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Marketing tips

Here are 10 tips for businesses either looking to get started in marketing or to review what you are already doing and make improvements.

Tip 1: Look at what you are doing now

Start by looking at the marketing activities you use and the marketing skills you have. You are probably doing a lot of the right things already. However, you should:

- research** what your market wants; where, when and why customers buy; what benefits they are seeking from your product or service; and what competitors are providing;
- decide** on your objectives, identify and choose your target customer groups and position your business to serve your chosen market profitably;
- put** the plan to work through selling and promoting your products and services to customers, through pricing and using appropriate distributors and agents effectively; and, finally,
- monitor** the effectiveness of your marketing activities in terms of customer satisfaction and the impact on your bottom line.

Tip 2: Focus on the customer

Make the customer the focal point of everything the organisation does. Why? Because good, happy, loyal customers equal higher profits. If your team is too heavily sales or product oriented, consider a change of approach. It's the little things you do that make all the difference for the customer!

Tip 3: Set up an effective marketing team

In a customer-focussed organisation, marketing is something that everybody does - not just marketers. Everyone has a role to play, including:

- your managers - who plan and look to the future, allocate budgets for marketing activities and co-ordinate activities;
- your sales force - who are the eyes and ears of the business and, through their frequent contact with your customers, can keep the business in tune with what the market is looking for;
- your marketing and communications staff - who develop and deliver marketing communications and support sales programmes as well as coming up with innovative new product/service ideas;
- your external marketing agencies and specialists - who are available to provide the occasional specialist support you need such as research, brochure design and printing, telemarketing or web site development. Links on this site will help you find professionals to help you.

Good communication between all these groups is essential to good marketing. But two things, in particular, ensure success. Your business should be committed to its customers and ensure everyone pulls together to deliver high quality products and services on time every time.



Tip 4: Divide your customers up into groups

Every customer is different so why treat them all the same? To start treating customers as individuals, look at how and when they buy. This will help to start putting them into groups and understanding the needs of each group. For example:

- High volume/high value buyers - place frequent large orders
- High volume/low value buyers - place frequent small orders
- Low volume/high value buyers - place occasional large orders
- Low volume/low value buyers - place occasional small orders

Groups of customers who have similar needs or who behave in a similar way are known in marketing as 'segments'. You will probably need to use different marketing techniques and approaches to reach different types of customer.

Tip 5: Identify customer benefits

Now you can identify why each customer segment buys your products and services and what 'benefits' they are seeking. This in turn will help you to target existing and new customers more effectively with specific products and services. As a result you can make better profits. For example, low volume/high value buyers may be more profitable for you than high volume/high value buyers who may continually squeezing you on price.

Tip 6: Decide how to deliver these benefits

You deliver benefits through what marketing people call the "marketing mix". These are essentially the tools of the marketing trade. Your goal here is to define your "unique selling proposition" (USP) - something that truly sets you apart from your competitors.

The basic marketing mix consists of:

- Product - the goods and services you are offering, including packaging and service content (warranty, after sales, etc.)
- Price - what the customer pays. Remember that there are different types of prices (list prices, discounted price, etc.) and many different ways to arrive at prices. Price may be used to communicate the position and values of the product/service.
- Place - how and where the customer obtains the product/service. For example, a catalogue company may allow customers to buy through the catalogue itself, on the company's web page or through off-the-page advertising.
- Promotion - the means and mix of activities used to promote the product or service, for example advertising, direct marketing, PR, exhibitions and trade shows.

But you should also consider the three extras:

- People - the people you employ and how they deal with your customers;
 - Process - the way your business operates; and
 - Physical evidence - the look of your premises, vehicles and the appearance of your staff.
- All can have an impact on how you are perceived.

It is usual to tailor the marketing mix to the needs of each segment.

Tip 7: Decide what and how to communicate

When you know who your audiences are and what they want, work out a message or messages to each customer segment. Since customers in each segment may want different benefits, the message to each segment may have to be adapted. The messages need to underline and explain



the specific and relevant benefits that you can provide them. You can then decide the best way of communicating, whether it is through printed media, such as brochures, or electronic media, such as web sites and e-mail.

Tip 8: Make a marketing plan ñ see document ämarketing basicsí

Once you have made these key decisions, you have effectively developed a marketing strategy. Why not write it down? The plan may cover between 6 months to 5 years. Then you will have a document that explains what you are doing to anyone who needs to know. This includes your bank manager, external marketing agencies you use and new members to the team. It is a good idea at this early stage to involve members of the team who are going to be responsible for delivering the plan.

Tip 9: Get on with it!

The marketing plan specifies what the marketing activities are, who is responsible for carrying them out and when. Now comes the time to get on and do it. Your role as a manager is to motivate your team and make sure you get the results you have planned for.

Tip 10: Measure and control

Your marketing plan gives you something to rate your performance on as you develop your business. For instance, if you spend money on advertising or PR, you can evaluate this against any increase - or decrease - in sales revenue, stock price or numbers of new customers contacting you. This will help you measure how effective your marketing activities are.

If you do need help with your Marketing, please feel free to contact us on 01245 382600 and we can tell you more about our team of specialist Marketing consultants who are available to support you.