



Results Marketing: How to Make Your Marketing Materials Work Harder for your Small Business

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Your customers and prospects are savvy buyers but they're bombarded by tons of marketing messages from vendors like you. Your success as a small business can hinge on the quality of your marketing materials (brochures, Web sites, newsletters, blogs, etc.) and how well they communicate the benefits of your products or services.

Mistakes to Avoid

Many marketing pieces don't work well because they are written from the company's perspective and not from the buyer's. Your potential customers are interested in finding out "what's in it for them?". What problem will you be solving, what process will you make easier, or what benefit will the customer derive from doing business with you? Keep it simple, straightforward and avoid industry jargon or overly complicated explanations.

While your marketing materials may be well written, if they're poorly designed, it may render them difficult to read, unattractive and useless. Smart design and good layout can make a positive first impression and make the material easier to read. All materials, from your Web site to sales flyers, should be complimentary in their look and feel and convey that they're part of the same "family". Include the cost of professional design services into your marketing budget.

Never overlook opportunities that allow you to build credibility or to become a source of knowledge in your marketplace. Try writing and submitting articles to an industry magazine on hot topics. Or provide your prospect and client databases with a monthly newsletter of tips, links and useful information. By providing consistent advice or information you'll quickly become an expert in your market.

Tips to Follow

Well written, effective marketing tools that reflect your business' branding can be a big asset. In addition to staying away from the problems listed above, here are a few tips to keep in mind in order to create winning marketing materials:



1) Know your target audience and speak directly to them
Have a clear and concise understanding of who your ideal customers are, their likes, dislikes, attitudes and behaviors. This knowledge will help you improve your marketing focus and communication effectiveness.

2) Sell benefits, not features

One marketing expert said it best: "Why is it better to offer problem-solving information than a straight sales pitch? Because nobody who bought a drill wanted a drill. They wanted a hole."

Selling solutions or ways to solve problems is the key to compelling marketing or sales copy. Put yourself in your clients' shoes and imagine what information they would be interesting in hearing about your products or services. Eliminate the word "we" from your copy and include plenty of "you" and "your".

3) Include a call to action

Never assume that prospects will take action without being prompted. Always include a call to action throughout your copy, whether it's on your Web site, in a print ad or brochure. Your call to action can be as simple as "Call today" , "Hurry, offer expires soon" or offering a free gift if prospects act by a certain date.

Don't undervalue the power of your marketing materials. When done right, the results can really make a difference for your business.