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The Top Five 2003 Marketing Tips That Can't Be Ignored

By Catherine Franz

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When marketing your practice, as well as designing your brochure, web site, business card, flier, advertisement, or other marketing effort, we recommend investing the time and effort needed to effectively address all these tips. Not one of them can be omitted.

Tip #1. MARKET FOR YOUR DESIRED PROSPECTS, NOT YOURSELF

What looks good to you is not necessarily effective for your desired audience. This is the biggest mistake I see people make over and over again. They come up with an idea, they think it's great, a few friends, family or nontarget market people give them the thumbs up and they run with the ball.

When it doesn't work, they just can't understand why. Do market research and test your strategies on your target market. Big companies do lots of market research before launching a product or service. The little guys don't have the resources to match this but that doesn't mean you don't do any. Even if you are an independent professional, you need to do marketing research. And market research isn't a one-time deal. It needs to be incorporated into your marketing system and it needs to be ongoing.

Tip #2. YOU MUST ANSWER THESE FOUR CRITICAL MARKETING QUESTIONS

Question 1: WHAT'S THIS ABOUT?

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Is it immediately clear to the reader what is being offered? Any opaqueness, confusion, or question marks in their mind, even for a second, and they have moved on. They are gone and usually don't return. Don't be cute or clever. Make it simple and very clear. Cute and clever has a reference point now with S*P*AM or hype. Don't let them place you into that category.

Question 2: WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?

The big benefits are very clear and directly stated... not implied; the reader doesn't have to guess. The listener

doesn't have to guess. Please come to you from all different stages of readiness and different desire levels. How do you handle each one when they arrive makes what occurs afterwards critical? It isn't what you perceive that they want, it is what they perceive what they want. Stop guessing just because you are too lazy to do the legwork to find out. Start asking and don't ever stop.

Question 3: CAN I TRUST YOU?

How do I know you are safe and credible? Can I find out easily enough if I want to? Is your photo and contact info prominently displayed so I can build a relationship with you? Put your photo on every page. If you want to, change the picture to show you doing something fun or different on every page.

People don't trust any more especially if all your contact information isn't on your web site. Put your phone number and address on every page. It says you are credible. Put them in every ezine, in fact, put it at the beginning and at the end.

Create a safe place for them to be, a comfort zone. If you offer a complimentary session, realize that people don't immediately sign up for these because they aren't comfortable to. It doesn't matter if you think you are safe, it's what they think. Step them into working with you feeling safe the whole way through the process. People are either boulders or blue birds. Blue birds are easy to convert to clients. Boulders need to know that they have a safe place to roll to before they will move.

Question 4: DO I FEEL GOOD ABOUT THIS?

Do I WANT to engage you? Do I feel COMPELLED to click my mouse or pick up the phone (or whatever the call to action is)? Do I feel good about myself in deciding to engage you? Can I trust that I'm making the right decision? What's my motivation? Am I being motivated by fear, shame, or being empowered to make a good choice? Am I so excited that I want to tell all my friends?

Tip #3. ALWAYS INCLUDE THESE THREE KEY ELEMENTS IN YOUR MARKETING MESSAGES

Element 1: POWERFUL HEADLINE

This grabs their attention and lets the reader know what you can do for them; the big benefit. Say what the biggest

benefit is up front. Make it about them. Use attractive words that rock their boulder so they read more.

Element 2: COMPELLING CALL TO ACTION

Your desired result is to motivate your ideal client to act immediately to engage you directly or indirectly and generate a prospect by getting their contact information. What do you want people to do? E-mail, phone, what? What will compel them to take action?

Element 3: OFFER THEM MULTIPLE CONTACT METHODS

Offer a choice between e-mail, telephone, web site, etc, so your prospect can choose what is most comfortable to them. I have visited many web sites where I had to search for five minutes to find their contact information. I am a persistent person and I know that most others who have left after 30 seconds. Can visitors to your web site find your contact information in 30 seconds? Put the information on every page.

Tip #4. CREATE A SYSTEM

Design a marketing system that you can implement repeatedly. Make it as automatic as possible. Ask the most valuable series of questions to yourself, "And then what do you want them to do? And then what? And then what? Etc." If they visit your web site ask, "And then what?" If they subscribe to your ezine ask, "And then what?" And then when

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they do that, ask "And then what?" Keep challenging yourself to come up with the answers.

No, I didn't say it was going to be easy. When I work with clients, sometimes it takes months to create a system. Most people give up to easily. Once you have it set up and it runs automatically, you will understand.

Don't waste your time, effort, and money with one-shot deals or fragmented marketing activities. Leverage everything. If you use writing for publicity, don't just write an article once for your ezine, ask "And now what?" Send the article to past clients with a "just in case you didn't see this yet."

Tip #5: FOLLOW UP, FOLLOW UP, AND FOLLOW UP AGAIN

Following up is one of the biggest areas independent professional fail to do. Set up a follow up system that is a part of your overall marketing system. Make it as automatic as possible — so that I can run while you are on

vacation.

If you want to always have that "personal touch" with everyone, hire a virtual assistant as part of your system. Always have the next step planned and let your prospects know of future opportunities to engage you.

Working with many independent professionals this past year, including coaches, insurance agents, real estate agents, engineers, too many medical practices to mention, I found they never asked the challenging question I mentioned earlier, "And then what? And then what?" Etc. They did speaking engagements and there was only one "And then what?" and they stopped there.

Remember people are at different levels and need to build trust with you. Give them the ladder and the rungs to do that and they will.

Always contact your leads within 24 hours of receiving them. Contacting them a week or two later, they people have moved on. If they had an issue they need to solve that you had a solution for they had most likely already found someone and

by-passed you.

Always follow up by e-mail, telephone, etc, multiple times. Yes, it's true, 80% of sales are made after five or more contacts.

These elements will make all the difference in the world between struggling to get clients and becoming wildly successful in marketing your services. They are worth investing your best efforts and getting the support you need to implement them effectively.

Marketing Wizard Shares Her 2004 Marketing Forecast

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With next year just around the corner, Internet Marketing Wizard, Catherine Franz, is sharing some tips on what to expect in 2004 that could possibly affect your business.

* Interrupt marketing is still fading in 2004, actually decreasing tremendously faster than in 2003. And could be totally eliminated by consumer voice and some new government regulations being proposed.

* Legitimate advertising climbing.

* Required planned marketing strategies doubling in order to stay ahead in building trust and continuing a legitimate marketing campaign.

* Online trial by error marketing will continue to fade to almost nil by the end of 2004.

* Online surfers increased their sophistication in 2003 and will double in 2004.

* E-commerce is going to make some drastic changes in transaction smoothness.

* Website hosting companies are going to begin to need to create other backend revenue because hosting prices are going to drop considerably due to larger companies providing

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more hosting services fee in order to attract higher numbers to make bigger revenues from their mailing list numbers.

* Viral marketing is going to get easier, prove to increase its usefulness and will triple its popularity for promoting products and services. Expected numbers are predicted to be off the charts.

* Referral or Word of mouth promotion is still the number one answer to marketing in 2004. There will be big increase in referrals, joint ventures, and strategic alliances.

* Bragging will be on the increase and will become even more sociably accepted in sales than in 2003.

* Fierce competitor competition among services companies will decline just slightly as companies run to catch up on learning to marketing cleanly.

* Web sites going e-commerce will double its numbers from 2003.

What part of this prediction affects your business in 2004. What plans have you made to "adopt and adapt" your marketing strategies to handle these variables.



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