



THE BEST TIME FOR MARKETING...

The best time for marketing is when they aren't buying.

Be realistic. If you aren't selling the hottest new fashion or gizmo for holiday gift-giving, it's hard to get anyone to think about buying your product or service from Thanksgiving through Christmas and New Year's. That's a six week lean selling stretch for lots of sales professionals. When you are trying to hit your quarterly and year-end numbers that lean stretch can be tough to swallow.

No leader likes to see their team sitting around the office having a pity party. Instead, build this market reality into your schedule and ramp up your marketing activities during sales lulls.

Why should you invest in marketing to your target market when they aren't buying?

1. To stay front and center on their radar – especially if you target the corporate market.
2. To increase their awareness of you
3. To bring attention to you
4. To highlight the added value you offer
5. To generate a desire to continue to hear what you have to say

What kind of marketing can you do when no one is buying?

Your marketing team can use this time to plan and schedule all marketing strategies for 2006 and get them scheduled and booked.

* If you will be a conference speaker in April, they need to establish a timeline for drafting the speech, shipping handouts to the location, developing the PowerPoint presentation to go with it, the press release, website promotion, travel arrangements, etc.

* If you will introduce a new product, service or program in June, they need to work out all the details for the most thorough and effective rollout with enough lead-time to implement all the pieces, or identify gaps to be filled in a timely fashion.

* If you have increased your marketing budget for 2006 – this is a great time to develop some of those promotional pieces or hire contractors/freelancers to develop them for you.

* If you have a 2006 goal of increasing visibility in a new market, a new niche, or a new country, the marketing team needs time to bone up on the nuances and implications of this goal to prepare successful penetration strategies.

Your sales team does not need to be idle during seasonal sales lulls either. Your sales force can use this time to research growth opportunities for the company and their own territories.

* Sales staff can use the holiday season as an excuse to followup every sale all year long with a brief visit or a phone call: to personally say thank you for the business, to ensure continued satisfaction with the product, service and the salesperson's work and to bind client loyalty with strong rapport.

* In addition, each client contact is a great opening to query them about their plans for the next year, to identify client needs which your product/service can address in the new year – i.e., scouting for 2006 add-on sales.

* Sales staff can also take time to study the market and their territory vis-à-vis the company's 2006 goals and start developing sales strategies and tactics to achieve the company plan and reach their own quotas and incentives.

* Sales staff can use this season for supplemental (internal or external) training to refine their craft.

Marketing is not a passive activity. You have to keep the pipeline full. So, periodically, it is important to reflect and assess how to rejuvenate your marketing efforts. This lull between the holidays is a perfect time to focus on all the behind-the-scenes marketing activities that will make next year, your best year yet!