

Why So Many Marketing Initiatives Fail

Let's face it, if you're in business, you're in marketing. What was true 50 years ago remains true today: nothing happens until something gets sold. And selling begins with effective marketing, but most marketing plans fail for two simple reasons:

1. They fail to capture the customers' attention. As strange as it may seem, the big task is not simply getting your message out to customers. In fact, that doesn't count for much. You can see the evidence for it everyday and everywhere.

Look at your mail, read newspaper or email ads. Most of what passes for getting the message out totally misses the mark. We're flooded with messages - and most of them go right by us. Why? Because they focus too much attention on the advertiser - not the customer.

What purports to be a message is no message at all. It may tell your story but if it fails to capture the customers' attention, it's a waste of money.

2. Perhaps the most pervasive marketing problem of all is a lack of consistency. Everyone starts out with a bang. It's going to be a great ad campaign or product promotion. Time, effort and money go into the projects. And where are they six months or a year later? More often than not, they're either all but forgotten or already a memory. The success of marketing is not so much in award-winning ads and brochures as it is in keeping the program going.

Business owners have an enormous challenge when it comes to marketing. They almost never have the time to put together and implement a comprehensive marketing program - and, most importantly, to sustain the program consistently over a long period of time. Here are some tips to help you create a lasting marketing effort:

1. A little planning can go a long way. Your calendar is a potent marketing tool. Start with your deadline and work backwards writing down each step required to complete the marketing endeavor.

2. Get others involved. Very often marketing initiatives require coordinating with printers, designers and even your staff. Getting everyone on board ahead of time will save you a tremendous amount of aggravation.

3. Avoid the temptation to waiver from the plan. Results from your effort may take months to manifest so don't give up too soon. Remember, consistency is an important factor contributing to a successful marketing effort.

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