



DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING RESULTS WITH THESE 6 SIMPLE STEPS

What if there were things you could start doing now that could help you to market more successfully in the future? Even if you didn't have your marketing act together over the past year. Well, there are.

(1) Review your past marketing activities and results

Take some time to review all of your marketing activities and try to understand which ones worked best. And when I say "worked best" I mean, which ones resulted in more clients, more customers, more sales, or more growth for your business?

Your goal each year should be to understand which marketing activities bring you more business and which ones do not, so you can concentrate on the activities that work, and delete the ones that do not. Even if you did not have an organized marketing plan, or marketing activities that you implemented consistently during the past year, if you are still in business today, then there must have been some form of marketing going on.

(2) Broaden your definition of marketing

Marketing isn't only things like running an advertisement, or sending out a direct mail piece. It's anything you do that puts your business, product or service in front of the prospects you are trying to sell to.

You may be surprised to realize you've been marketing more than you know!

Any time you talk to someone about your business, product or service, in person, at an event, over the phone, or through a brochure or some form of media, you are marketing. Any time you send someone an email or a thank you card from your business, you are marketing.

Be aware of any time you are communicating with current customers, or potential customers. Take the opportunity to make them aware of new products or services, special offers or programs, or even milestones or changes in your business.

Do you include your business card every time you mail a letter to a client or prospect? Do you have an email signature that includes your business name, your phone number, your email address, your website address and possibly even your tagline? You should. You are reminding people about your products and services and making it easy for them to find out more if they so choose.

If you truly believe that your products or services can enhance people's lives, then it should be easy to share the word at every opportunity. After all, if people don't know about you, they can't benefit. Put this way, it is almost a disservice to NOT market.

(3) See if you can track your sales to your marketing, either directly or indirectly

Take a look at the marketing you did do, taking into consideration all of the activities mentioned above. Can you directly or indirectly track any new or increased business to these activities? An example of direct tracking might be: You attended a networking event and someone you gave your business card to, contacted you or made a purchase.

An example of indirect tracking might be: You attended a networking event, and someone you gave your business card to, referred you to a friend, and that friend contacted you or made a purchase. For each marketing activity you did over the past year, ask yourself the following questions:

(a) Did I get any new clients, customers or increased sales as a direct result, or an indirect result, of this activity?

(b) If the answer is yes, quantify the result by asking yourself: How many new clients, customers or sales did it generate?

If you can't seem to track your past marketing activities, consider asking your current customers how they found out about you.

You could do a survey that includes a number of customer satisfaction questions, but also includes a question to determine how they found out about you.

If you have a handful of clients that you work closely with and you really don't know how they found you, pick up the phone and ask them.

At the end of this exercise, you will have a list of all of your marketing activities, and the results connected to each one.

(4) Separate those activities that resulted in business from those that did not

Are there any activities on your list that did not result in new or additional business? If you gave these activities a good opportunity to bring you business, then maybe it's time to consider dropping these activities and trying some new ones. After all, there is no sense continuing to spend money on marketing that has not proven to be effective for your business. Even if it has worked for someone else, it may not be a good marketing activity for you and your business.

(5) Use this information to plan your marketing for next year

Plan to spend more time, energy and/or money on those activities that brought you business and sales. These activities have proven themselves to be effective for your business, product or service. So odds are if you commit more to them, they will result in even more sales. And, if you really don't have any way to track your sales or new clients, don't beat yourself up. You are not alone. In fact, one of my biggest challenges as a marketing consultant has been to get my clients to track the effectiveness of their various marketing activities. Just make sure to remedy this now, once and for all. Commit to never implementing a marketing activity again without some way to track how effective it is.

(6) Set up a way to track all future marketing activities

Recognize the importance of tracking and make sure that you have a plan in place to track all of your future marketing activities. The simplest way to track is to simply ask each new customer where or how they found out about you. You may also want to consider including a code on any flyers or brochures that you distribute, and providing a reason for the customer to bring that flyer in when they come to make a purchase. Reasons to return the flyer could be to take advantage of a special offer, or to get a discount or free bonus gift.

You can also do this by phone or on the Internet if that is how your customers make purchases. Simply ask them to provide you with the code on the brochure or flyer that they are calling or ordering from. Make sure the code is specific to the location or group of people that you distributed the flyer to. If you are networking or speaking to a group and someone gives you their business card and agrees to receive your free report or e-newsletter, make sure you include a reference in your contact database of the event where you met them. For every marketing activity you do put a plan in place to help you track all them. Effective tracking is by far one of the easiest ways to improve your marketing effectiveness. And when you zero-in on what marketing activities are most effective for your business, you will be able to focus your efforts on only those activities, and will be able to spend less and get more as a result.

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