



IMPROVE YOUR MARKETING RESULTS WITH THESE 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 quite together over the past year? Well, there are.

Review your past marketing 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.

Marketing isn't only things like running an advertisement, or sending out a direct mail piece. (See "Is That Really Considered Marketing?" below to better understand all the different forms that marketing can take. You may be surprised to realize you've been marketing more than you know!)

Direct vs. Indirect Tracking

Take a look at what you did do. 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:

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

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

At the end of this exercise, you will have a list of all of your marketing activities, and the results connected to each one. Which activities brought you the most business? Are there any activities on your list that did not result in new or additional business?

Use what you learn to plan future marketing

Use this information as you begin 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. Delete those activities that did not.

If you don't have any way to track your sales or new clients, don't worry. What does your gut tell you about where your new business came from? Additionally, see the Question of the Week for tips on uncovering marketing results even if you didn't track very well. And if nothing else, be glad that you now know what you need to do next year to ensure your future marketing success.

Is That Really Considered Marketing?

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.

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