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5 Steps to Targeting Your Marketing Message

By Lois Carter Fay, APR

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In order to win at the game of business, a company needs a good plan. This can be done in-house, with a marketing consultant, or with a marketing firm. Here are five steps to developing and implementing a good marketing message:

1. Determine your company's strengths and weaknesses.

Before you can tell others who you are and what you do, you need to know about yourself. Gather your employees together and brainstorm a list of your company's strengths and weaknesses. Write everything down that is said and wait to evaluate it until you have exhausted all of the ideas.

Next, review each item on the list and decide if this is appropriate to be on the list, or if it can be eliminated. It's likely you will find several that can be combined so that you end up with a relatively short list of strengths and weaknesses. You can also develop a short survey and ask your customers and vendors what they think your strengths and weaknesses are. Their answers may surprise you!

2. Research your target market/customer.

Next, analyze your sales from the past three years. What products or services are most profitable for you? Who are your customers? What can you conclude about your customers? What is similar about them? Based on your profitability evaluation, should you be targeting a certain type of customer, or changing your current strategies? How do these customers make their buying decisions? How can you influence those decisions?

Consider such things as:

- Location
- Size business (either sales dollars or number of employees)
- Industries ypes of businesses
- Type of ownership (sole proprietor, corporation, etc.)
- Who are the decision makers, influencers and gatekeepers?

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3. Investigate your competitors.

Who are your main competitors? When you lose a sale, why does this happen? Which competitor generally makes the sale? What is better about your competitors' products and services? Why do your prospects choose a competitor instead of you? What are the annual sales figures for your competitors? What do they spend on their advertising and marketing efforts? (Your industry periodicals and associations can help you determine this.)

4. Differentiate yourself.

How are you better than your competitors? What is different about your company? Is your product or service a higher quality than your competitors'? Is it less expensive? Do you have better customer

service? Does your product last longer? Require fewer repairs? Why do your customers choose you instead of your competitor?

What problems do you solve? Make a list of your product's features and benefits. Are they different than those of your competitors?

Try to describe your business in one short and succinct "tagline," or positioning statement. This should be a clear statement of what you do and what you stand for in no more than eight or ten words.

Coca-Cola, for instance, says Coke is "The Real Thing." Once you create this short positioning statement, create your 30-second sound bite, also known as your "elevator speech," to use when you introduce yourself in public. This is also what you will use to help you focus your marketing efforts.

5. Create a marketing plan and execute it.

Now that you know who you are, who your competitors are and how you are better than them, you can create a roadmap to follow—a marketing plan for your company. Remember to include measurable short- and long-term goals, specific strategies, and appropriate tactics to reach your goals. Then, put your plan into action and evaluate the results, making adjustments as required.

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Attack Smaller Searches To Get The Big Ones!

By Martin Lemieux

Searching online can not only be fun, but you sometimes need to be downright inventive.

For those of you who have been searching online for years now, you've probably adapted ways & techniques to find what you are looking for quickly.

Unfortunately when it comes to promoting your site, nothing out there is classified as a quick fix. If people say it's a quick fix, it probably has a major risk attached to it.

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Your ultimate goal when promoting your site should be to acquire some of those "Big" search terms online! For example, "Marketing Tips" or "Marketing" in general. The only way to ever come close to the Big Dogs is to start small. Increase the search term and decrease your competition.

Here's an example of this, let's use "Marketing". Wow, what a powerful search term, but someone has to get it, right?

As of today, June 1st, 2004, if you search for "Marketing" you will get 72,700,000 results found within Google. That's a tough one.

Going further, let's add "Marketing Tips", you get: 7,560,000 results found.

Going a little further now, let's add "Web Marketing Tips", you'll get around: 5,760,000 results found.

Let's go beyond that for our final search, let's add "Web Site Marketing Tips", you'll get: 4,940,000 results found.

Now take a good look at all those search terms, what do you see right in the middle??? You got it, that oh so powerful term called "Marketing"!

Are you starting to see the value of targeting larger search terms? (Larger meaning more words attached to it).

Eventually as time goes on, once you've done your due-dilligence and worked hard at targeting these larger search terms, search engines will start rewarding your site with much smaller and more difficult terms to acquire.

Another way to accomplish this is to target your local market 1st. Instead of targeting "Web Site Marketing Tips" as a whole, you can target "Marketing In Hamilton, Ontario".

By targeting the area you live in, you not only target your local market 1st, but you also setup your web site for success in the future market, which ultimately, is the rest of the world!

Let's just say I was to remove "Ontario" from that search term "Marketing In Hamilton, Ontario", how many cities are named "Hamilton" ??? Many more than you think!

So in conclusion:

Don't be afraid to work for your key phrases and set your web site up for success by targeting larger key phrases to increase your chances of better search engine placements. In the end, you'll receive what you've been after all along, more exposure for your enterprise!

I hope you enjoyed the article!

Read more of Martin's articles online here:

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Martin Lemieux
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Smartads – Affordable Web Solutions

&

Eye Catching Print Design

Powerful Internet Marketing Tools

Attack Smaller Searches To Get The Big Ones!
Ground Zero Targeting!
E-marketing Basics: Pro And Cons Of Hour Targeting
Marketing To Forums: Part 2
Creating Marketing Fireworks

IP Ad Websender – The Ultimate Promotion Tool
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