

Sustained, well-executed marketing vital for growing businesses

Have your marketing efforts been less than fruitful? Do you know why? Perhaps it's because you haven't given marketing its proper consideration.

"Marketing isn't just running one ad and doing a trade show," says Gordie Gohr of Gohr Creative Services in Waukesha, Wis. You need a concerted effort employing the proper tools. Your program could include advertising, public relations, e-mail blasts, direct mail, and other means.

The approach you use depends on your needs and resources. Some firms find that non-traditional methods, such as sampling and other "guerrilla marketing" tactics work well. But because the group served is so small, the event must be coupled with a strong public relations campaign.

It's all about awareness, Gohr says. You don't know when your customers are in the mood to buy, so your marketing must be continuous. Think of the last time you purchased a mattress. The ads suddenly appear to be everywhere, when in fact they've been running regularly. You didn't notice them until you were ready to buy.

Marketing is vital, but you must keep your priorities in order. If you're no longer spending a majority of your time on your core tasks—providing a

product or service—it's time to seek help. Gohr says that executives who continue in this manner are doing their businesses a disservice.

Who should handle marketing? Gohr recommends someone with real-world experience or formal training who fully understands the various marketing tools available. If no such person exists on your staff, consider contracting with a marketing professional or firm.

Keep your business prosperous and profitable with sustained, well-executed marketing.

Most important, "surround yourself with people who will give you honest advice," Gohr says. They should tell you what appeals to your customers, not merely what you like.

Just as you are an expert in your business, so are the marketing people experts in that field. While it's OK to be involved and ask thoughtful questions, you must learn to trust their judgment.

Experience in your industry is helpful, Gohr says, but the basic principles of marketing apply to all businesses. Those fundamental steps will be used to generate a message

unique to your situation and needs.

Don't rush to cut your marketing budget when times are tough. Gohr says firms that market during difficult periods enjoy sustained sales and find themselves ahead of the competition when conditions improve.

In those situations, Gohr says, "make sure you've done your homework." Focus on those elements you can control, such as manufacturing, packaging, distribution, sales force education, and your message.

Tip of the Month

Principal vs. Principle

Though they are pronounced the same and share similar spellings, these words have distinctly different meanings.

Principal, as an adjective, refers to the first or foremost ranked item.

She had the principal part in the school's play.

(Someone who heads a school is a principal teacher or principal.)

Principle, on the other hand, is a rule or policy governing actions or conduct.

We will adhere to the principles that have kept this firm profitable and the envy of our industry.

The principles apply to everyone from entry level to management.

Reasonable expectations, sound execution ensure success and satisfaction

Because consumers are free to choose which messages they receive and products they buy, marketing firms are unable to offer firm guarantees as to the success of a program. But satisfactory results are still within your reach.

Gordie Gohr suggests you begin with realistic and measurable goals. Consider carefully your position in the marketplace as you set reasonable growth projections. Start with what you know prior to the campaign, and factor in outside forces such as economic conditions and competitor strengths.

Some additional factors to consider include:

-Sales staff: New members can add to your bottom line provided they, and the veterans, are trained properly and follow procedures.

- Markets: Similarly, new markets offer great opportunities for growth as long as prospects are properly educated on your firm and products/services.

Proper planning and execution will ensure maximum results, Gohr says.

Scribbles & Keystrokes is a regular feature of Supreme Communications, LLC, a marketing communications firm. Feel free to call Tom Fuszard at 262-789-7975, or send your questions and comments to tom@supremecom.biz.

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2505 S. Calhoun Rd., #203
New Berlin, WI 53151