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PRINTtips

Order Out of Chaos... Defining a Marketing Strategy



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What strategy are you using to promote your business or organization? Do you find yourself overwhelmed by the sheer number of choices – brochures and sales collateral, newsletters and product bulletins, direct mail, e-letters, desktop web site, mobile web site, blogging, Google Place page, search engine optimization, keyword search, content creation, LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter? Have you been jumping from one method to another based on whatever is getting the most buzz in the business magazines you read?

Paraphrasing from Nike: Pick one and *just do it*.

Your first task is to develop an effective marketing strategy that creatively combines traditional and new media to foster engagement and interaction with customers and prospects. So let's start with some basic definitions:

- *Traditional media* refers to ways used to reach customers and prospects pre-Internet: publications (magazines, newspapers); broadcast (radio and television); print (sales collateral, newsletters, direct mail marketing).
- *New media* refers to digital technologies that can be interactive (web sites, e-mail), social media where people share opinions, insights, experiences, and perspectives (blogs, podcasts, message boards), sharing sites (YouTube, Flickr, and social networks (LinkedIn, Facebook)).



For most small businesses and organizations, the high cost of publications and broadcast media, as well as their overly broad reach, make them unsuitable as marketing tools. So the foundation of an effective marketing strategy for most businesses and organizations is printed material: sales collateral, newsletters, and direct mail.

- *Sales collateral* is a broad term for printed material that supports the sales process by helping people with the buying decision. Brochures, flyers, sales sheets, product information cards, posters, and white papers are all examples of sales collateral. Well designed sales collateral (text enhanced with photographs, specifications, charts, tables, diagrams, or testimonials) will improve reader comprehension and retention, build the seller's credibility, and serve as a tangible reminder after a sales call.

Order Out of Chaos...Defining a Marketing Strategy (Cont)

“Newsletters are an effective way to communicate regularly with customers...”

- *Newsletters* are an effective way to communicate regularly with customers, keeping them informed and providing educational material of interest. That’s exactly why we publish Printips – to remind you that we’re your printer and to provide something that is informative and useful to you. Because it is printed and mailed, you have something tangible that can be put aside for later reading if desired.
- *Direct mail marketing* is currently enjoying a resurgence in popularity due in part to people being overwhelmed by the volume of e-mail, the backlash against spam, and the fact that direct mail is a great way to inform people about a web site. Recognizing this, the United States Postal Service launched a direct mail product in April 2011 that is called *Every Door Direct Mail*. EDDM offers a very low postage rate (as low as 14.5 cents per piece) for a large size self-mailer sent to all the businesses and residences in an entire carrier route. If you aren’t familiar with this program and you’d like to explore whether it could be effective for your business, contact us at 513-248-2121.

“So the foundation of an effective marketing strategy is still print...”

So the foundation of an effective marketing strategy is still print – printed sales collateral, a newsletter distributed monthly, bimonthly or quarterly, and use of direct mail marketing to build name awareness, introduce products and services, and direct customers and prospects to a web site. Now it is time to integrate new media into the strategy with two web sites – one desktop and one mobile.

“A web site also allows the business to stand out from the competition...”

All businesses – large and small, high tech and low tech – need a web site because today that is how people search for businesses when they are ready to buy. A web site also allows the business to stand out from the competition – especially if the site demonstrates expertise – and provide resources for present and future prospects that don’t have an immediate need.

Should you have a mobile web site in addition to a desktop site? Three reasons why you should:

- A web site designed to display on a desktop computer monitor doesn’t translate well to the very small screen of a smart phone.
- Smart phones use different navigation tools (no mouse to click), making it harder to move around a desktop site using a mobile phone.
- Smart phone use is growing. According to a 2011 report from market research company iSuppli, the number of smart phones shipped in 2009 was 16% of the total market; by 2011, the percentage rose to one-third of the total volume; and iSuppli predicts that by 2015, over half of all mobile phone shipments will be smart phones. Smart phones provide another way for businesses to communicate with their customers.

Currently there is a big push to have print and mobile work together. Printing a QR (Quick Response) code on sales collateral, a newsletter, or a direct mail piece opens up a new dimension of customer communication. When scanned by a smart phone, a QR code can lead anywhere – to a web site or video, a map, additional information, a coupon or product review, or many other places. And if a business obtains the customer’s permission (*i.e.*, opt-in), the business can send messages to the smart phone with special offers or contests, all designed to increase customer loyalty.

Let us help you implement your marketing strategy

For years we have been helping our customers communicate with their customers to build sales. In the past we’ve done this exclusively with print. Now we are prepared to help you integrate print (which we still believe is the foundation of an effective marketing effort) with new media – desktop and mobile web sites, QR codes, and opt-in web-based promotions.

For more information or to get started, contact us at 513-248-2121.

Core Marketing Practices

An important feature of an effective marketing strategy is a core set of practices that shape the marketing message. Here are three proven ones:

- **The business narrative.** These are the stories that explain how your business is different from others of its kind. Rather than being about what you do, the narrative centers around the business values – what it stands for, what it does, and what it doesn't do.
- **Influence through education.** By using education as the primary means of influence, your business will become known as a place where problems are solved and options are presented.
- **Provide what others need.** This does not mean just providing your product or service. It also means connecting others for mutual benefit, creating strategic partnerships, and being a mentor.



Q.

I've heard that communication preferences vary by generation. How does this apply to a marketing strategy?

A.

There are generational preferences in communication styles. Applied to marketing, this means that you will need to use a variety of communication techniques to reach your customers and prospects. The techniques

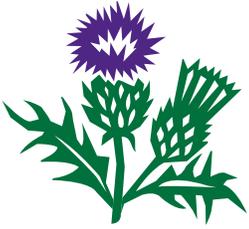
may be similar (sending a printed newsletter through the mail versus sending a digital version via e-mail) but one should not supplant the other.

Here is a brief recap of communication preferences by generation:

- Traditionalists (1925-1945): face to face communication, formal letters
- Baby Boomers (1946-1964): telephone, face-to-face, e-mail, cell phones for talking
- Gen X (1965-1978): e-mail, cell phone for text, blogging, instant message
- Gen Y (1979-1997): text, online social networks, e-mail (but only for work or school), instant message

Baby boomer and Gen X frames of reference are more influenced by traditional media such as print and television, while Gen Y's frame of reference is technology..

“...this means that you will need to use a variety of communication techniques to reach your customers and prospects.”



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“Besides having your own web site, consider registering your business for Google Places.”

Google Places

It has been said that people love to buy but hate to be sold. Since potential customers often go to the Internet to find a business, a referral, or a review when they are in the market for a product or service, make it easy for them to find you. Besides having your own web site, consider registering your business for Google Places.

Google gathers information on businesses from various public sources for its search response. Google Places allows business owners to review and update this information so it appears correctly on Google Maps and associated Google search and display sites.

Here is what Google claims are the benefits of Google Places:

- It's one more way to improve your SEO
- As the Internet continues to replace the phone book when people are looking for a product or service, Google Places will make sure you appear in their search.
- If optimized correctly, your Google Places listing makes your business show up on the first Google page.
- Mobile users can find you more easily.
- It's a great place to have your customers write a review.

To get started, go to www.google.com/places and click “Get started.”