



PRINTtips



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Under One Roof

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Multi-Channel Marketing... Many Ways To Vary Your Promotions

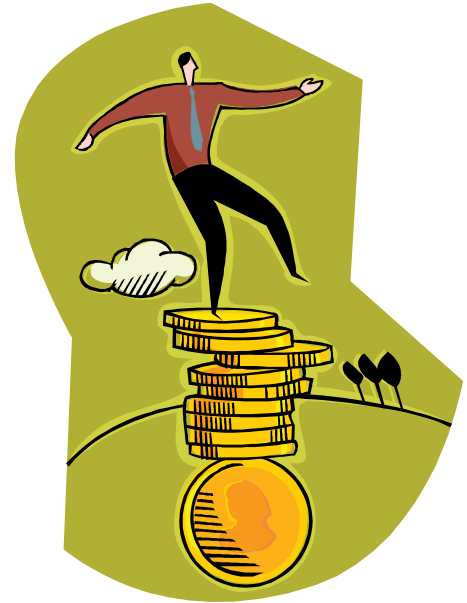
The lifeblood of any business or organization is keeping current customers interested in your product or service while finding prospects to become new customers. This necessarily means that your business or organization must devote time and resources to promotion – using various methods to reach a target audience with a specific message.

Effective promotion is not limited to large businesses with substantial budgets. Smaller businesses and organizations can be successful by understanding how promotion works and adapting strategies and techniques to fit the available resources.

Promotion objectives

There are many possible objectives for a promotion strategy. Each is intended to produce a specific outcome and can be used singly or in combination. Here are the most common objectives:

- *Build awareness.* Although your current customers know you well, your prospects – the businesses or individuals you have identified that you want to have as customers – may not know you at all. Promotion helps introduce your business to your prospects, and is often the first step in gaining a new customer.
- *Create interest and build trust.* People buy things they need or have an interest in from those whom they trust. And long-term, loyal customers are the result of many positive interactions and transactions that become a trusting relationship. Promotion begins the process of building a relationship.



- *Provide information.* If you are launching a new product or service, whether to existing or new customers, the object of a promotion may be to explain it and its benefits. If your product is well established, an information-based promotion establishes you as an expert and creates interest among prospects who don't yet know your company.
- *Sell something.* Some promotions are intended to drive demand and increase sales by getting customers and prospects to try the product. Free samples, free demonstrations and free trial periods are the type of promotions that stimulate demand.
- *Establish loyalty.* A repeat customer is one who has product or brand loyalty. Promotions based on establishing loyalty are useful after a customer has made one purchase, to start the process of building a strong relationship.

Multi-Channel Marketing (continued)

“... the things that cause someone within the target audience to become a buyer...”

“Keep in mind that no single promotional method works all the time for every target audience...”

Target audience

Effective promotion begins with determining what audience you are trying to reach, since both the message and the promotional method may change depending on whether you are targeting current customers, past customers, or prospects. Most small and medium-sized businesses are equipped and staffed to offer a specific and well defined complement of products or services. A successful promotion matches these products and services to the audience most likely to be interested in them.

Purchase motivators – the things that cause someone within the target audience to become a buyer – are different for individuals and businesses. In general, individuals purchase products or services to satisfy a basic need, to solve a problem or to feel good, while businesses purchase to increase revenue, maintain the status quo or decrease expenses.

If your target market is individuals, learn to describe them with measurable characteristics such as age, gender, level of education, income, marital status, ethnicity, and family status. The corresponding characteristics for businesses are number of employees, annual sales volume, location and years in business.

Selecting the promotion method

For a promotion method to succeed, it must first reach the target audience. This sounds simplistic, but is often overlooked by businesses that haven't adequately profiled the target audience. It is important to change your perspective from a business owner or sales manager to a target audience – simply put, to sit in their chair or walk in their shoes.

Begin by asking yourself how your target audience accesses information. Are your customers and prospects more likely to seek information using traditional media like reading newspapers and magazines, watching television, reading newsletters or responding to a direct mail campaign? Or do they seek information by reading e-mail, searching the Internet or reading blogs? You'll need to set aside your personal biases – though you may be intrigued

by social media such as Twitter and Facebook, if your target audience isn't, then a promotion using these methods will not be effective.

Keep in mind that no single promotional method works all the time for every target audience, so rotate several methods and vary your approach. In addition, use promotions regularly. Over time, consistency and frequency will influence the buying decision more than the specific type of promotion.

Promoting on a budget

No matter the size of your business or organization, it needs to have a budget for promotions. Pick a time period – we recommend quarterly, semi-annually or yearly – and commit both a sum of money and some time for a designated person to manage the promotional effort. It takes both a budget and someone to manage the budget to ensure a successful promotion.

Promotions don't have to cost a lot of money or take a lot of time. A simple way to start is by targeting your best customers and introducing them to products or services you offer that they may not be using. Here are seven ideas for promoting on a budget.

1. Send a monthly informational newsletter.

That's what we do with Printips. Sending Printips gives us a chance to demonstrate our expertise, introduce you to new technologies like QR codes, and remind you of the full scope of services we offer.

2. Highlight the specific products and services that represent what you do best.

Develop a series of post cards, flyers or mini-brochures that showcase the things that provide the majority of your sales. These are the things that, because of equipment or skills or experience, you can offer a true competitive advantage to buyers. The series can be distributed individually or as part of another communication.

3. Follow up a purchase with an additional offer.

A customer who has just made a purchase is an excellent candidate to make

Multi-Channel Marketing (continued)

another one right away. This is especially true if the customer receives an offer with additional value attached – a discount coupon or a buy one/get one promotion. To create urgency, include an expiration date for the offer.

4. Target past customers. Revive an old relationship by contacting past customers. There may be a negative reason (such as a bad customer service experience) that explains why a customer became inactive, but don't worry about it. Something may have changed within the past customer's company that again makes them a good candidate for your promotion.

5. Put a sticker with teaser copy on an outbound envelope. Teaser copy – a few words that create interest – is often printed near the address on the outside of an envelope or a self-mailer. Teaser copy is just what its name implies: something that teases the reader to open an envelope or keep reading. If the teaser copy is printed on a sticker and affixed to the envelope, it becomes dimensional and attracts even more attention.

6. Offer a guarantee. Changing suppliers presents some prospects with a risk factor

they may be reluctant to deal with. This is true even if the current supplier is not performing well. Alleviate the anxiety and eliminate the risk by offering a guarantee to your prospect.

7. Self-promote. Get the word out about your company's accomplishments. When you win an award, land an important new customer, expand your capability or capacity by adding equipment or staff, let everyone know. People like to do business with successful people. Use a press release directed to the business editor of your local newspaper to announce something you are proud of. Add a line to your e-mail signature and announce your accomplishment on your web site.

Promotion builds business

Regardless of the size of your budget, it is important to continuously promote your business. For over 25 years we've been helping businesses, organizations and individuals with promotions to customers and prospects. To brainstorm promotional ideas to help your business or to get started with your promotion, contact us at 513-248-2121 . We're ready to help.

“Teaser copy is just what its name implies: something that teases the reader to open an envelope or keep reading.”



What is a multi-channel promotion?



Multi-channel refers to using more than one promotion method simultaneously for a message on a single topic. Multi-channel can be very effective, especially when the messages in one channel

are referenced in the other and are integrated. Use one constant and simple theme that offers a variety of response options.

Here are some examples of multi-channel marketing:

- Sending an e-mail timed to arrive at the same time as a mailed catalog.
- Inviting customers and prospects to visit a web site to print a coupon to use in a retail store.
- Adding a URL or QR code to sales collateral with an invitation to visit the web site, register, and receive something in exchange.

“Use one constant and simple theme that offers a variety of response options.”

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Promote By Solving Problems

TRICKS & tips

“... the basis for a checklist of what should be considered before making a purchase.”

If you are in business, you have developed areas of expertise that other people are interested in. For example, you know how to differentiate your product or service from your competitors – why what you are offering is superior and worthy of consideration. That becomes the basis for a checklist of what should be considered before making a purchase. And that type of information is valuable to others.

If you have been in business for a while, you may have several areas of expertise that you can share and many options for getting the word

out. An informational brochure and a periodic newsletter are two commonly-used and relatively inexpensive methods. Others are writing a column for a local newspaper or sending a post card as part of a direct mail marketing campaign. A more ambitious method is to hold a seminar or demonstration on an informational topic or offer a presentation as a public speaker for community groups. Writing a blog is a new and increasingly popular method.

For subject matter, use topics that help your target audience with their problems.

Are You Reaching Your Target Market?

IDEA CORNER

“Many of our small business customers routinely turn to us for help...”

A recent survey of small business owners conducted by the Hewlett-Packard Company revealed that very few felt confident about their marketing efforts. Almost half (46%) claimed not to have any general marketing expertise, 60% said they could be doing a better job as marketers, and only 18% felt confident about creating their own marketing material.

If this describes you, then take note: we can help. Many of our small business customers routinely turn to us for help with developing

a promotional campaign, creating a logo and graphic identity, and writing sales-related copy. Because we have worked with so many companies over the years, we have developed sensitivity for what works. Using a series of probing questions, we'll guide you through the process of determining who your target audience is and how to reach them. For more information or to make an initial appointment for a consultation, contact Gregg MacMillan at 513-248-2121 ext 712 or gjm@techgra.com