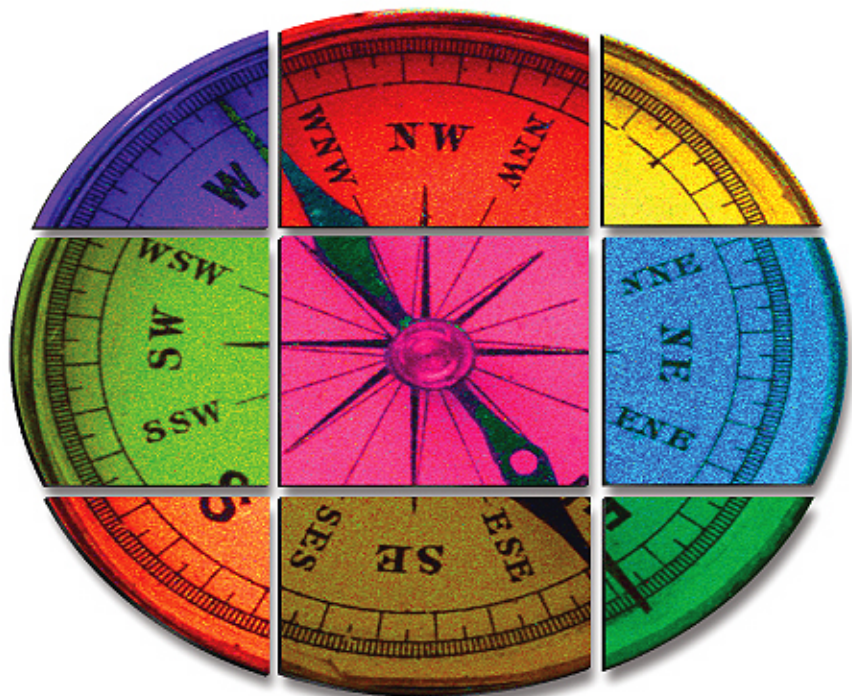


By Kevin Yaney

GUIDE TO MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS



Do you know where you are going?

Marketing is a key component to any

successful business venture. Your customer needs a clear understanding of what you are selling and why they should buy it from you. In today's business world, there are a multitude of different marketing mediums to help you get your message out. However, to be most effective, there are some key questions you should ask before you commit to any marketing campaign.

1. What does your customer want?

A lot can be learned from simply listening to the people who are currently buying from you or you desire to have as a client. An ongoing dialog between you and your consumers will tell you a lot about what you should be selling. As needs change, you will be ahead of your competition if you simply listen.

Here is a simple test to give to your sales & marketing staff. Ask them what they think your customers would ask for if they could have anything from your company. Then, have a conversation with several customers and ask them the same question. If you want to find out if your current marketing strategies are working, find out if the

salesmen and the customers are saying the same thing.

2. What is the mood of the market?

In an affluent capitalist society, most goods are purchased on emotion rather than reason. We have all seen consumer goods packed around checkout lanes at supermarkets. For the most part, there is nothing stocked on those shelves that are essentials to life, yet they appeal to us on a feeling level. Billions of dollars change hands each year by making people stand two minutes in front of a POP display before they pay for their groceries.

Your products and services are also dependent upon the emotion of the marketplace. Timing your marketing strategies to the mood of the market is essential. What are the feeling towards your industry and your products? Are you trying to market your company simply by listing all your best features or are you trying to appeal to an emotion?

3. What is the competition doing?

Knowing your competitor's strengths and weaknesses is essential in putting together a marketing plan. Why would a

customer buy from them and not from you? Conversely, what edge do you have that keeps your customers buying from you and not from them?

4. What are the roadblocks?

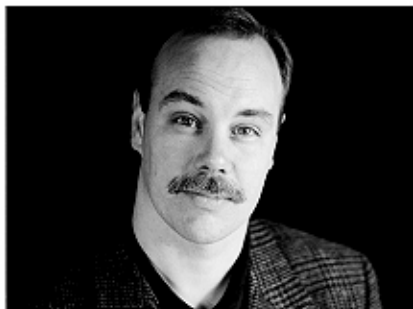
Are there issues that need to be overcome before a customer will take a second look at your product? Typical issues are price, quality control, turn-around time, inexperience with your product or name recognition of your company. Recognizing these obstacles helps formulate a marketing plan that can navigate around them or eliminate them all together.

5. What is your plan of attack?

Coordinating all this information into a plan of action will help you reach your market in an organized and consistent manner. You will also be in the best position to select the best medium to carry your message. Too often businesses fall in love with a specific advertising medium and are wooed by the emotional high they get from being seen. A good plan of attack makes rational rather than emotional decisions about marketing and advertising as it pertains to the answers to the previous four questions.

10 Stupid Marketing Mistakes

1. Mistrust the research. Marketing research is essential in knowing what a large group of people are thinking. If you think you are smarter than the crowd, think again.
2. Don't listen to your customer. There is a temptation in marketing to tell the customer exactly what he needs instead of listening to what he wants and adjusting marketing strategies to meet his expectations. Hear what the customers are saying to you and you can avoid some giant pitfalls.
3. Go when you should have stopped and stop when you should have gone. Timing is key to successful marketing.
4. Believing you have saturated your market to the point you don't have to advertise. 90% of advertising is brand recognition. The most recognized brands are the ones who advertise the most.
5. Expecting too much from a single source of advertising. To be successful, advertising needs to be repetitious and diversified.
6. Mistaking public relations for a marketing plan. A piece of good PR is worth its weight in gold for about 24 hours. Marketing is intentional, consistent and persistent. It is your ride for the long haul.
7. Expecting marketing to take the place of sales. Marketing can lead the horse to water. Sales is what makes it take the drink.
8. Ignoring old customers while searching for new.
9. Believing customers will come to you regardless of any marketing efforts.
10. Not measuring the success or failure of your marketing efforts.



Kevin Yaney is the founder and president of Yaney Marketing, Inc., a full service ad agency offering specialized services in marketing, creative arts and publishing. Kevin has worked in the marketing and publishing industries since 1983.

To learn more about how you can successfully market your business, contact Yaney Marketing at 317-776-0676 or by e-mail: contactus@yaney.net. Visit our web site: www.yaney.net



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