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Strategize Your Marketing!

By Ron Sathoff

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Anyone in the business of Internet marketing has probably seen the phrase "marketing plan" over and over again. Unfortunately, a lot of people seem to think that having a marketing plan is just another way of saying, "Where will I advertise today?"

I'm a firm believer that your marketing plan should be much more than this. To use some military terms, I think that a marketing plan should be "strategic" as well as "tactical." In other words, we should make sure that we focus on our entire plan, and how it works as a system, rather than just focusing on individual parts like classified ads or website copy.

Here are a few tips that I've used in the past to help me create and visualize a marketing strategy:

* **Think Backwards:** I've found that the best way to construct a marketing strategy is to start with the thing you want to happen at the END of the marketing process, and then work back from there. That means that the first step in creating your marketing strategy is to think about where you want to make your sale. Will it be on the phone? Will it be on your website?

Once you have decided on what your "point of sale" is going to be, you can then start moving on to the next step, which is getting your customers to that point. How will you get your customers to call? How will you get people to visit your website?

This is when you should also think about any other steps that might be needed. For instance, how much additional information

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will the customer need before you send them to the point of sale? Will they need repeated messages to get them to buy? By answering these kinds of questions before you start writing, you will be saving yourself a lot of time and effort later on.

* Make a chart of your plan. The best way to keep track of your marketing plan is to just create a simple flow chart of your steps. For instance, a very basic marketing plan might look like this:

Classified Ad ==> Website (Point of Sale)

More complicated plans might need more steps:

Classified Ad ==> Website (More Information) ==> Phone Call (Point of Sale)

Sales Letter ==> Follow-up Letter ==> Website (Point of Sale)

Classified Ad ==> Autoresponder ==> Website (Point of Sale)

In any case, these simple charts you create should help you keep track of the purpose and nature of each part of your plan.

* Remember that your different steps will have different goals. For instance, your "point of sale" has your ultimate goal (the sale), so that is where you need to be your most persuasive. Therefore, you need to make sure that the copy and information you have here is rock-solid. After all, this is the foundation of your entire system, and if the copy here is weak, the entire process will fail.

As for you other steps, remember that they are NOT there to make the sale by themselves -- rather, they are intended to either get the customer to go to the point of sale, or to "prepare" the customer for the final sales pitch.

Having a well-thought-out marketing plan is an important step in making your e-business a success. As always, realize that these tips are in no way comprehensive -- instead, they are just a few initial thoughts on how to make sure that everything you do, advertising-wise, fits into a larger marketing system. That way, you can maximize the effectiveness of your marketing attempts,

which will help save time, money, and sanity!

Ten Ways to MROI—Maximize the Return on Your Investment in Marketing

By Susan Dunn

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MROI means Maximizing Return on Investment. How do we do this in marketing? Track, measure, analyze, strategize. The more data you get, and the more you massage it, the more you learn, and the smarter your marketing is going to be.

Here are some questions to ask yourself when you plan your marketing strategy for the new year. (Substitute customer for client.)

1. What are the historical patterns of behavior of your clients? Do they respond more in the fall? At New Year's? Gear up for these times in the coming year.
2. What clients have brought in the most revenue? These clients are "worth" more. Where did they come from? Why did they choose you?
3. What else might these high revenue-driving clients like to buy from you? Ebooks? Tapes?
4. What contacts brought in the most business? A particular ezine? Something on your website?
5. What products, services, or programs have brought in the most revenue? Replicate these!
6. Where have your referrals come from? Remember the 80/20 rule — 80% of your referred clients probably came from 20% of your referrers. Reward the people who refer to you. Find more like them. (For 80/20 rule see www.topten.org/public/AG/AG310)
7. What does your clientele look like demographically? What sex, age, income, education, occupation, hobby? Match your ads and promotions to where these people will be.
8. What's the 'formula'? Can you verbalize it? Know precisely what drives traffic and revenue to you. For instance, mailing X number of flyers yields X new clients, costs \$X, and takes X hours.
9. Did you factor in your time? If giving one teleclass yields less clients than the above tactic, but only takes 1 hour and costs less, it's more cost-effective for you to give teleclasses.
10. And are you still creative? Making your marketing more business-like can't be done at the expense of your creativity. Both are necessary.

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