



Practical  
Professional  
Business Support



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## Tips for More Successful Marketing

Whether you are a start-up business or an established one, you need to continuously market your business to maintain awareness, attract new customers, penetrate new markets, or introduce new products or services. The following tips should help you to become a better marketer and help you achieve your business goals.

### 1. Define your Target Customers

The first step is to define your target customers. Are they consumers or businesses? If consumers, what is their age, gender, location, occupation, educational level, etc.? If other businesses, what is their size, number of employees, industry, location, decision maker, etc.? The more precisely you define your potential customers, the easier it will be to tailor your message and select the most appropriate ways to reach them.

### 2. Identify your Customers' Wants and Needs

You may learn that different sub-segments of your target audience have different reasons (wants and needs) for buying your products or services. Your customers' wants and needs will determine the messages that you need to send to them.

### 3. Focus your Message

Your message is what you say to persuade potential customers to take a desired action. Your message should include: who you are, what you do, and why they should buy from you. It should also tell customers what to do if they are interested in what you sell – the “call to action” (i.e., call for more information or to place an order).

### 4. Define your Reach While Avoiding Waste

Many media channels will talk about their “reach”. This is the total number of individuals who make up their audience. The key factor to consider is the percentage of audience members who are actually in your target market. The more closely you can match a medium's total reach to your own target audience, the more effectively you can invest your ad dollars.

### 5. Understand Frequency

The term “frequency” refers to the total number of times your ad runs in a specific medium and the length of time between each ad. People are bombarded by thousands of ad messages every day and filter out most of them. You must run your ads enough times to break through your customers' awareness level. A general rule of thumb is that you must run the same ad at least three times before it will begin to register with your audience.

### 6. Choose the Right Media

The key to selecting the right medium is to match the characteristics of each with your target customer profile.

- Radio is a tightly focused medium. It is the most appropriate channel for your message if you sell a product or service designed for a very specific audience. For example, advertise on a Country & Western station if you sell western-style clothing.
- Television can also be effective (especially cable programming) if you want to reach a large but sub-segmented portion of the general public.
- If you want to reach businesses, a business-oriented publication may be an ideal choice.
- Direct mail can be effective if you can find a mailing list that closely matches your customer profile.
- The Internet may be a good choice, especially if you want to reach a national audience.
- There are many other alternatives to promote your business, including: join a business networking group, do presentations/work shops, write press releases and articles for publication, create a joint alliance or marketing partnership with another company, or keep your customers and prospects up-to date on your company with email newsletters.

The more advertising and non-advertising strategies you use, the more effective your overall marketing program will be.

## **7. Monitor the Effectiveness of your Marketing Activities**

Once you have your plan in place, you need to continuously monitor how many customers each medium is bringing in. If you have a website, add a “how did you hear about us” question so you can track it. If you are a retail location, ask each customer as they pay and track the results. Or run a draw periodically and have the contest form include a “how did you hear about us” question.

The key is to understand what is working and what is not. It will help you determine the most cost effective medium and optimize your marketing dollars.