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Smart Business Brief

Advice for Success!

Seven tips for more successful marketing

Whether you're a start-up business or an established firm, you need to continually market your business to maintain or increase awareness, attract new customers, grow market share or penetrate new markets, introduce new products or services, and increase distribution. The following seven tips should help you to become a better marketer and help you reach your goals.

- 1. Define your target audience:** The first step is to define your most likely customers. Are they consumers or businesses? If consumers, what is their age, gender, marital status, geographic location, occupation, educational level, etc.? If other businesses, what is their size, number of employees, industry, geographic location, decision maker, etc.? The more precisely you define your most likely customers, the easier it will be to refine your message and select the appropriate media to reach them.
- 2. Identify your targets' wants and needs:** While the range of your most likely customers may be very wide, you will learn that different sub-segments of your target audience have different reasons (wants and needs) for buying your products or services. For example, some people buy mobile phones because they want to be able to easily contact their clients or their office, while others buy them primarily to use in case of emergency. Your customers' wants and needs will determine the messages you send to them.
- 3. Focus your message:** Your message is what you say to persuade potential customers to take a desired action. You may need to develop a different message for each sub-segment of your target market. Your message should include: who you are, what you do, and why the reader/listener should buy from you. Your message should also tell customers what to do if they are interested in what you sell – the "call to action" (i.e., call for more information or place an order).
- 4. Define reach while avoiding waste:** Many media channels will talk about their "reach", the total number of individuals who make up their audience. Generally, media with large audiences will charge higher rates for their ads than media with a smaller reach. But be careful. The key factor to consider is the percentage of audience members who are actually in your target market. The more closely you can match a medium's total reach to your own target audience, the more effectively you can invest your ad dollars.
- 5. Understand frequency:** The term "frequency" refers to the total number of times your ad runs in a specific medium and the length of time between each ad. Many publications or broadcasters will offer discounted rates if you purchase more ads during a specific time period. People are bombarded by literally thousands of ad messages every day and have developed a subconscious "filtering system" to filter out most of these ads. You must run your ads enough times to break through your customers' awareness level. A general rule of thumb is that you must run the same ad at least three times before it will begin to register with your audience.
- 6. Choose the right media:** The key to selecting the right medium is to match the qualities of each with your target profile. Radio is a tightly focused medium. It is the most appropriate channel for your message if you sell a product or service designed for a very specific audience. Television can also be effective if you want to reach a large but sub-segmented portion of the general public. If you want to reach businesses, a business-oriented publication may be an ideal choice. Direct mail can be effective if you can find a mailing list that closely matches your customer profile. The Internet may be an excellent choice, especially if you want to reach a national audience.
- 7. Try additional promotional strategies:** There are many other alternatives to promote your business, including: Join a business, civic, or networking group, perform public speaking to targeted groups, write press releases and articles for publication, sponsor an event, create a marketing partnership with another company, distribute ad specialty items imprinted with your name and phone number to targeted groups, use a professional "Message On-Hold" service to sell and educate callers while they're on hold, or keep your customers and prospects up-to-date on your company with personal letters.