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## 12 SALES-BOOSTING STRATEGIES

The competition is fierce and ad budgets are tighter than ever. If you're looking to boost profits and gain market share, there are some things you can do to gain a bigger piece of the pie.

**Give your product a distinct personality.**

OfficeMax's Rubber-Band Guy is an instantly identifiable, highly memorable character that has boosted sales and brand recognition. It personifies the brand while selling the message that whatever customers need they can get at OfficeMax.

**Give them an interesting history lesson.**

Some of the most common products we use today have the most interesting development histories. Hippocrates, the father of modern medicine, left historical records of a powder made from the bark and leaves of the willow tree to help heal headaches, pains and fevers. By 1829, scientists discovered that the salicin in willow plants was the key ingredient in aspirin, which was later repackaged and marketed by Bayer.

**Sing your product's praises.**

Create a memorable catchy song, poem or jingle that hooks in people's minds. Gillette sold millions of razor blades using "The Best a Man Can Get," which continues to stick in consumers' heads, leaving a positive impression about the product's unbeatable performance.

**Re-package your product for the customer.**

Create new convenience packaging that makes your product easier to buy, use or refill. Motor oil used to be sold in cans that required a punch-in can opener or separate punch-through spout. These were messy and troublesome to use. Now oil is sold in twist-open, easy-pour plastic bottles.

**Let consumables take the lead.**

Drop the price of your product, then promote and sell its consumables. Computer printers can be bought for as little as \$20, yet the ink cartridges sell for \$29 apiece. So don't worry about making a big profit on devices, let your consumables take the lead.

**Use viral marketing.**

Viral marketing is any word-of-mouth or "tell a friend" mechanism that induces users to re-convey a marketing message to other sites or users. Leveraged by the power of the web and email, viral techniques can create exponential growth in your product's visibility.

**Customize your product.**

Try to give customers exactly what they want by creating apparently customized versions of your product. Consider the success of Cycle 1, 2, 3, 4 Pet Foods, or Burger King's "Have it Your Way."

**Go high tech.**

Exploit the latest technological advancements in media to underscore your message. For example, explore the use of audio chips in magazines, brochures or mailers. The novelty of these devices gets people talking, and there's that "V" word again (viral marketing).

**Promote product sharing.**

This can be done by showing how your product brings friends and family together. An emotional appeal like this can be very memorable. A good example is Almond Joy's, "you can share half and still have a whole." Another is the ubiquitous Friends-and-Family discount, which abounds in everything from cell phones to vacation packages.

**Show your product being used by experts.**

If possible, establish your product as the one used by recognized experts in the field. A case in point is Canon's use of photojournalists to endorse its 35mm cameras.

**Make your product sui generis.**

Establish the fact that your product is generically in a class by itself. Consider Porsche's use of the line "there is no substitute." Or products that have become household words: "blow your nose with a Kleenex," or "make me a Xerox copy."

**Think outside the demographic box.**

Attract a new category of customers by thinking outside the box. Consider gaining younger or older buyers by expanding the utility and style of your product, e.g., cell phones for 'tweens, or health bars for seniors.

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