

9.0 MARKETING BASICS FOR SMALL BUSINESS

CONTENTS

- 9.1 Introduction and Summary
- 9.2 Define the Target Market
- 9.3 Marketing Strategy Defined
- 9.4 Development of a Strategy
- 9.5 Test the Strategy
- 9.6 Print Advertising
- 9.7 Public Relations
- 9.8 TV Advertising
- 9.9 Printed Material

9.1 Introduction and Summary

Establishing a marketing plan is arguably the most difficult and critical step in establishing or expanding a business. It is imperative that time and effort be spent to understand the target market, i.e. those who will be the principal buyers of the product or service. Marketing strategies are only meaningful when the market definition is accurate and complete.

9.2 Define the Target Customer

- whether the **customer** is another business or consumer;
- the **needs or desires of the average customer**;
- **bounds on the market** to be served, whether local, regional, national or global;
- the **relevant characteristics (or demographics) of the customer base**, (e.g. income level, age and spending patterns in the case of consumers)
- whether the planned business could target a **market niche**

9.3 Define the Business Environment

- **competitors** presently servicing the market and a description of each.
- **size, number and characteristics of the competitors**
- **market trends**
- **factors that may influence the market**, e.g. interest rates, tax rates etc.

9.4 The Marketing Strategy describes how the business will address market needs. With a thorough treatment of the market, the strategies to best serve it often become obvious¹. Good strategies will consider barriers to entry and growth, factors that give certain companies an edge and benefits offered by the present business (the competitive advantage.) These can form a central theme in promotion.

¹ There are many publications that treat the development of marketing strategies and the reader should thoroughly research these.

9.0 MARKETING BASICS FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Page 2

9.5 Development of a Strategy

- **survey the target customer** base; define **customer needs**
- define **factors that differentiate the present business** from others.
- define the **image** you want to project. The image, of course, must be designed to attract the target customer.
- study **techniques used by competitors** or other companies in the business
- determine the **competitor's strengths and weaknesses**, *vis a vis* your own
- consider elements and benefit/cost of. . .
 - advertising specific to the market
 - cold calls
 - business cards and stationary
 - flyers, sales letters, and or other pertinent information
 - networking by attendance at meetings of professional groups, civic or chamber of commerce groups.
 - trade show attendance
 - the Yellow Pages, with care
 - get professional help
 - The Internet

9.6 Test the Strategy

- Start with a **small trial** to determine efficacy
- **Monitor results** of every promotion
- **Build on what works**, discard what doesn't
- **Adjust** constantly

9.7 A Guide to Print Advertising

- Plan what results are you seeking
- Schedule the advertising with regard to promotion, season, product change
- Give the reader a reason to act, what is the benefit? Is it a unique offer?
- Check other advertisers; are their ads working?
- Invest in a consistent commitment to advertising
 - Repetition works
 - Check with professionals
- Monitor results
 - Keep a log
 - Code the advertising message to track the source
- Continue or improve a successful campaign; terminate poor performance early

9.8 A Quick Guide to Public Relations

9.8.1 Press Release

- has to be **news** ("news" is what the editor says is news)
- must be of **interest**, i.e. it possesses slant or "hook"
- **demonstrates** your **expertise** in the field
- **presents the facts** in the first paragraph (who, what, when, where and how)
- follows an **established format**, double spaced
- should be written or at least **reviewed** by a professional
- is submitted to the **appropriate contact** the editor specializing in this field
- telephone contact to **follow up** submittal

9.0 MARKETING BASICS FOR SMALL BUSINESS

Page 3

9.8.2 Networking, community involvement are essential

- **Business cards**, business stationery
- **Attend meetings** of professional groups, Chamber of Commerce, etc.
- Offer to cover peak loads for the competition
- Get **referrals**
- Have **letters and flyers ready to go** at a moments notice

9.8.3 Actions worthy of note in the press

9.9 Quick Guide to TV Advertising

9.9.1 Spend only what is necessary

- local 30-second spots on TV can be as low as \$5.00
- TV offers many choices

9.9.2 Get demographics of viewers from the cable advertiser

- Don't be biased by your own TV viewing

9.9.3 Run ads for an extended period of time

- reminder of what business does and where business is
- name awareness occurs over extended period

9.9.4 Monitor results, as above; fine tune your schedules regularly

9.10 Quick Guide to Printed Materials

9.10.1 Review purpose for congruence with marketing plan

- what is it and how does it fit with the message?
- to whom is it directed?
- how will it get there?

9.10.2 Develop a schedule and budget

9.10.3 Tailor copy to the audience . . . customer wants to know "what's in it for me"

9.10.4 Use a professional for copy; amateurish efforts do more harm than good
Your unique style must be reflected

9.10.5 Proof read your copy several times

9.10.6 The message

- copyright when appropriate
- second "window of time"; get reader's attention immediately
- color is important
- design is everything
- stress the benefits
- keep it short