, promotional brochures, websites, corporate videos

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and CD and DVD-roms.

- **Product design:** teapots to trains to telephones have all been designed with the help of designers. If you are producing a product or new invention, you will probably work with a product designer.

- **Interior design:** developing the right kind of store or office can set you apart from competitors and even help your staff work more effectively.



10 MORE TIPS BEFORE YOU START

Tip 1: Look at what you are doing now

Start by looking at the marketing activities you use and the marketing skills you have. You are probably doing a lot of the right things already. However, you should:



- research what your market wants; where, when and why customers buy; what benefits they are seeking from your product or service; and what competitors are providing;
- decide on your objectives, identify and choose your target customer groups and position your business to serve your chosen market profitably;
- put the plan to work through selling and promoting your products and services to customers, through pricing and using appropriate distributors and agents effectively; and, finally,
- monitor the effectiveness of your marketing activities in terms of customer satisfaction and the impact on your bottom line.

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Tip 2: Focus on the customer

Make the customer the focal point of everything the organisation does. Why? Because good, happy customers equal higher profits. If your team is too heavily sales or product oriented, consider a change of approach.



Tip 3: Set up an effective marketing team

In a customer-focused organization, marketing is something that everybody does - not just marketers. Everyone has a role to play, including:

- your managers - who plan and look to the future, allocate budgets for marketing activities and co-ordinate activities;
- your salesforce - who are the eyes and ears of the business and, through their frequent contact with your customers, can keep the business in tune with what the market is looking for;
- your marketing and communications staff - who develop and deliver marketing communications and support sales programmes as well as coming up with innovative new product/service ideas;
- your external marketing agencies and specialists - who are available to provide the occasional specialist support you need

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such as research, brochure design and printing, telemarketing or website development.

Good communication between all these groups is essential to good marketing. But two things, in particular, ensure success. Your business should be committed to its customers and ensures everyone pulls together to deliver high quality products and services on time, every time.

Tip 4: Divide your customers up into groups

Every customer is different so why treat them all the same? To start treating customers as individuals, look at how and when they buy. This will help to start putting them into groups and understanding the needs of each group. For example:

- High volume/high value buyers - place frequent large orders
- High volume/low value buyers - place frequent small orders
- Low volume/high value buyers - place occasional large orders
- Low volume/low value buyers - place occasional small orders

Groups of customers who have similar needs or who behave in a similar way are known in marketing as 'segments'. You will probably need to use different marketing techniques and approaches to reach different types of customer.



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Tip 5: Identify customer benefits

Now you can identify why each customer segment buys your products and services and what 'benefits' they are seeking. This in turn will help you to target existing and new customers more effectively with specific products and services. As a result you can make better profits. For example, low volume/high value buyers may be more profitable for you than high volume/high value buyers who may continually squeeze you on price.



Tip 6: Decide how to deliver these benefits

You deliver benefits through what marketing people call the "marketing mix". These are essentially the tools of the marketing trade. Your goal here is to define your "unique selling proposition" (USP) - something that truly sets you apart from your competitors.

The basic marketing mix consists of:

- Product - the goods and services you are offering, including packaging and service content, such as warranty, after sales.
- Price - what the customer pays. Remember that there are different types of prices such as list prices, discounted prices, and many different ways to arrive at prices. Price may

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be used to communicate the position and values of the product/service.

- Place - how and where the customer obtains the product/service. For example, a catalogue company may allow customers to buy through the catalogue itself, on the company's web page or through off-the-page advertising.
- Promotion - the means and mix of activities used to promote the product or service, for example, advertising, direct marketing, PR, exhibitions and trade shows.

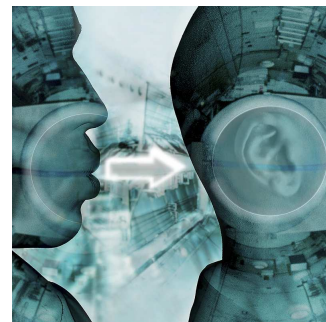
But you should also consider the three extras:

- People - the people you employ and how they deal with your customers;
- Process - the way your business operates; and
- Physical evidence - the look of your premises, vehicles and the appearance of your staff. All can have an impact on how you are perceived.

Tip 7: Decide what and how to communicate

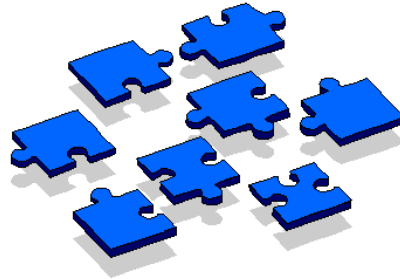
When you know who your audiences are and what they want, work out a message or

messages to each customer segment. Since customers in each segment may want different benefits, the message to each segment may have to be adapted. The messages need to underline and explain



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the specific and relevant benefits that you can provide them. You can then decide the best way of communicating, whether it is through printed media, such as brochures, or electronic media, such as websites and email.



Tip 8: Make a marketing plan

Once you have made these key decisions, you have effectively developed a marketing strategy. Why not write it down? The plan may cover between 6 months to 5 years. Then you will have a document that explains what you are doing to anyone who needs to know. This includes your bank manager, external marketing agencies you use and new members to the team. It is a good idea at this early stage to involve members of the team who are going to be responsible for delivering the plan.

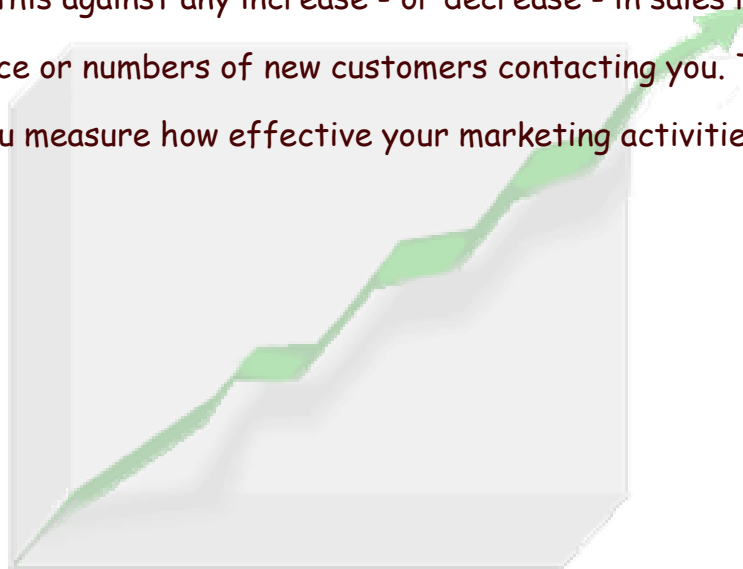
Tip 9: Get on with it!

The marketing plan specifies what the marketing activities are, who is responsible for carrying them out and when. Now comes the time to get on and do it. Your role as a manager is to motivate your team and make sure you get the results you have planned for.

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Tip 10: Measure and control

Your marketing plan gives you something to rate your performance on as you develop your business. For instance, if you spend money on advertising or PR, you can evaluate this against any increase - or decrease - in sales revenue, stock price or numbers of new customers contacting you. This will help you measure how effective your marketing activities are.



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ADVERTISING CHECKLIST

When you're presented with proposals or finished ideas for an advertisement or campaign, always check the suggested ads will "work for you". Remember: all advertising is not created equally. Some advertising can be highly successful, other ads will make no impact and some can even damage your business - or reduce your market share.



Here's things you should ask yourself:

- Does the advertising speak directly and clearly to your target audience?
- Does it offer a main idea?
- Will it stand out on the page or on screen? (If it's a newspaper ad cut it out and place it in position. How does it stand out?)
- Is it distinct from your competitors? Many people wrongly see similarity as a benefit. Do everything in your power to make your ads stand out and be different; at the same time retaining your brand identity.
- Is the typography - the fonts used - well-balanced? Is the layout clean and logical? Is it easy to read? Does the headline draw you into the copy? Does the copy keep you reading on?

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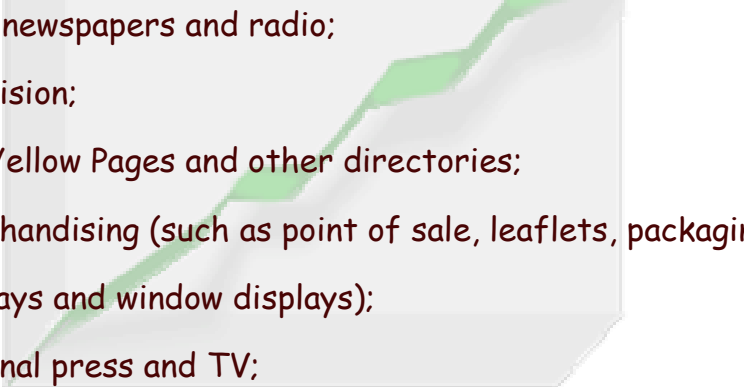
- Will the advertisement reproduce well, or translate well onto the screen? Are the production methods being recommended appropriate? Especially on television and radio, professional production is vital if your advertisement is to have credibility. A cheaply produced advertisement may reflect badly on your corporate image. How will your TV ad, for instance, stand up when viewed after a high profile consumer brand ad?
- If using TV or radio, be sure that your idea is incredibly strong and keep it simple. A good idea is a good idea, no matter how much it costs to produce - flashy production techniques cannot mask a poor idea. Don't be tempted to shoot live-action footage on a low budget and always get a good indication of the quality you might expect when completed.
- White space is good. Don't be tempted to create ads that uses every square inch of space for printed ad. One small word in the middle of a large white space will have far greater impact than a over-full, retail style advertisement with every square inch covered.
- Is the "call to action" - the bit encouraging a customer to do something - easy to read? Are the contact numbers correct, are any forms easy to complete and return? Is the ad making it easy for the customer to respond? Freephone numbers and freepost addresses get better response levels.

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"Word of mouth" referrals from satisfied customers is often the best form of advertising - and the least costly.

However, most businesses have to pay for more formal and consistent advertising. You'll also need to think about the best type of advertising to reach your particular customers - and how much you're able to spend on a campaign.

For instance you could promote your business through:

- 
- local newspapers and radio;
 - television;
 - the Yellow Pages and other directories;
 - merchandising (such as point of sale, leaflets, packaging, shelf displays and window displays);
 - national press and TV;
 - posters and leaflets;
 - trade journals;
 - websites;
 - exhibitions and trade shows.

Many small businesses advertise using local press and radio. These media outlets usually have staff who can create ads for you. Ask about special features and "free" editorial for companies placing advertisements. You might also be able to get a place in a special section or feature at a preferential rate.

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You can also call in a advertising agency or design agency specialising in advertising to help you create a suitable advertisement. Some agencies have in-house media buying departments. These can help you place ads in the right media (newspapers, TV, radio, etc.) at reasonable rates. They can also offer advice on the best outlets to reach your preferred customer groups. Alternatively, you can go to an independent media buying agency - or book space by talking to media outlets directly.

For anything bigger than a small, local campaign, it's usually advisable to take professional advice.

Remember, that as well as advertising, there are ways to promote your business, including direct mail and telephone selling and public relations.



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Public Relation
(Effective Promotion at 0 Cost)

Public Relations, or PR, is about managing reputations - shaping perceptions about your business.



The term is often associated with media relations - getting stories in newspapers and magazines, as well as on TV, radio and the internet.

But PR also covers:

- sponsorship activities,
- media/trade briefings;
- creating promotional publications;
- websites and online PR; as well as
- conferences and events.

Some businesses do DIY PR - they handle publicity issues in-house, or employ a full-time communications person. But others outsource the activity to consultancies and individual PR consultants. You can even do this yourself if you are brave enough.

But if you feel your reputation would be better protected by hiring an expert go ahead...

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Do some planning

Whichever route you take, take time to plan your PR carefully. Set out your goals and how you want to achieve them.

Look at all the options open to you. You could publish a leaflet, get coverage in a trade magazine, or organise an event to woo customers. Whatever you do, you'll need to grab customers' attention. For this reason, many businesses employ specialists to help them put together a PR campaign.

Use research

Look at research - even informal feedback from customers - to establish the extent of the gap between how your organisation is seen and how it wants to be perceived. For instance, a firm seen as "high-brow" and "stuffy" might want to reposition themselves as fun and interesting. It could opt to sponsor fun events or launch a wacky website to change perceptions.

It's also important that PR is seen as just one part of the marketing mix. It's no use changing public perceptions in the press and elsewhere, then customers getting a very different impression when they contact the company and speaking to staff.

Evaluate your results

Finally, monitor the effectiveness of your efforts.. Do people think differently about your organisation? For instance, have sales increased? Has your position in the market changed for the better?

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One simple tracking method is to look at media coverage generated by your PR activities. What kind of messages have been picked up by the media? Are they positive or negative? And how much space have you generated? How much would it have cost to buy the same space as advertising?

Finally, remember that any PR activity should complement other marketing, such as advertising and direct mail. The messages you send should also be consistent with these other channels.



MARKETING TIPS

SERVICE TO CUSTOMER IS SERVICE TO YOURSELF

Successful companies provide proactive customer service. Proactive customer service leads to increased business and loyalty. Here are a few tips to keep in mind.



Be a double checker

Customers appreciate it when a sales representative takes a minute to check on an item they've asked for. It lets them know they're being listened to and cared for.

Do something extra

Average service is about meeting the customer's expectations. Great customer service is exceeding it. Give your customers more than they expect, and they'll return to do business with you.

Take the initiative

Offer several solutions to the customer's predicament. If one doesn't work, make sure you have multiple avenues to resolve their problems. This way, the customer knows you are trying your best to help them, and in the future will not hesitate to buy from you, since they'll know whatever problem they have, you'll be able to fix it.

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Anticipate Everything

Please your customers by knowing what they'll appreciate before they know it. Win over new customers by accurately anticipating your competitor's service capabilities and strategies, and then beating them to the punch. There's not a market leader in any business that can keep its position by being complacent. Look ahead, to see what your customers will want in the future. Then plan a strategy to deliver it to them before anyone else in the market place.

Why People Buy

When you sell a product it's not only important to know who bought it, but also why they bought. What motivated them to buy your product, what motivated them to buy your product over your competitor's product, and what you can do to motivate them to into a repeat purchase in the future. Almost every significant purchase made involves either saving money or time. If you can include one, or better yet, both of these powerful motivators in your offer, you're success rate will likely increase. When people feel like they are saving money they are more inclined to make a purchase immediately rather than put it off and eventually forget about it. This is especially effective with limited time offers that initiate action within a certain time frame. Demonstrate that your product or service can save them time, make them more efficient, and allow

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them to get more business done during the day and you have a winner. Integrate these two buying motivators in the same offer and watch your direct marketing campaign soar.

Limited Time For Motivation

A limited time offer can often move the skeptic and procrastinator from prospect to customer. Because putting a drop dead date on an offer frequently will move that hesitant person to action. If there is only a short time to take advantage of a special opportunity - often you will enjoy more response. People will do something vs. doing nothing. Rather than wait until they feel good, are more comfortable ... whatever "excuse" they were thinking ... they move. In essence, a limited time offer will entice your prospect into action for fear of losing this unique opportunity. You have to give them a reason to buy your product, and a time constraint could just be the little extra motivator you might need to get your prospects over that decision-making hump .

Following Up On Customers

What is the BIGGEST mistake made in marketing? This mistake is made by 99% of the companies marketing products or services.

What is the BIGGEST mistake made in marketing? This mistake is made by 99% of the companies marketing products or services...

The biggest mistake in marketing - and not just direct marketing,

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but any marketing - is made by people who spend a lot of time, energy, and money on an ad or an inquiry-generation program. When they receive the highly qualified lead it brings in, they send a brochure and a letter. At best, they call about a week later. When a sale is not immediate, they hang up, and they never call back or send another letter. They assume their campaign failed. What a mistake. A single letter and brochure is not a campaign. A campaign is not a single effort of anything - why do you think they call it a campaign? A campaign is a sustained effort over time.... The biggest mistake made in marketing is not contacting a well-qualified buyer, who has expressed an interest in your product or service after the first mailing, a second time with harder-hitting additional marketing material or letters.

The Cluster Principle

People with similar demographic and psychographic profiles have a tendency to cluster together in the same geographic areas.

Companies do the same.

People with similar demographic and psychographic profiles have a tendency to cluster together in the same geographic areas.

Companies do the same. Most brokerage houses are in the same part of town. Many cities have a restaurant row, as well as an auto row, and the financial community will most likely be within the same 5-block radius. Using SIC Codes, carefully combed to select the

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demographics, geographics, and even psychographics will help you identify these cluster groups of businesses you need to target. More importantly it will help you differentiate between the "mom and pop" outfits and the Fortune 500 businesses in the area. This will help you select the right audience to target.

Yellow Pages Strategy

Display ads in the Yellow Pages are different from those in most other publications since they are in customers' hands for a full year. For that reason, it's often prudent to start with relatively small display ad. If the ad proves cost effective, consider enlarging it next year. If it isn't, you can fine-tune the ad at a relatively modest cost. All successful display ads-and especially those in the phone book- should state clearly why the reader should do business with your company. List the main benefits of choosing your company, and always give them several ways to contact you...phone number, web site, e-mail, FAX.

Boosting Your B-to-B Sales

Here are a few tips to help you improve response to your business-to-business direct mail:

Mail to different job titles. In large companies, decisions are made on many levels, so you must prove to all that doing business with you is beneficial and safe. Try mailing to different job titles

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simultaneously, perhaps with different copy addressing each level's concerns. Or you might encourage pass-alongs of the same piece.

Provide complete information. Business decisions require more consideration. That's why it's vital to provide complete product specifications and detailed features.

Avoid chest-beating corporate brochures. A brochure should have a clear, specific purpose. Stick to that purpose and save the heady language and images for your annual report. (Taken from the DM News Web site-September 10, 1999.)

Benefit Based Customer Focus

Begin evaluating every corporate task, policy and strategy relative to the actual amount of benefit the customer will receive. If an action does not directly benefit a customer, why are you doing it?

This is another way of measuring whether you should do something at all. If reorganizing the telephone staffing actually benefits the customer calling in, then do it. But if it only benefits the internal perception of the operations department, why are you wasting effort, time, and precious resources on an activity that produces no benefit for the customer. Always ask yourself; If I were a customer would I see this as a tangible benefit valuable enough to for me to invest my time and money in? If so, then it might be an avenue to explore, but if it doesn't even motivate you to an action, why would it stimulate a customer to part with their money?

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Marketing Tips To Remember

Here are a few marketing tips to keep in mind when you're considering launching a new campaign.

Most businesses will get 80% of their sales from 20% of their customers. Know exactly who those 20% are and aim your advertising to that segment.

Research is a vital part of your marketing plan. Your effort should produce answers to who your prospects are, and where, why, when, and how they are converted into active buyers.

As your business grows, prepare a strategic marketing plan looking at how your product or service will meet the long-term needs of your customers.

Dramatically increase your odds for a direct mail response by including a self-addressed, stamped or postage paid envelope.

Continuity In The Marketplace

You need to be in the marketplace on a regular, continuing, and ongoing basis. Not necessarily the same amount every week or every month, but on a regular basis. Whatever makes the most sense-not just in and out at your convenience. You are more likely to be remembered when it's time to buy if you are frequently seen. Seen through the articles, at a trade show, through a piece of direct

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mail, or well-placed advertisements. Even on the radio or TV if its appropriate for your market. Some products are seasonal, so therefore you must have the biggest impact during that season. The range between the best and worst season is rarely more than 20%. This doesn't mean you shouldn't be aware of it. It does mean you need to be in the marketplace on a continuing basis.

Still more Marketing Tips To Remember

To successfully market a product or service, you must first position your company in relation to the competition. Know how you want your company, product or service to be perceived by customers.

Image is important in the mind of the consumer. Decide whether you want to be known for low bargain prices, unlimited selection, top of the line customer service, or the highest quality of merchandise. Then position your business and marketing strategy accordingly. Don't try to be everything to everybody, pinpoint your customer and target his or her needs.

As your business grows, prepare a strategic marketing plan looking at how your product and service will meet the long-term needs of your customers. Focus on specific marketing objectives, how to achieve them and a path of appropriate actions to take.

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Commandments Of A Successful Entrepreneurship

So you're planning to start a new business, huh? Here's a few things to consider before venturing out on that financial limb.

- Find a market niche. What makes you unique, and how are you different from anybody else out there.
- Always under-promise and over-deliver.
- Choose your area of interest carefully, taking into consideration your greatest talents, weaknesses and current available resources.

Is Your Loyalty Program In A Rut

The objective of any loyalty program is to establish long-term relationships with customers so that they count on the program as they would a trusted friend. New loyalty programs should grow steadily over the first two years, while a mature program should generate inquiries at a monthly rate of 4 to 5 percent.

When participation begins to decline, the most common cause is the loss of creative focus on the program. It's also common for newly launched programs to settle into a rut of self-imposed sameness. Both of these afflictions are easy to fix, with a little creative energy. Simply set as your goal the creation of some kind of

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surprise value-added offer for at least one segment of your membership base each quarter.

Surprise, meaning something different in style and substance from anything you've already done. If ROI begins to slip, tackle the benefits structure with fresh eyes and open ears. Talk to members. Ask them what they like and dislike about the program, and what kinds of recognition and reward they wish for.

Product Based Customer Focus

Begin evaluating every product development, product extension, product enhancement, and product revision activity in terms of actual customer purchases those activities will create. If you are developing new products without a precise linkage into the purchase potential of the customer, why are you wasting time, talent, energy and resources to develop something that you aren't even sure customers want? A product is only a product when many people are lining up to buy it; until then it is only a risk. Every activity in product development must begin and end with live customer experience, input, and design assistance. You cannot even begin to think about a new product until your customer base tells you what the product is, how it is to be positioned, priced, packaged, and delivered.

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Generation Y Lists

The teen market is growing in a big way, and today's teens are ready to buy through the mail. When introducing a product to the teen market, direct mailers will encounter several problems when making their list selections.

The teen market is growing in a big way, and today's teens are ready to buy through the mail. When introducing a product to the teen market, direct mailers will encounter several problems when making their list selections. The first is the lack of quality direct mail responsive names. There are precious few response lists available for the teen market. As a result, teen marketers must rely more heavily on the use of compiled and enhanced lists.

Once they have used every quality response name they can get their hands on, teen marketers should carefully select names from the recently burgeoning number of enhanced and compiled teen lists using tight demographic selects. Another dilemma often run into by teen marketers is to whether to mail to the parent's name or the child's name.

Assuming that you are offering a quality product that is not offensive, it makes no difference who you mail to. Ultimately the parent's will view and approve the purchase prior to response, regardless of whose name is on the mail piece.

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The Brand Name Game

The difference between a good brand name and a disaster isn't always clear. In addition to capturing the attention of customers, the name must be easily pronounceable and free of negative connotation in foreign languages.

The difference between a good brand name and a disaster isn't always clear. In addition to capturing the attention of customers, the name must be easily pronounceable and free of negative connotation in foreign languages. If you plan to brand for technology companies and products -especially those that will be marketed on the Internet- then a great name must address a few basic issues.

- **Easily recognized**

The name must be easy to hear and, subsequently, to spell so it can be easily located with search engines.

- **Must be unique**

The name should avoid clichés of the category, too many companies use trite standbys like net, com, and info.

- **Must be descriptive**

The name must create a vivid and emotional expectation of an experience.

- **Must be imaginative**

The name has to avoid "cybersquatters" -Internet opportunists that

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have scooped up the rights to nearly every word imaginative.

Testing Your 800 Number

Although the 800 number has proved its worth over and over again, yours may be the exceptional circumstance. Why not find out? Test your 800 number with the same type of precision and accuracy as other facets of your direct response advertising. In some of the advertising or direct mail pieces, use a split run to determine whether the number pays for itself. The test can be split into the following segments.

- Use of a toll free number
- Use of a regular number
(buyer pays for this call)
- No phone number listed

In each case, the test is for total dollars generated; then the increase, if any, is weighed against the cost of the toll-free phone system.

Avoid The Trade Show Burnout

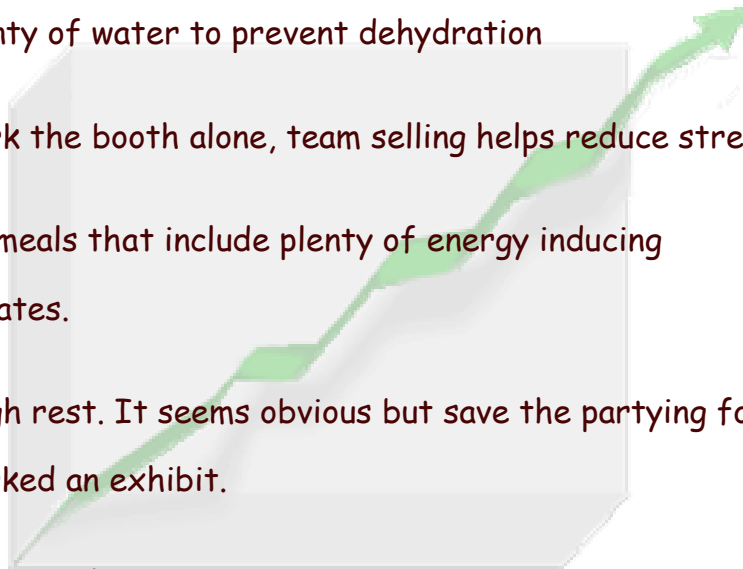
Working an exhibit is akin to a performance, and reps can't sustain energy without proper conditioning and techniques.

Booth staffers at trade shows often face personal energy crises. Researchers have found that performance levels are highest between 10 a.m. and noon, with sales people reporting their lowest

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energy levels in the early morning from 8 a.m. to 10 a.m. But working an exhibit is akin to a performance, and reps can't sustain energy without proper conditioning and techniques. Here are a few steps to avoid burnout.

- Take a 10-15 minute break every three hours.
- Drink plenty of water to prevent dehydration
- Don't work the booth alone, team selling helps reduce stress.
- Eat light meals that include plenty of energy inducing carbohydrates.
- Get enough rest. It seems obvious but save the partying for after you've worked an exhibit.



Maximizing Leads

Here are a few ideas that'll help you maximize your sales leads, and transform them from prospects into customers.

Program Management

Appoint a program manager to ensure that each step of the sales process is supported and completed.

Lead Qualification

Quality, not quantity, is key when it comes to leads. So use one or several methods to pre-qualify inquirers.

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Sales Force Motivation

If you refer leads to an outside sales force, be sure the sales reps "buy into the system" and follow up on leads.

System Management

You need to decide whether an in house or outside lead management and fulfillment system is best for you. Among factors to consider are: personnel, training, facilities, equipment, contact management software, and all the costs these will incur.

System Analysis

Measurement and reporting are necessary to be sure you're maximizing the leads you generate. Be sure all the inquiries go into a database, which then provides a wealth of information for reports.

Only Seconds Till Impact

Creating an exhibit that makes an impression and that has stopping power is achieved via two important ingredients: booth structure and exhibit graphics. A booth's structure should always complement companies' marketing messages or be indicative of a particular industry. The booth's construction and layout also should be designed to direct traffic flow to the exhibitor's advantage. Does the exhibit utilize color to maneuver traffic to specific areas? Exhibit graphics are a great way to introduce a company's overall marketing campaign, highlight distinct brands while maintaining a cohesive theme, tell a story or explain a process. Re-purposing

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exhibit graphics for a variety of applications will establish continuity and consistency in an exhibitor's message-key elements to successful branding.

Full Circle Strategy Improves Profit

The basic principle is that best prospects will always closely resemble your best customers. The best place to start is to analyze your customer base and determine key traits held in common by your top customers. Consider business demographic elements such as industry, size, and location.

Then use this information to find prospects who look just like your top customers' profile. Once the target market is defined, start planning the campaign and developing a marketing offer that is customized to meet your target audience.

Once these steps are completed, it's time to execute the plan by obtaining lists, designing mailing pieces, queuing telemarketing calls, qualifying leads, and making sales calls.

Tracking the results from every campaign will help improve the results for future campaigns and further ROI. The end result of full-circle marketing is measurable. By analyzing and planning first and executing and tracking later marketers can hone selling strategies and maximize marketing dollars.

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Profitable Catalog Marketing On The Internet

A few ideas on how to more effectively market your catalog online.

Shopping Portals

There are a host of opportunities for you to explore from the major sites like Yahoo and Excite to catalog request domains to online shopping malls. You can place banner ads, and you can experiment with keyword buys.

E-mail Marketing

This is one of the most awesome vehicles you can employ. People are in a different mindset when they read through their e-mail and you can use this to push individuals to your particular site. Test multiple offers, personalization techniques, and creative approaches.

Loyalty Programs

Develop a profile of each registrant and then provide offers tailored to these interests. Have a strong offer, good creative and pinpoint targeting.

Affiliate Programs

Round out your offering for incremental value. If you have a site selling cigars you might want to feature a link where they can buy a book on cigars, as long as you keep a percentage of the sale from the books they purchase.

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Technology

Consider using all the technological tools available to enhance the experience for your customers. Explore the possibilities of using Flash, audio, video, multimedia e-mails and more.

Don't Be Afraid To Go After Large Accounts

Although large accounts present special challenges, they are far from unapproachable. Contrary to popular belief, large accounts are not impossible to crack. Here are a couple of common myths about large accounts, and how to overcome them.

They won't change suppliers.

Large accounts take more effort, and your prospects may not always be thrilled to see you at first. But if you're persistent and genuine reasons for them to make a change, they'll become more excited about the idea.

They're usually happy with their service.

Any supplier takes care of its biggest customers, right? *Wrong.* No one has a lock on good service, low price, and high quality. Things can and do change, so get ready for a long purchasing cycle. Watch for announcements of new buyers or executives in your target company. A new person on the job means new ideas, new policies, and often, new vendors.

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Learn About Your Non-Buyers

Too many marketers spend all their research time and money learning who their buyers are and why they act as they do. They should, instead, spend their resources learning why non-buyers don't buy. The direct marketing universe opens up dramatically once you understand who might be a buyer but hasn't been (1) reached at all or (2) reached properly.

Know Thy Product & Prospect

Do you know what you are selling? That is to say, are you familiar describing it to a customer, in user's terms, in intimate detail?

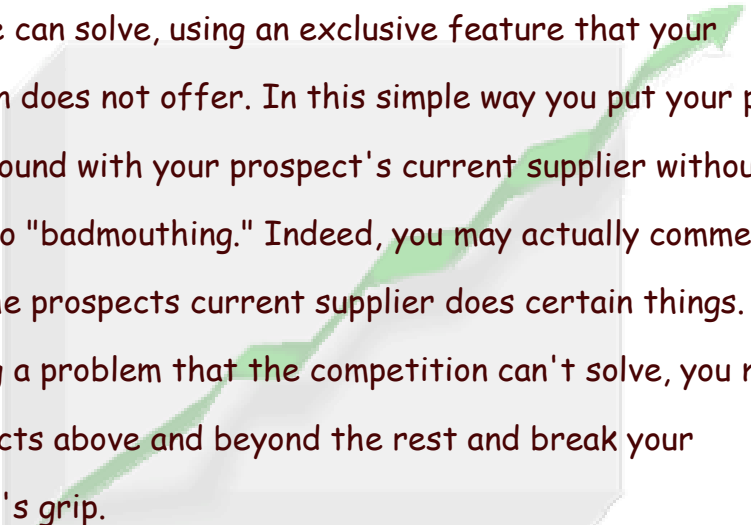
Some marketers make the mistake of describing products or services from the point of the view of the person designing or testing them. Use simple every day language to make a compelling firsthand assessment of the item or program in question.

Try to learn as much as you possibly can about the product or service you are offering. If it is all-possible try to use it in exactly the same way a customer would. When you speak from firsthand experience about the items you are trying to sell, it is much easier to make statements you know you can stand behind. Knowing both your product and prospect will help you make sales.

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Break Your Competitors Grip

You've probably run into prospects who are so comfortable with your competitor and his products that they won't even consider making a switch. In your presentation to the prospect lump your product or service together with the competition's. Show them working well together. Then introduce a problem that your product and service can solve, using an exclusive feature that your competition does not offer. In this simple way you put your product on equal ground with your prospect's current supplier without resorting to "badmouthing." Indeed, you may actually comment on how well the prospects current supplier does certain things. But by introducing a problem that the competition can't solve, you move your products above and beyond the rest and break your competitor's grip.



Points To Remember About Offers

Here are a few points to remember when you're creating your next direct marketing offer.

- In traffic-building programs and when generating leads, sell the offer, not your product or service.
- In mail order you must sell the product first, with an offer as an extra benefit.

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- The closer your offer relates to your product or service, the higher the quality of your response.
- The broader the appeal of your offer, the more action you will generate.
- Realize the importance of ego. Personalize.
- Your offer must be restated prominently on the order form or response device.
- Note your offer, the higher the response rate.
- Test offers only if your product or service will be the same next time.
- The way you state your offer can be as important as the offer itself.
- Make sure you have included all the true costs of your offer (handling, packaging, postage).
- Know your audience before you select your offer.

Free Is The Key

You should always present the offer as something of value and something of importance. Free is the key. Many people believe that "free" is the most important word in advertising and direct marketing. It's certainly the most important word when it comes to

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describing your offer. If you are offering something for free-shout it! Almost always start the headline on the reply card with the word "Free." It will almost always increase response. Plus, use the word "free" as much as possible within the other elements of the direct mail package, or within the advertising copy.

Review The Basics After A "No"

The buyer said "no." Now what do you do? Review the basics, because the basics will lead you to success.

Preparation

Were you prepared with a thorough knowledge of your products and services?

Benefits

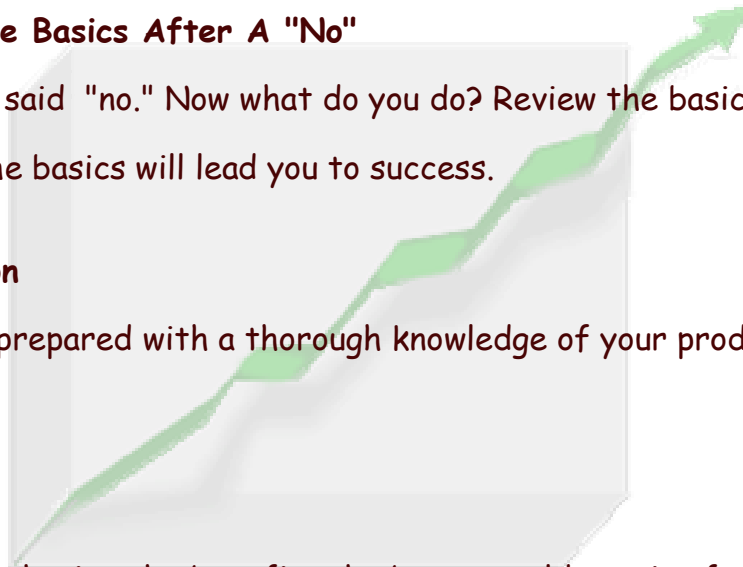
Did you emphasize the benefits the buyer would receive from your product/service? Did you speak in their language and show how your product/service could solve their problem?

Impression

What impression did you make? Were you prompt and well groomed?

Turn Off

Did you exaggerate benefits, knock the competition, or in any way pressure the customer to buy from you? Can you think of anything you said that might have turned them off?



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Order

How did you ask for the order? Did you wait for buying signals? Did you ask several times? Did you ask at all?

Courtesy

Where you polite and friendly when they said no? Did you ask to be of help in the future? Did you leave them feeling glad they spoke with you?

Matching The List To The Offer

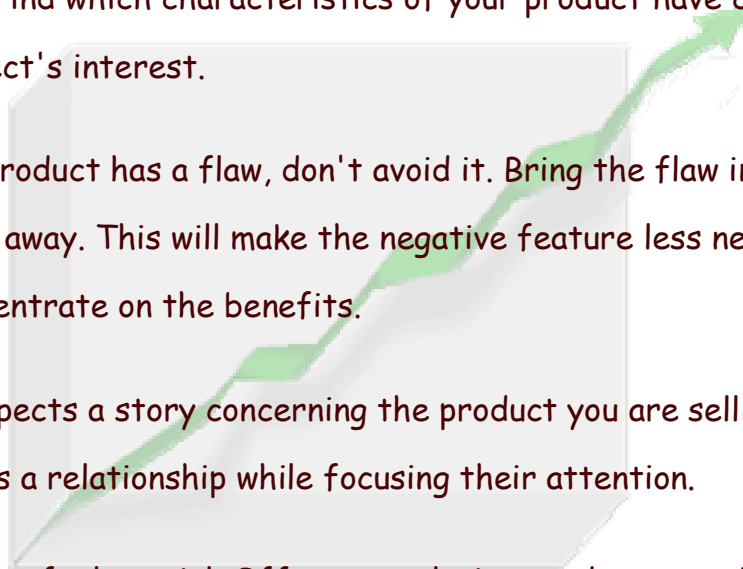
Offer and list must match. That is, the person receiving your mailing must be a logical perspective buyer. Most people in the direct mail business view this as a one way street: they search for lists that match, in demographics and psychographics, their ideal buyers. This is safe, it's within the parameters of good merchandising, and it's unassailable. But every competitor is doing the same thing. That exception can be powerful, since you and your competitors can saturate a list, especially when the list owner sets no limits on the number of times he allows his list to be circularized. So look for an inversion to the match up rule: match the offer to the list. If you're matching the list to your offer, you decide what you're selling and how you're going to sell it. Then look for possible buyers under those terms. If you're matching your offer to the list, you decide what you're selling and to whom. Then you decide how to appeal to those buyers.

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Psychological Triggers To Target

Consumer's behavior is often consistent with their previous decisions. Therefore, if a customer says "yes" to an offer, make another offer that relates to the first.

- Determine the nature of the product so you can relate it to your prospect. Find which characteristics of your product have caught the prospect's interest.
- If your product has a flaw, don't avoid it. Bring the flaw into the open right away. This will make the negative feature less negative. Then concentrate on the benefits.
- Tell prospects a story concerning the product you are selling; this establishes a relationship while focusing their attention.
- Make them feel special. Offer an exclusive product to make your prospective customer feel like they will be the owner of something only a select few can have.
- Simplicity is key. The easier it is for a potential customer to make a choice, the more likely they are going to make it.
- Live up to your promises. Be as specific as you can in your copy. Be an authority on your product; this will further establish you as a credible source.



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- Get customers actively involved in the buying process. Talk to them as if they already owned the product.

How Important Is The Offer

How important is the offer? If you look at most direct mail pieces you receive - the offer doesn't seem to very important at all. Many either have no offer, a weak offer, or they hide the offer instead of making it the hero of the package. But it is the offer that can influence response to a far greater degree than anything else.

There's a rule that goes like this: If you change the creative, you can multiply response twice over. If you change the offer, you can multiply response three-fold. I believe this is still an understatement. I have been involved in direct marketing programs where changing the offer lifted response seven-fold and ten-fold. It should be something of value. Ideally it should be something the prospect can't get anywhere else. However the most important is this: if you can tie your offer to your main benefit it can be exponentially more effective.

Don't Take No For An Answer

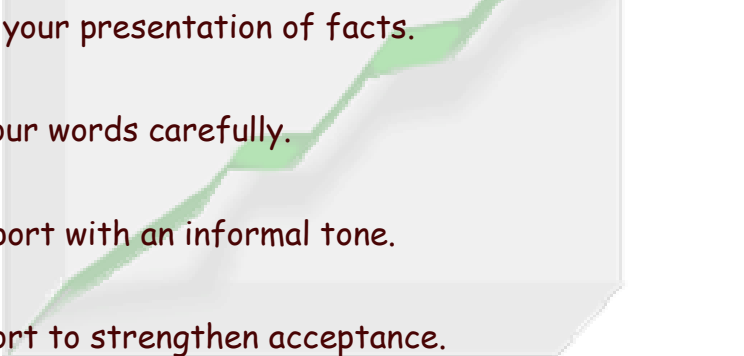
Continue to "talk" to your prospects even after they say no. Often a "no" is really a "not now." Prospects sometimes say "no" just because the timing is wrong. They may not be able to use your product or service at this moment, but things could change. If you keep corresponding with them, your name is the one they will think of

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when they need the product. And, do not forget to send a thank you note after every cold call, whether it had a positive or a negative outcome. You can always thank someone for taking time to see you. You want to keep the door open for future opportunities that might arise.

Ten Tips To Communicate With Force

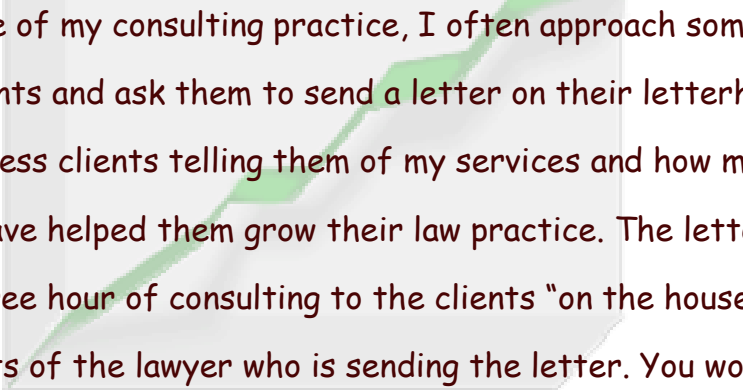
Here are ten tips to get your message across effectively to your target audience.

- 
- Optimize your presentation of facts.
 - Choose your words carefully.
 - Build rapport with an informal tone.
 - Use rapport to strengthen acceptance.
 - Be persuasive with credibility and clarity.
 - Pay attention to pronoun use.
 - Maximize your opener.
 - Know your audience and how to reach it.
 - Influence reader receptivity through strategic word choice.
 - Add potency with powerful adjectives.

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Use Cross-Overs With Other Companies

Maybe you don't pay enough attention to this powerful marketing technique. It is so simple, many companies just don't put any faith into its true power. The idea is to work with other companies to offer each other's products and services to each other's customers. It's reciprocal and it is profitable for BOTH companies. Here's how it works.



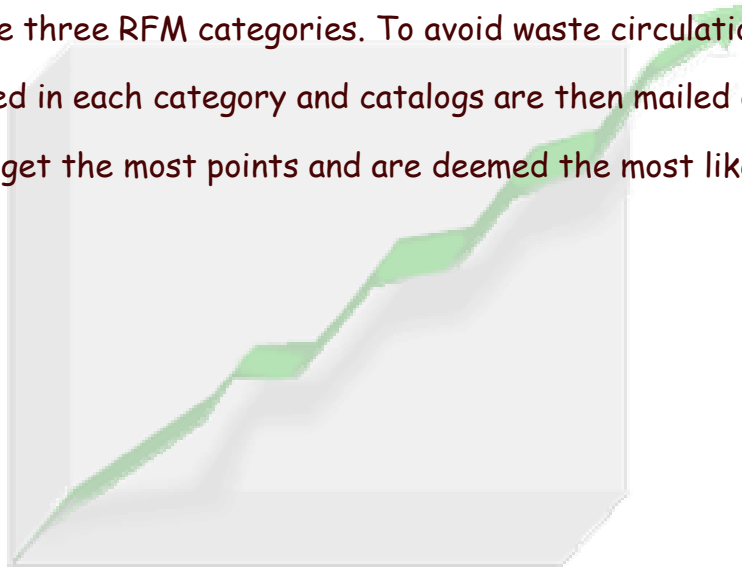
In the case of my consulting practice, I often approach some of my lawyer clients and ask them to send a letter on their letterhead to their business clients telling them of my services and how my services have helped them grow their law practice. The letter offers a free hour of consulting to the clients "on the house" or compliments of the lawyer who is sending the letter. You would not believe the response to such a letter!

As a retailer, you could do the same thing with other retailers. You might offer all patrons of a local restaurant a voucher for 10% off their next purchase at your store. In return, you might offer your customers a voucher for one free drink, or half off the regular cost of a dinner at the restaurant you are reciprocating with. Both companies win, and there is little or no money involved!

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Identifying Your Best Customers

The best prospects on any consumer list are those who make frequent purchases in significant amounts. Identifiable by computer search, they fit into the RFM formula: Recency of purchase, Frequency of purchase, and Monetary value of purchase. The RFM formula works best when mail-order catalog houses assign points in each of the three RFM categories. To avoid waste circulation, points are assigned in each category and catalogs are then mailed only to those who get the most points and are deemed the most likely to buy again.



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**THIS SECTION WE WILL COVER SOME CLASSIC MISTAKES
LEARN FROM OTHER MISTAKES TO MAKE LESS MISTAKES**

It has been over fifty years since organizations began to understand the real importance of marketing strategy and planning.

Prior to the 1950s most companies did not have marketing departments, but instead marketing activities were scattered among many departments such as advertising and sales.

Things began to change as scholars and consultants pushed for companies to adopt strategies designed to unify a variety of marketing activities carried out in different parts of the company.

By the 1960s most major college and university business programs were preaching the importance of marketing and an avalanche of books and magazines supported this cause.

With so much time and energy directed to improving marketing decision making, one might think that past mistakes attributed to lack of marketing knowledge would now be all but eliminated. In reality, there are many mistakes that are bound to be repeated no matter how much attention is directed to understanding marketing.

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Here are a few:

1. The Research Tells Us So

Relying on the results of market research as the deciding factor when making marketing decisions is a risky proposition. Why? Because research is inherently fraught with many potential problems. These problems are often the result of how the research is designed or how it is executed. It is particularly a problem if the researcher does not have access to all information. For instance, errors often occur with customer surveys including questions not being asked correctly and non-customers completing the survey. The bottom line is companies must perform market research to gain information needed to make informed marketing decisions. However, marketers must understand its limitations. In the end the marketer must weigh all available information to make their decision and not focus solely on what the research says.

2. All We Need to do is Pump More into Promotion

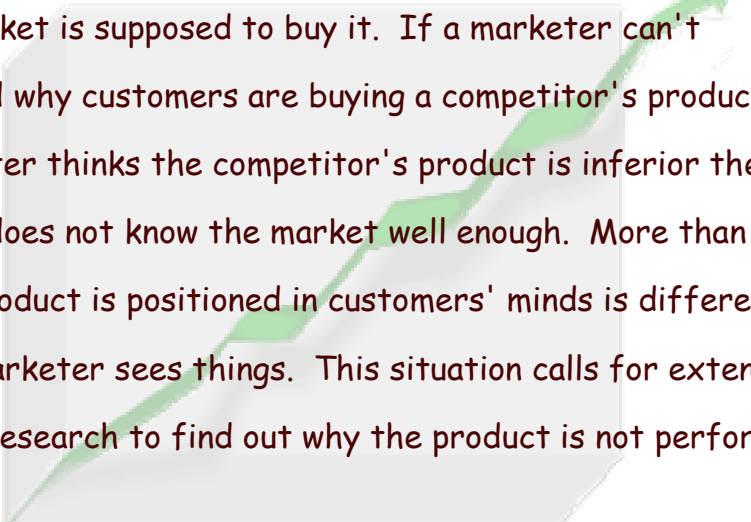
Wouldn't it be great if marketing was this easy? Just spend more on advertising and other promotions and we will quickly see our sales increase. More likely what you'll see is your profits decrease! The argument for more promotion as the medicine needed to fix lackluster sales is heard in nearly all organizations. But to view marketing problems in terms of promotional deficiencies is extremely shortsighted. Marketing is much more than advertising. Sales problems could be the result of numerous other marketing

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problems. Before deciding to spend more on promotion it probably makes more sense to spend time reviewing all marketing decisions to make sure problems do not lay elsewhere.

3. We Have the Best Product on the Market

Says who? The marketer might think it's the best product, but remember the marketer is not buying the product. The marketer's target market is supposed to buy it. If a marketer can't understand why customers are buying a competitor's product when the marketer thinks the competitor's product is inferior then the marketer does not know the market well enough. More than likely how the product is positioned in customers' minds is different than how the marketer sees things. This situation calls for extensive customer research to find out why the product is not performing as expected.



4. The Boss Knows What's Best

A classic problem in many small businesses is when the person who built the business believes they know what works. The entrepreneur justifies this by telling everyone that the business is successful because he/she knows what the market wants. The boss often discounts market studies as a waste of funds, and worse yet, brushes aside marketing suggestions from others in the organization. While it is very likely the boss knows a lot about the market, it is unlikely the boss knows everything about the market. Making marketing decisions based on executive intuition works

sometimes, but eventually lack of information, whether from refusing to undertake research or giving a cold shoulder to employees' ideas, will lead to poor decisions.

5. Our Customers Only Care About Getting the Lowest Price

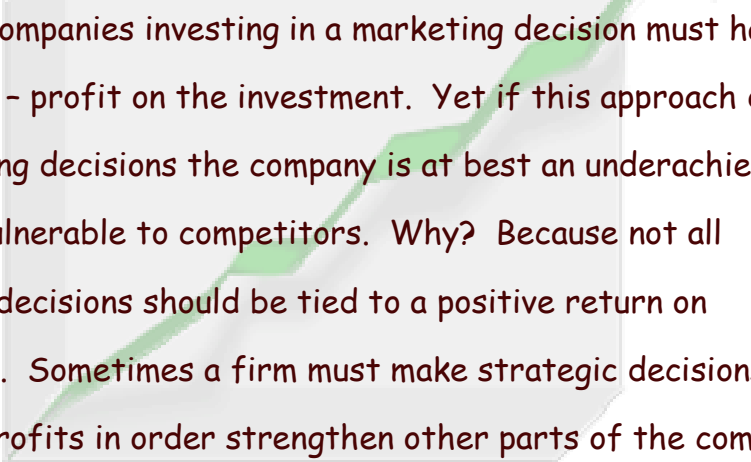
No they don't. They care about the best value for their money. Customers first and foremost want to feel comfortable with their purchase and know they got their money's worth from their decision. It is a miscalculation for marketers to believe customers reduce purchase decisions to selecting the product with the lowest price. Yet if a marketer undertakes a little research they will invariably find many other issues affect the purchase. Companies that feel they are losing out to lower priced competitors are really losing out to higher value competitors. Clearly to fight this requires marketing efforts that increase the value of the firm's products in the minds of its target market.

6. We Know Who Our Competitors Are

Most marketers when asked to name their competitors can easily rattle off a list. While the length of this list shows strong knowledge of the market, what is more important is who is not on the list. Companies not viewed as competitors are potentially the biggest threat to a company, especially for companies operating in a rapidly evolving market. At the very least the marketer should have two lists - current competitors and potential competitors. The list for potential competitors should be heavily weighted with companies

that are outside the current industry. In this way the marketer broadens the universe of potential influencers in their market. Having this knowledge not only makes the marketer aware of potential competitors but investigating firms in outside industries may also provide insight and ideas for product innovation, new markets and new channels for communication.

7. The Only Thing That Matters Is ROI



For many companies investing in a marketing decision must have only one payoff - profit on the investment. Yet if this approach drives all marketing decisions the company is at best an underachiever and at worst vulnerable to competitors. Why? Because not all marketing decisions should be tied to a positive return on investment. Sometimes a firm must make strategic decisions that sacrifice profits in order strengthen other parts of the company. For example, a company may spend significant funds to develop a new product that research suggests has little chance of being profitable. But the product may serve as a major annoyance to your competitor's top product. Because of this the competitor may need to expend more resources to insure their product retains its market position. Being forced to direct more funds to support their top product may slow down their efforts to develop new products that could compete against your products.

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8. Who Needs to Plan

Marketing executives within fast moving industries often feel planning beyond the short-term is useless since the market changes so rapidly. Yet failing to lay out a plan may lead to some big surprises, like running out of money! In a business environment where decisions are made quickly it is easy to lose track of where the money is going. A marketing plan can help the company insert controls on marketing expenditures. It also has the added benefit of having marketers take a step back to see where the company has been and may uncover important information that was not apparent earlier. Additionally, a marketing plan may help insure that everyone within the company is on the same page with regard to the basic direction of the firm's marketing efforts. This may prevent finger pointing down the road. Even if a plan is limited to only covering the next six months of operations it is an exercise that should not be avoided.

WHY INTERNET MARKETING ?

It may seem surprising but many companies, big and small, have yet to develop a rational



Internet marketing strategy. Considering the Internet has now been used effectively by marketers since 1994, any organization without a strategy to utilize the Internet for marketing is probably making a big mistake. For any organization that still does not have a meaningful Internet marketing effort we offer 10 Reasons why you should.

1. The Go-To Place for Information

Possibly the most important reason why companies need to have an active Internet marketing strategy is because of the transformation that has occurred in how customers seek information. While customers still visit stores, talk to sales representatives, look through magazines, and talk to friends to gather product information, an ever-increasing number of customers turn to the Internet as their primary knowledge source. In particular, they use search engines as their principle portal of knowledge as search sites have become the leading destination sites for most Internet users. Marketers must recognize that the Internet is where customers are heading and, if the marketer wants to stay visible and viable, they must follow.

2. What Customers Expect

The Internet is not only becoming the resource of choice for finding information, in the next few years it is also likely to be the expected location where customers can learn about products and make purchases. This is especially the case for customers below the age of 25. In many countries, nearly all children and young adults have been raised knowing how to use the Internet. Once members of this group dominate home and business purchases they will clearly expect companies to have a strong Internet presence.

3. Captures a Wide Range of Customer Information

As a data collection tool the Internet is unmatched when it comes to providing information on customer activity. Each time a visitor accesses a website they leave an information trail that includes how they got to the site, how they navigated through the site, what they clicked on, what was purchased, and loads of other information.

When matched to a method for customer identification, such as login information, the marketer has the ability to track a customer's activity over repeated visits to the site. Knowing a customer's behavior and preferences opens up tremendous opportunities to cater to customer's needs and, if done correctly, the customer will respond with a long-lasting loyalty.

4. Extreme Target Marketing

The most efficient way for marketers to spend money is to direct spending to those who are most likely to be interested in what the marketer is offering. Unfortunately, efforts to target only customers who have the highest probability of buying has not been easy. For instance, consider how much money is wasted on television advertisements to people who probably will not buy. Yet the Internet's unrivaled ability to identify and track customers has greatly improved marketer's ability to target customers who exhibit the highest potential for purchasing products.

5. Stimulate Impulse Purchases

Whether customers like it or not, the Internet is proving to be the ultimate venue for inducing impulse purchases. Much of this can be attributed to marketers taking advantage of improvements in technologies that: 1) allow a website to offer product suggestions based on customer's online buying behavior, and 2) streamline the online purchasing process. But online impulse purchasing also takes advantage of the "purchase now, pay later" attitude common in an overspending credit card society. How this plays out over time as many customers become overwhelmed with debt will need to be watched and could impact online marketer's activities.

6. Customized Product and Service Offerings

Companies know they can develop loyal customers when product and service offerings are designed to satisfy individual needs. This has led many online marketers to implement a mass customization strategy offering customers online options for configuring products or services. The interactive nature of the Internet makes "build-your-own" a relatively easy to implement purchasing option. An empowered customer base that feels a company will deliver exactly what they want is primed to remain loyal for long period of time.

7. Takes Prospects Right to the Sale

No other form of communication comes close to turning exposure to promotion into immediate customer action as the Internet, which allows customers to make purchases immediately after experiencing a promotion. Prior to the Internet, the most productive call-to-action was through television informercials that encourage viewers to call toll-free phone numbers. However, moving customers from a non-active state (i.e., watching television) to an active state (i.e., picking up the phone to call the number) is not nearly as effective as getting people to click on an Internet ad while they are actively using the Internet.

8. Conveys Perception of Being a Full-Service Provider

For distributors and retailers the Internet makes it easy to be a comprehensive supplier. Unlike brick-and-mortar suppliers who are often judged by the inventory that is actually on hand or services

provided at a store, e-commerce sites can give the illusion of having depth and breadth of inventory and service offerings. This can be accomplished by placing product and service information on the company's website but behind the scenes having certain orders fulfilled by outside suppliers via shipping and service agreements. With such arrangements customers may feel they are dealing with providers that offer full-service when in reality a certain percentage of the products and service are obtained from other sources.

9. Lower Overhead, Lower Costs, Better Service

Internet technologies are replacing more expensive methods for delivering products and services, and for handling customer information needs. Cost savings can certainly be seen with products and services deliverable in digital form (e.g., music, publications, graphic design, etc.) where production and shipping expenses are essentially removed from the cost equation. Cost savings may also be seen in other marketing areas including customer service where the volume of customer phone calls may be reduced as companies provide online access to product information through such services as Knowledge Bases and answers to Frequently Asked Questions. Field salespeople may also see benefits by encouraging prospects to obtain product information online prior to a face-to-face meeting. This may help reduce the time devoted to explaining basic company and product information and leave more time for understanding and

offering solutions to customer's problems. As these examples suggest, the Internet may lower administrative and operational costs while offering greater value to customers.

10. Create Worldwide Presence

The Internet is a communication and distribution channel that offers global accessibility to a company's product and service offerings. Through a website a local marketer can quickly become a global marketer and, by doing so, expand their potential target market to many times its current size. Unlike the days before e-commerce when marketing internationally was a time-consuming and expensive undertaking, the uploading of files to establish a website is all that is needed to create a worldwide presence. While establishing a website does not guarantee international sales (there is a lot more marketing work needed for the site to be viable internationally), the Internet provides a gigantic leap into global business compared to pre-Internet days.

27 QUICK TIPS TO TOP SEARCH ENGINE RANKINGS

1. Increase your site's link popularity by increasing your internal and incoming links.



- Internal links - Cross link all your sites and important pages within each site. This will maximize the PageRank of all your pages within each web site.
- Incoming links that you control - Create several small web sites related to your main site. Each site should only consist of a few pages. Then cross link them all together using the most important keywords. Don't forget to include links back to the main site.
- Incoming links that you don't control:
 - Ask sites that link to your competitors to link to your site. To find out which sites are linking to your competitors, visit a search engine and enter, "link:" followed by the competitors' domain name.

For example:

link:www.yourcompetitor.com

- Exchange links with sites listed in the same category as yours in the major web directories, such as the [Yahoo! Directory](#) and the [Open Directory](#).
- Find sites that accept site submissions. Visit your favorite search engine and search for:

"add url" "your keywords"

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Also try searching for the actual submission page using its page name.

For example:

addurl.html, addsite.html, addlink.html, etc.

2. Include a TITLE tag as the first META tag, directly after the HEAD tag.

For example:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Mike's Marketing Software Tools Reviews</TITLE>
...
```

3. Try to avoid *stop words* in your TITLE tag. Stop words (a, an, and, but, he, her, his, i, in, it, of, on, or, she, the, etc.) are common words and characters ignored by some search engines to enhance the speed and relevancy of their search results.

4. Include a META DESCRIPTION tag, directly after the TITLE tag. Include the most important keyword phrase for the web page as close to the beginning of the description as possible.

For example:

```
<HTML>
<HEAD>
<TITLE>Mike's Marketing Software Tools Reviews</TITLE>
<META NAME="description" CONTENT="Mike's Marketing
Tools is the leading review site for the very best internet
marketing tools for web marketers and webmasters.">
...
```

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5. If you use a META REFRESH tag, make sure it is set to refresh after 30 seconds.

```
<META HTTP-EQUIV="refresh" CONTENT="30;  
URL=http://www.mikes-marketing-tools.com">
```

Some search engines consider pages that refreshes under 30 seconds as spam. I recommend using a JavaScript redirect tag, if you require a quicker page refresh.

For example:

Step 1 - Paste this code into the HEAD section of your HTML document. Change the 3000 to whatever number you like. 1000 represents 1 (one) second.

```
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript"><!--  
function redirect () {setTimeout("change()",3000);}  
function change () {window.location.href="http://www.mikes-  
marketing-tools.com";}  
//--></SCRIPT>
```

Step 2 - Insert the onLoad event handler into your BODY tag, so that the JavaScript code is executed when the page loads.

```
<BODY onLoad="redirect()">
```

6. Remove all other meta tags (author, date, etc.), unless you're sure they are absolutely necessary. The only meta tags I ever use are the META DESCRIPTION and occasionally the META REFRESH tag.
7. Include a site map with links to all your pages. This will help search engines find and index all your pages.
 - Limit the number of links on a web page to 50.
 - If you have more than 50 links, limit your links to your most important pages.

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- Include text on the page as some search engines, such as AltaVista, have been known to kick out links only pages.
8. Use one or more header tags in your main page body and include your most important keyword phrase/s.
- Use large header tags, such as <H1> and <H2>.
 - Use Cascading Style Sheets (CSS) to alter the appearance of the header tags to fit the look and feel of your site.
9. Check the first couple of lines of the first paragraph to see if it's appropriate to be used as a description of your page. Many search engines utilize the first couple of sentences of the body text as the search results description, instead of the contents of the META DESCRIPTION tag.
10. Try to achieve an overall keyword density of 1-2%.
11. Try to achieve a minimum word count of 300 and a maximum of 750 words on each page.
12. Register a domain name with the exact keyword phrase you wish to target, using hyphens to separate the keywords.

For example, if the keyword phrase is "search engine rankings," then register:

search-engine-rankings.com

If the domain you want is unavailable, either try a different extension, such as .NET, .INFO, or .US, or add a keyword to the end (preferential) or beginning of the domain.

13. Name directories after your keyword phrases, using hyphens or underscores to separate the keywords.

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For example, if an important keyword phrases is, "search engine rankings," name your directory:

`www.yoursite.com/search-engine-rankings/` or...
`www.yoursite.com/search_engine_rankings/`

14. Name web pages after your most important keyword phrase. Separate the keywords using hyphens or underscores.

For example, if the keyword phrase is "search engine rankings," then name the page:

`search-engine-rankings.html` or...
`search_engine_rankings.html`

15. Name your graphic files after keyword phrases. Again, separate the keywords using hyphens or underscores.

For example:

``

16. Include an ALT (alternative text) attribute in image tags. Include the most important keyword phrases.

For example:

``

17. If you use an image map, include HTML links, as some search engines do not follow image map links. Plus image maps do not offer search engines any link text to index. So, try to avoid the use of image maps as they do not help with your search engine optimization efforts.
18. Use the longer or plural version of a keyword, where possible. Word stemming is a concept used by some search engines to

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return search results that include keywords that extend beyond what you searched for.

For example, a search with the keyword "engine" might return results for, "engines," "engineers," and "engineering." If someone searches for the longer version of a word and your page only uses the short version, then your page will be excluded from the list of possible results.

19. Sprinkle a few uncommon keywords and synonyms in your main body text. Less popular keywords have less competition in the search engines. So your web page is has a greater chance of being listed amongst the top results.
20. Do not repeat keywords or keyword phrases over and over again on a web page, as this would be considered as spam by search engines.
21. Keep your pages as close to the root domain as possible. Do not set up more than 3 directory levels.

For example:

www.yoursite.com/index.html (1st level - excellent)
www.yoursite.com/html/index.html (2nd level - Good)
www.yoursite.com/html/marketing/index.html (3rd level - OK)
www.yoursite.com/html/marketing/search/index.html (Too many levels down - search engines will find it difficult to find and index pages this far down)

22. If you have a persistent (on most or all of your pages) navigation bar at the side of each page, your table is almost certainly set up in such a way that it pushes your page's body text down the HTML document. Search engines give prominence to keywords nearer the beginning of a HTML document. So, design your HTML table so that the navigation bar is placed after your main body text.

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23. Move Javascript code to a separate file, or the end of the HTML document after your closing BODY or HTML tag. Yes, this technique actually works!

Follow these instructions to move the JavaScript code to a separate file and link to the file from the HTML document. Then place the following code in between the HEAD section:

```
<HEAD>  
<SCRIPT LANGUAGE="JavaScript" SRC="file-  
name.js"></SCRIPT>  
</HEAD>
```

This procedure also reduces your file size, and therefore your download time. In addition, it allows you to reuse the code on other pages by simply link to the JavaScript file. Both of these techniques will move your important body text nearer to the top of the HTML document.

24. Although not always practical, you may like to try naming your cascading style sheet tags after keywords.

For example:

```
.search {  
color: #ff0000;  
}
```

25. Use Robots.txt files instead of Robots meta tags, as some search engine robots do not recognize the tag. Visit [The Web Robots Pages](#) for more information.
26. Do not use font size one (1) text as the default text size. Many search engines consider tiny text to be spam. It's OK to use some font size one text.

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27. Do not participate in link farms or link exchange programs.

Search engines consider link farms and link exchange programs as spam, as they have only one purpose - to artificially inflate a site's link popularity, by exchanging links with other participants.

Do not confuse link farms and link exchange programs with reciprocal linking. Reciprocal linking is the exchange of links with individual sites, and is certainly an accepted technique for improving your site's link popularity.



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Learn from the **Amazon success story...**

Secret To Amazon.com's Success



Starting out from his Garage Jeff

Bezos built the foundation of Amazon.com from the garage of his two-bedroom house rented outside of Seattle. He fashioned his first office tables from wooden doors, angle brackets, and two-by-four lumber purchased from Home Depot.

This article summarizes the recognizable aspects of Amazon.com 's success and lays down lessons learned in the form of tips. You have the opportunity to analyze the tips given here and apply them with prudence to your own business.

You as the owner of your own home based business started - or about to embark if you have not as yet started - with the same resources as Jeff Bezos. You are in a similar situation - if not much better position - than the Amazon founder because you have the secret to his success to learn and apply into your own business.

Tip No. 1: Be modest in your initial investment. For example, your laptop or PC shall not necessarily be top of the line. Your office location could be a corner of the house or your room, basement or garage. Save on office rent by all means. Be like Jeff Bezos and other successful marketers who spent prudently and succeeded.

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Motivation You should motivate yourself to succeed. When Amazon was struggling to make profits for the first time, only its founder Jeff Bezos believed that the business goal could be achieved in a year's time. Everybody was astounded when Jeff Bezos achieved his goal after one year.

Tip No. 2: The lesson that could be learned from the above account is to lay down and make known in clear fashion your goal to every stake holder of your small business. They include your spouse and your web designer, among others.

Write down this goal and post this on the wall beside your desk. Save this goal in your hard disk and make the text the start up page when you boot your computer. You can convert your goal into a screensaver. Read your goal to yourself every day as you go about your business on the Internet.

Tip No. 3: You should motivate yourself every day and pass this motivation on to every one who's involved in your business. To paraphrase the author Wallace D. Wattles who wrote *The Science of Getting Rich* in 1910, envision yourself right now as having a very successful business and do every which legal and ethical way to actualize your vision. FYI, Wattles' book is featured in my web site.

Change It is said that change is the one single permanent thing on this planet. Amazon changed the way it does business through the

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years. First it was an online book seller. Next it expanded into selling music and videos.

Then it offered toys, consumer electronics and software to its customers. These were linked with a host of new products until this very day. Amazon has a constantly evolving product line. Its competitors have a hard time catching up with the innovator.

During its initial years of operation, Amazon was not making any real profit. It practiced instead the habit of reinvesting its income into new markets. This it did to make possible for its customers to make wider choices for the company's offerings.

Tip No. 4: Your home based business should be run like Amazon. You could be selling your single information product now. Two weeks from today you will have added another back end product. Next month you will have introduced into your product line the inventory of the affiliate program you have joined in.

Tip No. 5: If your web site is content based, you should be adding new content every day. Casual visitors to your web site will become your regular visitors when they see new content every time they come back to your site. And these visitors will in the end become your regular customers.

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Be a Generalist A generalist is one who does a multitude of things. In computer language it is known as multi-tasking. This has been the culture at Amazon.

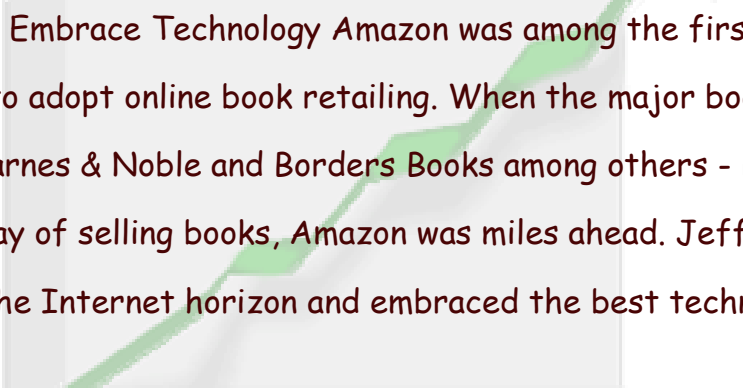
Tip No. 6: You as the single person in your home business must be a generalist, too. This means doing and knowing everything that goes in and out of your business.

You don't know any HTML coding? This is tolerable. You must strive however to understand at least the basic formatting that goes into your site code. This way you can make small insertions into your web pages when your web designer is nursing a cold or is out of town. Or you can learn a thing or two on scripting. By the way, HTML tutorial is one of several categories among the home based business free learning stuff presented in my web site.

Work Ethic Jeff Bezos was the company CEO and he and his wife were the first workers at Amazon. Their work ethic was marked with hard work and consistency, among others. These traits were handed down to their employees through the years.

Tip No. 7: To succeed and last long in your Internet business, you should work hard to put your business online in the fastest and frugal manner possible. The important thing to consider is to start up and put your small business online early and rapidly. If you have to wake up at two in the morning to do your Internet work, by all means stick to this routine.

Tip No. 8: You should be consistent in your business-related tasks. If your content needs updating twice weekly, follow this schedule with devotion. Visitors to your web site will notice even slight changes to your content when they go back to visit your web pages. Not to mention the search engine spiders which would just be too glad (i.e., in electron manner of speaking) to index new contents to your web site.



Be First to Embrace Technology Amazon was among the first, if not the first, to adopt online book retailing. When the major book sellers - Barnes & Noble and Borders Books among others - realized this new way of selling books, Amazon was miles ahead. Jeff Bezos surveyed the Internet horizon and embraced the best technology on sight.

Tip No. 9: New technologies come and go almost daily. Some of these technologies enable you to run your business fast and easy. Other technologies rob you of your investment. Your duty is to examine each technology and assimilate into your business the best.

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Here Is Some Top Resources Used By Many Top Internet Marketers:

One major need of every marketer is a great reliable webhosting provider so check out <http://www.PhoenixFirehost.com>

Get Products with your own brand name from
<http://www.REBRANDER.net>

Domain Registration's starting as little as \$1.49 per year from
<http://www.axedomains.com>

Splash page design from <http://www.splashpagedesigner.com>

Private Label Right Articles From: <http://www.ArticleVine.com>

Private Label Right Products And Source Codes From:
<http://www.PhoenixFiresale.com>

