

## **7 ways to gain excellent results from your marketing**

**FACT:** Research shows that most SME companies do not have a marketing strategy in place to grow their companies. Why? Because like it or not, most SMEs believe that you need big budgets for marketing – This is not true!

Let me explain...

Marketing is an INVESTMENT. As with any investment, you begin by investing what you can and then plough a percentage of the returns back into the investment pot to gain bigger returns next time. It is exactly the same with marketing. However the area that many companies struggle is in understanding the rules behind creating a successful marketing strategy.

I'll let you into a secret...getting excellent returns from your marketing is not difficult if you have the basics right. You can achieve amazing success if you just follow the 7 rules...

- 1. Know your target market.** Yes, you have heard this before but what does it mean? Put simply, build a profile of your customer. If you work with consumers give your profile person a name, background, gender, likes, dislikes and really think about what your customer wants from you and why they want to spend money with you.

If you are a business to business company, define how big the company is in terms of turnover/employees, how many people get involved in the decision to purchase, what is the problem that they need to solve using your product/service and where are they located.

By putting yourself into their situation, you can get a better feel for your customers' needs and wants, both now and in the future.

- 2. Identify why you are different from your competitors.** This requires a close look at your products/services, your competitor's offering and the customer. Why do your current customers buy from you? If you don't know – ask them! You need to stand out from your competitors so when customers have to make the choice, they will buy from you.
- 3. Think about where your customers would look to buy your services.** If you talk to advertising sales people, they will tell you that your customers read the publication/listen to the station, but there is also an element of timing too. Put yourself into your customer's shoes and think where would I look for the information when I needed it, and when would be a good time to catch their attention.

4. **Build a database.** Every successful company has a database that it uses with timely offers to create new customers, generate more business from existing customers and to build long-lasting relationships with their customers. If you do not have a database, use someone else's. Partner with a company who has the right profile of customers and get them to send your offer to their customers. If the offer is good, the business partner will also benefit by adding value to their relationship with the customer.
5. **Create an advert that works.** Too many people develop adverts with the main focus being their logo. I am sure they are proud of it along with their mother, but the customer is looking to buy a product/service. Research shows that a strong headline to attract attention followed by a good offer as the main feature in your ad is core. Your logo should be in the bottom left and the call to action in the bottom right corner. Don't forget to list your phone number!
6. **Plan your marketing activity.** Many businesses experience some level of seasonality. The planning for a seasonal event such as Christmas often starts 6 months in advance, especially for restaurants and bars that already have their menu, adverts and activities in place. Write a plan of what you are going to do and when. Use this plan to ensure you don't miss any opportunities.
7. **Tracking and measuring.** If you only remember one thing, it must be to track and measure every activity you undertake. We all hate wasting money, but if you do not know what response you got to what advert/mailling etc, you are in danger of throwing money down the drain. When you know how many responses you got, did they convert to customers and what did they spend? You need to know whether the costs to buy these new customers (after all you spent money to get the business) was covered by their spend and if not how many times do they need to spend with you to cover their costs (this is the breakeven point).

If you follow these key rules, you can increase your sales dramatically and build a long and healthy relationship with your customers.

Nicola Bury from Haybury Marketing is a specialist in small and medium sized business marketing. For further information call 028 4273 9222, email [info@hayburymarketing.com](mailto:info@hayburymarketing.com) or visit [www.hayburymarketing.com](http://www.hayburymarketing.com).