

Marketing For Success

**Grow
Your
Business**



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You think you have a great product or service but no one knows you exist. You spend money on advertising but very few are paying attention or responding. Every business has to be effective at continuously attracting new customers to exist and to grow and you have to accomplish this in an environment where competition is everywhere. There is no doubt that most businesses will fail or succeed based on their ability to find new customers and generate favorable word of mouth advertising.

Forty years ago when there was less of everything, it was easier to be noticed. There were three major television stations and in most communities there was one major radio station and one major newspaper that captured the majority of the audience. There was less competition and fewer products and services from which to choose.

Today the consumer is very knowledgeable, has very little time, has an enormous selection of products and services from which to choose and is flooded with advertising. If you are in business today you have to compete in a very mature market with an abundance of competition. Your competition is not only from independents, but also from national franchises, discount operations and online companies.

Today the consumer can get their information from a vast selection and variety of sources. There are hundreds of cable television stations, specialty radio station options, scores of specialty magazines and newspapers. The electronic choices for gathering information are exploding. The average person receives hundreds of direct mail pieces and catalogs every week. What has happened is that the consumer can get their information in so many different ways that the population has become very fragmented. You can no longer advertise and hope to reach a mass audience.

As a result, the average small business person today has to specialize and target a very specific market or the business will be invisible. In fact, many businesses, products and services are invisible today because the consumer is so overwhelmed with too much of everything. Too much advertising, too much selection and with a shortage of time they are not going to go out of their way to buy anything.

So you ask, how do you find customers? Today the single biggest reason for a person to become motivated to buy from you is a referral or testimonial from a friend telling them that they have had an enjoyable experience with your business. In order for your business to be successful, your marketing has to come full circle and culminate in a successful referral business. A successful marketing program has to begin with a successful lead generation program. Second, it has to create remarkable, wonderful, friendly experiences for prospects and customers at every point they touch your business. If you have been successful at lead development and creating remarkable experiences within your marketing program, you will have been successful at the final step of developing the word of mouth advertising that will drive the profitability of your company. Your marketing program will have successfully come full circle.

There are three excellent books that offer great ideas on how to build a remarkable company about which people will talk. First, is a book called Chocolates on your Pillow aren't Enough by Jonathan M Tisch. Jonathan Tisch is in the hotel industry, which is similar to other business industries where there is a too much competition offering essentially identical products or services. In this type of competitive business environment, one can make a case for not placing your emphasis on the product or service, which is readily available from other competitors, but instead differentiating yourself from the competition by placing your emphasis on the total customer experience. The key point is that customers remember PLEASANT EXPERIENCES and if they are remarkable experiences they will talk about them to their friends. In order to deliver a memorable experience, every time and every place a customer interacts with your business, it must be a welcoming, friendly experience. You must examine every customer touch point with your business and determine what the customer WANTS at every touch point. Frustration at any single touch point will cause a customer to drop out. Examples of the many points where a prospect or customer can touch your business could be any of the following: A salesperson or customer service person on the telephone, a website, an advertisement, a face to face sales encounter, a delivery of the product or service, the payment method, issuing a complaint, the level of enjoyment in experiencing the product or service, a telemarketing call, a catalog, a trade show, a follow- up call. Every time your business touches a customer it has to deliver what they want in a welcoming, remarkable experience.

Keep in mind what customers want. They want their life to be easier; they want to save time, and anything that they take the time to touch they want to run more efficiently. They want more affordability and they want their experiences to be fun. Customers want more personalized service today than ever before, they want more information both about the service or product and the company, and they want easy access to good communication.

In order to provide a total experience that is remarkable, all of the various points at which a customer can touch you have to be integrated. For example, when a customer has a positive experience during a face to face sale at the customer's home, they need to encounter another pleasant experience when they later call on the telephone to ask a follow up question. The various touch points need to interface so every experience at every touch point is welcoming and remarkable.

Michael Gerber in his book E-Myth explains that if you are going to stand out from the competition and be talked about, you need to focus on making the business model itself remarkable. The business model contains the systems that determine how you are going to sell the product or service and how it is going to be delivered. Obviously, many of these systems are experienced as touch points with your customers. The business model systems in this regard have to satisfy the wants of your market better than the competition. The business model has to both alleviate frustrations and satisfy the emotional needs of your customers better than the competition. What you are really selling is the uniqueness of the systems of your business model. For example, in the lawn maintenance industry it

may be your systems to train the field technicians. These systems may be so unique and effective that your company produces a pleasant, memorable experience every time your field technician's service touches a customer. Systems that provide for efficient quality control and follow up may be so superior to the competition that this effort also creates outstanding impressions and generates word of mouth advertising.

In order to maximize word of mouth referral business Seth Godin in his book, The Purple Cow, suggests that you will be invisible if your product or service is not targeted to a small group of people that will be more likely to listen. However, the opportunity for even a small group to listen to your advertising is difficult. As a result, it becomes important to invest your time and money into your product or service to make it so incredible that people will talk about you and seek you out. In developing a remarkable product or service you should develop your market niche first and then develop an exceptional product or service that will meet your customers wants and solve their problems. For this to be successful you will need to get inside the head of your target customer so you can develop something they will love. Your customers wants will probably take you down the most difficult path but that will be the right path every time. As you develop your extraordinary product or service, explore the outer boundaries and get as far away from the competition as possible.

The common thread among all of these ideas is to create something so noticeable people will talk about you. Everything that touches a customer has to be more remarkable than the competition.

In order to develop customers that will talk about your exceptional experiences, services and products, you will need to have a multi functional marketing plan that will consistently develop leads. Do not fool yourself, a company will not survive long term without a marketing program that is consistently developing leads. One of the best books on this subject is Guerrilla Marketing by Jay Conrad Levinson. He explains the importance of developing an annual marketing plan and being committed to it long term. You can never stop marketing for the following reasons: A) the market is constantly changing with new people moving in and out B) people forget about your company if you do not continually keep your name in front of them C) your competition will not quit marketing so, if you quit, the competition will capture your share of the market D) to survive you have to keep finding new customers to grow and replace lost customers E) it gives you an advantage over your competitors who do not do any marketing F) if you start and then stop, you lose the investment and benefits of all your past marketing expenditures.

In order for your marketing plan to succeed you not only have to be committed to marketing but you also have to be patient. Most marketing efforts do not produce instant results so do not get discouraged. It helps if you develop the mind set that placing one advertisement is an expense but a marketing plan is an investment in the company. There is a big difference in the psychology of treating marketing as an investment. In order for a marketing plan to be successful you have to be consistent with a focused

message. It's the consistency of your marketing plan that generates a familiarity between your company and the customer and the familiarity generates the confidence to buy. To generate marketing success you also have to utilize a combination of different media and strategies. Just like placing one advertisement is not an effective marketing plan, utilizing only one media or strategy is also not effective.

You can increase the effectiveness of your marketing by making it convenient for buyers to get service or product information and place orders. You must develop as many touch points to place orders as possible. Examples of maximizing purchasing convenience would include providing effective sales information and ordering capabilities on a website, over the phone, by email, through a catalog or a direct sales visit to the home or business.

An effective marketing plan is not just about developing leads or generating new sales but it is also about marketing to your customer after the sale. The most profitable return on your marketing investment is the additional revenue you generate from your customers in the months and years to come. You can increase sales to your customers by becoming involved with them. What I mean by this is simply being nice to your customers, expressing an interest in their needs as a customer and a friend, knowing their name and customizing offerings to their needs. Customers remember personal attention.

Every part of your marketing plan is an ongoing experiment. To maximize your return on investment you need to be constantly measuring the results. If you do not measure the results you will be wasting time and money on medias that are poor performers. To maximize your return you need to monitor every media and strategy so you can kick the poor performers out and double up on the good performers. Remember, in order to maximize your marketing program EVERYTHING that touches a prospect or customer is marketing. A few examples would be the signage and cleanliness of the trucks, how your phone is answered, the appearance of your employees, the clarity of your invoice, the ease of interacting on your website, and how your company handles a return or credit. The more obvious marketing touch points are the sales presentation (by phone or face to face), the performance of the service or product, the quality control and the follow up after the sale.

To create an effective marketing plan you have to develop an annual marketing plan in writing. You need to identify your target audience, the various marketing media and strategies you will use to reach your target audience, the frequency of each marketing event, and what your cost is expressed in terms of percentage to sales. This must all be in writing or you do not have an annual plan and your marketing effort will fail. Once you have an annual plan in writing, you have to be committed to its success. Remember, frequency and consistency is what breeds success. Measuring results, experimenting and adjusting the annual plan is what will make your marketing plan pay off financially.

To develop your written marketing plan, RND's marketing consultants can help you decide which medias and strategies will work best for developing leads and which will work best for building loyalty and additional revenue from existing customers. Consider

the following marketing objectives to develop a continuous source for leads and a steady flow of new customers.

- 1) Build a successful blanket mailer program
- 2) Build a successful door to door canvassing program
- 3) Build a successful telemarketing program
- 4) Build a successful referral business
- 5) Build a successful program that targets your niche market
- 6) Build a successful program that targets neighbors to your customers
- 7) Build a successful program that targets your prospects that never ordered
- 8) Build a successful program that activates your inactive customers
- 9) Build a successful program that will turn a higher percentage of leads into customers and sales
- 10) Build a successful program that increases website traffic and develops both leads and sales

We all know that building customer retention is the key to growing the revenue of a business. Every time you lose a customer you have to incur the expense of finding a new customer just to maintain your revenue. Building customer loyalty is paramount to experiencing successful company growth. We also know that once you have a customer, it's your customer that is going to represent your best source for ADDITIONAL revenue. The following are some additional objectives that a successful marketing plan must fulfill.

- 11) Build a successful program to sell more products or services to existing customers
- 12) Build a successful program to retain more customers and build loyalty

The following is a list of marketing medias and methods. Many of these ideas can be read about in Guerrilla Marketing by Jay Conrad Levinson. As you review these different marketing methods you will notice that they all have different strengths. For best results, it is important to match the strength of a media or marketing method to your audience, your budget and your objective.

1) **Canvassing or going door to door** takes more time than traditional marketing medias but it can be extremely effective. If your product or service can be sold more effectively with face to face contact, then this marketing method offers an advantage. It also has the advantage of being able to be directed at a very targeted audience. The disadvantage is that canvassing door to door takes time for one person to reach a large quantity of prospects. To be effective for a larger company, you will need to get many people involved in a canvassing campaign. Tips for success. Have a neat and clean appearance and dress as your prospects dress. Smile as you announce your name and your company's name. Time is of importance so you want to qualify your prospect right away with a single question. For example, if you are selling a window washing service you may want to ask the prospect if they currently utilize a professional window washing company? If they would answer "yes" you can quickly ask a follow up question "are you happy with your present service?" Ask another question to confirm you are talking to the decision maker. Whenever you mention a feature of a product also mention the benefit. It's the benefit that sells. For example, a feature for core aerating a lawn is plugging 7 holes per square foot but the benefit is a deeper root system and a thicker, healthier lawn. The consumers' interest always lies in what the product will do for them. Be sure to engage the prospect in conversation and try to learn something about the prospect's needs so you can tell them how your product or service can fulfill those needs. Utilize circulars or brochures as sales and visual aids to enhance the presentation and to create credibility and confidence. Do not give prospects the brochure until you have closed or attempted to close the sale. Proudly point out the successes of your company and give customer references. Perhaps you have customers that you can use for references on the same street that you are canvassing.

Close the sale by asking for a decision on a delivery date or payment method. If you are canvassing on a larger scale you may want to consider having a professional sales leader manage a group of lead developers who knock on the doors for the sole purpose of developing leads and leaving door hangers for those not at home. The literature you leave at the door could refer to the fact that you have an estimate for them and to expect a follow up call. These "not at home" leads can be interfaced with your telemarketing program. As leads are developed the sales leader can be personally called over to make the sales presentation. Make sure to check with city hall of the community you intend to canvass to see if they require a permit for the individual who is going to do the canvassing.

2) **Personal letters**, when drafted properly, can be a very effective marketing method. The more personal they are the more effective they will be, so this marketing method is well suited to customers or prospects about whom you have personal information. The letter needs to be about them and not you. For example, "I noticed how beautiful your home looks with the new exterior remodeling and painting. Would you like some ideas on how you can improve the looks of your retaining walls?" Remember to always state the benefits to the customer of what you are suggesting. For example, "An updated retaining wall will complete your exterior remodeling and add to the value of your home both aesthetically and financially." Most people read the salutation first and

the P.S. second so put your best benefit and a sense of urgency to act in the P.S. It also adds a nice personal touch to hand write the P.S. Instead of requesting a response, simply inform them that you will be following up. As it is true with every marketing strategy, it is the phone follow up that will increase the effectiveness and improve your marketing results.

3) **Telemarketing** allows you to qualify your leads quickly and verbally express more details about your product or service than many other marketing media. Telemarketing is also a great choice when you are selling business to business; however, it has been more challenging since the mid-nineties selling to individuals and families. Keep in mind that telemarketing can work well in conjunction with other marketing strategies, especially direct mail and canvassing where literature has been distributed.

Another advantage is your ability to target certain markets. Effective telemarketing campaigns utilize well thought out scripts that are practiced to sound natural. Telemarketers need to be trained to ask pointed questions to uncover needs and objections. They need to know how to answer the objection, confirm that the objection is solved in the prospect's mind, and sell benefits. They also need to know how to ask decision making questions to close the sale. Sales brochures are great marketing tools to mail out to qualified prospects that have not been closed. As always, testing and adjusting your sales presentation should be a never ending process.

4) **Sales brochures** are great marketing weapons. They allow you to go into detail about your product or service and bring it to life with color photography. Sales brochures can be used as visuals during a sales presentation. They can be used to build referral business by handing or mailing them to customers who have already purchased. They can also be given to qualified prospects who could not be closed as a way to keep your message in front of them until the next follow up call. If you are mailing a brochure to someone make sure you enclose a personal note on both the envelope and the brochure so it stands out from all the other direct mail they will receive. Sales brochures can be a great tool for building credibility and confidence and turning prospects into paying customers. In developing a brochure the first question to ask is "what is it you want the brochure to do?" Do you want it to help close sales, generate referral business, drive prospects to your website, or to act as a silent sales person? Remember that the advantage of a brochure is that it can be very informative, so don't be afraid to utilize a lot of good copy. The first thing you should see when you look at the brochure is what you are offering. The offer needs to be stated in terms of what it is going to do for the prospect and it should also state your number one benefit. This message needs to be tied directly into a color photograph that supports the message. Remember, color sells so always use color images. The remainder of the brochure needs to continue to list the remaining benefits and give information that will create credibility and confidence. Be sure to tell your prospects exactly what type of action you want them to take.

5) **Classified advertising** is not targeted to a specific audience; however, it will be sought out by people who are actively seeking your product or service. As a result, it can be a very inexpensive media when it is generating results. Don't forget to include the online classifieds. In some online formats you may need to place the ad daily to stay at the top of the listings. To maximize the effectiveness of your classified advertising use a short headline in capital letters that captures attention. The content of the copy should follow directly from the headline. The copy should be written as if you are talking to one person and should be formatted as "people talk" versus want ad talk. Remember to include all of the main benefits, yet keep the advertisement as short as possible. The ad should end with a motivation to buy. The following is an example of a classified ad for a lawn maintenance company :

**ENJOY A BEAUTIFUL
MAINTENANCE FREE LAWN**

Save time and treat yourself to a special experience and a great looking lawn. We have been developing and maintaining thick, weed free lawns since 1985. We can also mow, seed, aerate and deep root feed. So relax and enjoy. Call today for a free estimate & recommendations
937-0125

6) **Direct mail** allows you to target a specific audience, go into a great amount of detail about your product or service and utilize color photography to bring your offering to life. This media can be used to accomplish a wide array of sales goals such as developing leads, driving prospects to your website and developing immediate sales. Direct mail is also a great way to stay in touch with customers and generate additional revenue. This is an easy media to measure results and develop feedback to make the mail piece more effective in the future. The disadvantage is the cost of the postage. However, as long as the response rate justifies the cost of the postage, the mailing cost is not important. You can also consider direct mail packs. Direct mail packs will cut your postage costs significantly but you will also give up the flexibility of mailing to a specific target audience and be forced to print on a smaller mail piece to present your offer.

When developing a direct mail piece, the first decision you need to make is whether you will mail a letter in an envelope or a flat mail piece. The advantage of the flat mail piece is the print production cost will be less than producing both promotional literature and envelopes plus the mail piece does not need to be opened to be seen. If you do use an envelope, make sure to use a bright colored oversized envelope with a teaser printed on the outside to encourage it to be opened. For the flat direct mail piece consider using oversized mailers larger than 5.5" x 8.5" inches to capture attention. Other points to keep in mind to maximize results are 1) The headline should state the primary benefit 2) The graphics should support the headline 3) State all the additional benefits and offer solutions to problems 4) Use the words "you" and "yours", highlight important statements in red, use the word "free" and "guarantee" 5) Use testimonials when appropriate 6) Repeat the offer on the reply card 7) Make it easy to reply and respond.

7) **Websites** are one of your best media marketing values and present the possibility to be one of your most effective marketing revenue producers. A website has several advantages over traditional media. First, it is more convenient. Customers and prospects can get on your website from any location and at any time of the day. Second, they can spend as much time on your site as they choose. Third, you can present an unlimited amount of product or service information with as much detail and photography as is necessary. Fourth, websites offer interactive capabilities that are not available in any other types of media. Remember, when you design your site not to think of it as an advertisement but instead think of it as a shopping experience that will interact with the customer and allow them to shop for as long as they wish. Some of the more important points to design an effective website include: A) a pleasing and attractive design with good graphics. B) detailed content C) as much interactive capability as possible, both within the site and with the company. D) easy navigation from topic to topic within the site E) as much personalization as possible. F) Procurement capability is critical. The website must offer an efficient way to procure an order and/or prospect. To get the maximum benefit out of your website, your customer service staff must offer a quick response to prospect and customer requests from your site. You also have to promote your website. Good, interactive websites have tremendous potential to generate revenue if your target market knows that your site exists.

Promoting your site in your other marketing strategies is a good place to start. It is important that prospects can find your site through Google or Yahoo search engines. In order to benefit from a search you will need to invest marketing dollars on a pay for click basis. The more you invest the higher up on the list your site will appear. You also need to invest time researching key words, incorporating the key words into your site, developing rich content to publish in your site weekly, and getting as many companies linked to your site as possible. The goal is to establish your site and company as an authoritative site so the search engines recognize you as a leader and place your company on the top of the organic search lists.

8) **Newsletters** are a great way to stay in touch with customers and to build customer loyalty. Newsletters should not be formatted or resemble an advertisement. They should have newsy headlines, with educational, informative content and attractive photography. This is also a good media to present new ideas and offer solutions to problems. Many times the topics discussed in a newsletter can end up generating additional revenue. Remember, because they are newsletters, they must be timely relative to the information that you are conveying.

9) **Stuffers** promoting new or add-on services or products are very effective at generating additional revenue from your customers. Insert stuffers postage free in with your monthly statements or your invoices left at the door. Again, remember to state the number one benefit to the customer in conjunction with a supporting color photograph.

Other than the major media sources of newspaper, television, radio and magazines, there are many other marketing methods available to your company that will generate revenue. The following is a sample list:

- 10) **Small outdoor signs**
- 11) **Thank you cards**
- 12) **Tradeshows**
- 13) **Publicity announcements**
- 14) **Specialty gifts imprinted with your company logo**
- 15) **Sponsoring community events**
- 16) **Donating charitable gifts to silent auctions**
- 17) **Advertising on service vehicles**
- 18) **Advertising on uniforms**
- 19) **Sales cards**
- 20) **The yellow pages**
- 21) **Advertising on shopping bags or grocery receipts**
- 22) **Window banners in retail stores**
- 23) **Catalogs to build authenticity and shop at home convenience**
- 24) **Seminars and demonstrations**
- 25) **Free sample programs**

Notes

1. Chocolates on Your Pillow aren't Enough, Jonathan M. Tisch, p. 2, 3.
2. E-Myth, Michael Gerber, p. 3, 4.
3. The Purple Cow, Seth Godin, p. 4.
4. Guerrilla Marketing, Jay Conrad Levinson, p. 4, 5, 6, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14

Incorporate the following actions into building a successful marketing program.

- 1) Have you successfully identified your target audience?
- 2) Have you successfully identified what your customer really wants?
- 3) Have you successfully matched the strengths of the various marketing media and methods with your target audience?
- 4) Have you completed a written, annual marketing plan?
- 5) Does your marketing program offer consistency, both in frequent investments in advertising appearances as well as the image and message of the advertising?
- 6) Do you make it convenient for your customer to get information about your products or services?
- 7) Do you make it convenient for your customer to purchase your products or services?
- 8) Does your marketing program offer personal attention to your customer to make them feel special?
- 9) Does your marketing program offer friendly, remarkable experiences at every point your customer touches your company?
- 10) As a marketing vehicle, do your systems to deliver the product or service alleviate customer frustrations and satisfy the customers wants better than your competition?
- 11) As a marketing vehicle, is your product or service remarkable enough to create word of mouth advertisement?
- 12) Do you have a multi-functional marketing program that is consistent in developing leads better than the competition?
- 13) Do you continue to market to your customers after the initial sale?
- 14) Do you measure every marketing event for its financial return?

RND's marketing consultants can help you build a personalized program that will fulfill as many of your marketing objectives as you desire.