



THE 7 MOST COMMON MARKETING MISTAKES

When marketing your product or service, you need to have a firm understanding of your audience, the message you want to deliver, the offer you're willing to make, and the optimal timing for your marketing campaign.

Too often novice marketers, even marketing veterans, make costly mistakes that result in poor performance of their marketing campaign. Common marketing mistakes can be avoided with adequate planning, attention to detail, and ongoing measurement and evaluation.

If you're considering a traditional marketing campaign, an Internet marketing campaign, or something that's never been tried before, be sure to avoid these common marketing mistakes.

1. **Timing.** You may have a great list, a fantastic offer, and even a well designed marketing piece, but if your timing is off, so too will be your results. As an experienced marketer, I have seen some very expensive marketing campaigns that were very compelling but failed to produce results. This is because the campaign reached consumers at a time in which they had no interest in buying the product. For example, trying to sell snow shovels in July would not be considered good timing.
2. **Failure to Test Your Headline.** As the first thing your prospect usually reads, the headline is essential for luring your prospective buyer into the message, your offer, and the action you want them to take. Regardless of the medium, you should continually test your headlines (or subject lines) by running split tests and evaluating response. This ensures that your marketing message attracts the largest number of prospective buyers.
3. **Failure to Test Your Offer.** In direct marketing, the offer is directly correlated to 40% of your response. If you have the right offer, people respond. There are other factors to consider as well, but providing a compelling offer is required in most instances. Offers can range from discounts to "hurry while supplies last", but the commonality remains. Test your offers for optimizing response.
4. **Having a Good List.** Having the best offer and award-winning design is not enough. For many types of marketing campaigns, success is directly tied to having a targeted list. With today's sophisticated list generation tools, you can acquire lists that are highly segmented based on demographics, psychographics, buying behavior, and many other characteristics. The key here is not to be penny wise and pound foolish. If you're wondering where to invest your marketing dollars, spend them on developing a good house list (names you acquire on your own) or by renting/purchasing a well segmented marketing list.
5. **Relying on a Single Communication.** On average, consumers are hit with over 2,000 marketing messages everyday. In fact, recent studies have indicated that consumers need to see your marketing message an average of 12 times before they take notice. If there is any truth to the claim in part or in whole, it means that you must communicate to prospects on a regular basis. Placing a single ad in the newspaper or sending a single email cannot deliver effective results. Determine the media that prospects use to gather information and develop an ongoing campaign that works within your budget.
6. **Not Measuring Campaign Effectiveness.** Over time, your business is going to do a lot of marketing. Even if you are a small business wondering how you're going to communicate to a prospective audience, you're going to eventually have some type of communication. Regardless of the marketing campaign size or expense, you need to track your results. This can be done with a simple spreadsheet or a multi-million dollar CRM system. The bottom line is you need to record what works and what doesn't so that you can improve your results in the future.
7. **Failure to Continue the Dialogue.** After consulting for a number of large companies, I'm still amazed at how many fail to communicate to customers on an ongoing basis. Often times, consumers or businesses only hear from the seller when its time to buy again. If you have an established customer base, chances are you've worked hard to acquire them. You should be spending some of your marketing budget to retain them. Be sure to open a dialogue with customers, solicit their feedback, and communicate with them regularly. This will help to build your business over the long-term.

If you're new to marketing, have experience as a marketing professional, or simply want to improve your current marketing results, be sure to learn from the mistakes of others. To be successful, continually work towards improving your marketing effectiveness. Avoid the 7 most common marketing mistakes, and you're on your way to delivering tangible results.

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