

IMAGINE. . . The perfect marketing program. It would generate incredible levels of qualified response. It would produce a terrific return on investment, and it would be easy to do. Wouldn't such a marketing program be great for your business?



The KEYS to Marketing Results

Unfortunately, it doesn't exist. In marketing, there are no magic bullets. But, successful marketing initiations aren't difficult – they just require doing the right things with patience and persistence.

Fortunately, there are a number of steps most companies can take to dramatically improve their marketing results. Interested? Please read on.

Target Practice

Too often, in a scramble to get “something” done, companies employ a fire, ready, aim, approach. Marketing is done reactively with lots of tactics and little strategy. This approach will undoubtedly hit something but usually not your objectives.



Ready!

Do your homework! Planning is the most critical and overlooked part of marketing. The investment in planning will yield great returns in response, and it will avoid waste. Take some time up-front to research key decision makers involved in the purchase of your product or service. *Research may seem like a major undertaking, but it's critical to success.*

Strive to understand the target audience on all levels. Describe who they are in great detail. Include demographic information, education, experience, and personality type. Don't stop there. Investigate their common likes, dislikes, interests, and hot buttons. Ultimately, you want to show these people how your product can solve their problems, fill their needs, and help them obtain their objectives.

Remember to segment – the more you hone in on your target audience, the better chance you have of hitting it. Often, there are a number of different audiences you'll need to influence in order to

make a sale. Understand each group, and tailor your message to address each one accordingly. Don't take anyone for granted who can have an impact on the purchase decision – deals can be made or broken by anyone from administrative help to senior management.

Aim!!

Watch where you're pointing that thing! Unfortunately, many companies are “shooting” at anything and everything, hoping that they'll get the results they want. In business, “hope” will not get you very far. However, focus and intelligent planning will.

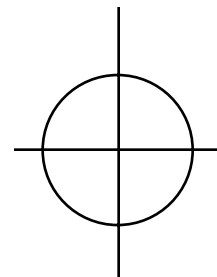
Determine how to reach the target audience as effectively as possible. If your audience reads a particular journal, aim there. If they have a tendency to listen to a certain radio station, that's where you're lining up the cross-hairs. Or if feasible, go to the extreme. Many companies today are developing a list (database) of the names and addresses of their prospective clients, and delivering “custom” messages directly. This method may have a higher cost per prospect, but it's effectiveness often justifies the investment.

Fire!!!

You know who your target is, you know their hot buttons, and you know where to find them. Now it's time to “pull the trigger.” Boom!!! Grab their attention, and grab it quickly.

It doesn't matter whether you are using TV, radio, newspaper, or direct mail; you only have a few brief moments to capture someone's interest.

How you get their attention depends on the target audience and the marketing medium you've chosen. If you've chosen to use direct mail to reach your audience, consider including something in the envelop to create curiosity, for example a small package. Creating dimensions to your message dramatically increases the probability your mail will get opened.



You've got their attention, NOW WHAT?

THE OBJECTIVES ARE
TO GET AN IDEA OF
THE EFFECTIVENESS
OF YOUR MARKETING,
OPEN THE LINES OF
COMMUNICATION
WITH YOUR PROSPECTS,
DEMONSTRATE
YOUR SOLUTION TO
THEIR NEEDS, AND
ESTABLISH A BUSINESS
RELATIONSHIP.

The hunt has just begun! You've got their attention, now what? First, go back to your planning and research. You've already figured out what concerns and interests they have. Now, in their words illustrate how your product or service addresses their needs. *Keep the message brief, and make it loud and clear.*

Keep firing!

The key is to ensure that prospects will think of your company when a relevant need arises. You may find this happens on the first shot. More realistically, however, you will have to continue to get your message in front of the prospect, demonstrate that your interest in helping them will solve their issues, and maintain top-of-mind awareness. This way, when the opportunity presents itself, your company is at the top of the list.

Give them a reason to take action. Encourage your target audience to respond to your marketing. *Encourage prospects to "raise their hand" and communicate with you directly.*

- Asking is still one of the best ways to get information from someone. So, try sending surveys inquiring about business challenges, goals, and opportunities.
- Telemarket your prospects, and conduct a brief survey by phone.
- Offer to provide something of value for simply responding to the marketing.
- Ask for their input. Everyone loves to be the expert. Let them tell you what they know and what they would like to know.
- Have some fun! Create games and contests to encourage response.

The objectives are to get an idea of the effectiveness of your marketing, open the lines of communication with your prospects, demonstrate your solution to their needs, and establish a business relationship.

Make it easy to respond. Give prospective clients every possible means to contact you.

The more response methods available the more convenient it will be for the target audience to respond. Give them access to your company's mailing address, fax number, phone number, e-mail address, and web-site address.

Here are some final thoughts on enhancing overall marketing effectiveness.

Maintain consistency across marketing initiatives and make sure everyone within your organization is on the same page. Integrate the various marketing vehicles, and make them all more effective. For example, your outside sales activities will improve dramatically if they are integrated with a direct mail initiative, an advertised sale, or a current TV campaign. A well sustained "tag-team" strategy will be much more effective than a single, isolated activity.



QUICK TIPS!

1. KNOW YOUR AUDIENCES.
2. GRAB THEIR ATTENTION.
3. GET YOUR MESSAGE ACROSS, AND KEEP THEIR INTEREST.
4. ASK FOR RESPONSE.
5. BE PERSISTENT.
6. BE CONSISTENT.

