

# AT THE CORE OF THE ISSUE



ON THE MARK MARKETING

June 2009



## ***"The SME Rapid Business Builder"***

### **Top 10 Marketing Tips for the SME Market**

July 1 often heralds a time to reflect on your business achievements over the past financial year. Have you grown? Gone backwards? Or are you treading water?

When the economy is growing fast, it's easy to succeed without much attention to marketing. However, the economic future today isn't looking rosy.

What do many businesses do when there's a downturn? They try to lower their costs of course. In theory this is fine, but often the first thing to be cut is marketing, particularly advertising and promotion and that's a great way to ensure your sales go down!

So, how do you develop effective marketing strategies to sustain you during these times?

#### **1. Start with a marketing plan**

Small and medium businesses often see the development of a marketing plan as a waste of time and energy. They rush into the implementation of their ideas in an effort to be "doing something" often wasting more time and money communicating with prospects that don't have a need for their service or product or are not as profitable.

#### **2. Analyse your market**

Your market is the overall industry in which you compete. You need to analyse your market so you can gain an understanding of your business's full market potential and identify new areas of opportunity.

Ask yourself:

- Is my market growing or declining and why?
- Which segment of my market is most advantageous for my business to compete in?
- Which factors are changing my market (e.g. seasonality/trends) and how will they affect the future of my business?

#### **3. Know your competition**

Thoroughly investigate your competition. Find out their strengths and weaknesses and how they compare to yours. Write their marketing plan. This will give you the intelligence to anticipate their moves and pre-empt them.

#### **4. Focus on the customer**

Effective marketing strategies begin and end with the customer. Ensure you maintain existing customer relationships. It costs far less to conduct business with an existing customer than to attract new ones. Develop a profile of your most profitable customers. Know their needs, business pains and media habits.

### **Facts To Ponder**

#### **Simple Truths**

Over 75% of business managers fail to measure the return on their marketing investment.

Not because they cannot or because they are not interested, but simply because they do not know how!

Product and corporate brochures are a typical example. Regarded by everyone as essential marketing collateral yet we print larger numbers to secure a lower unit cost and then stick them in a cupboard to gather dust.

The quantity may be split and distributed around the company but largely most managers assume they are used regularly, add value to the companies brand positioning and hopefully even generate the odd sale.

If you want a tool that will help you measure the return on your marketing spend [click](#) on the link and we will send you an excel tool.

**Website developers make 5 common mistakes that KILL your websites ability to be found on Google.**

Many websites do not achieve high rankings on Google and other search engines because Google's indexing robot has difficulty indexing their web pages.

Search engine robots are very simple software programs. If they cannot find the content of your website immediately, they will skip your site and go to the next link in the list.

Here are the top 5 design faults that drive search engine robots away:

#### **Reason 1: Your robots.txt file is damaged or it contains a typo**

If search engine robots misinterpret your robots.txt file, they might completely ignore your web pages. Double-check your robots.txt file and make sure that you use the disallow parameter only for web pages that you really do not want to have indexed.

#### **Reason 2: Your URLs contain too many variables**

URLs with many variables can cause problems with search engine robots. If your URLs contain too many variables, search engine robots might ignore your pages.

#### **Reason 3: You use session IDs in your URLs**

Many search engines do not index URLs that contain session IDs because they can lead to duplicate content problems. If possible, avoid session IDs in your URLs. It is better to use cookies to store session IDs.

#### **Reason 4: Your web pages contain too much code**

Your web pages can contain JavaScript code, CSS code and other script code that is not directly related to your content. Visit your website with a web browser and select "View source" or "View HTML source". If it is difficult for you to spot the actual content of your website then search engines might also have difficulty to parse your pages.

#### **Reason 5: Your website navigation causes problems**

Fancy JavaScript or DHTML menus cannot be parsed by most search engine robots. Flash or AJAX menus are even worse when it comes to website navigation. Search engine robots follow HTML links; any other links can cause problems.

You can then use this profile to attract new customers and communicate with them more effectively.

#### **5. Perform a SWOT analysis on your business**

Assess your strengths and weaknesses from your customer's point of view. Then look at the opportunities and threats - those things outside your control that will have an impact on your business. From this analysis develop a list of key issues that need to be addressed.

#### **6. Identify your key points of difference**

Do you have a compelling customer value proposition? You can gain a competitive edge in your market by knowing and communicating your key point of difference to your target market. Ask yourself, "What do I offer that makes me unique?"

#### **7. Set realistic objectives**

Be realistic about what you need to accomplish and how long it will take. Your marketing objectives should be relevant to your current marketing and business issues and move you towards achieving your financial goals.

#### **8. Think geometrically**

The best way to grow your business is geometrically - by enlarging the size of each transaction, engaging in more transactions per cycle with each customer, tapping into the enormous referral power of each customer and of course, getting new customers through traditional avenues. By focusing on all four directions at once your business will grow.

#### **9. Track and measure your marketing**

Measuring your marketing tactics will save you valuable time and money. A simple way is to ask every customer. "How did you hear about us?"

#### **10. Learn from your experiences**

Continually speak to your customers, research your competitors and analyse your business and market to ensure you are taking advantage of all opportunities available. If something doesn't work - don't be put off - chances are you will know what went wrong and why, so your marketing activities will only become more effective and improve your business results year after year.

For more information on Website Optimisation, send an email to [Info@OnTheMark.com.au](mailto:Info@OnTheMark.com.au).

## **What is SEO (Search Engine Optimisation)**

The process of increasing the amount of visitors to a web site by ranking high in the search results of a search engine. The higher a web site ranks in the results of a search, the greater the chance that site will be visited by a user.

It is common practice for Internet users to not click through pages and pages of search results, so where a site ranks in a search is essential for directing more traffic toward the site.

A well-ranked SEO Optimised website translates to more people seeing your company information, more potential customers and ultimately more sales.

Bottom line, when you advertise you want your advertisement to be seen by as many people as possible after all that's why you advertise.

So why should your website be any different. You paid to develop it, you pay to host it and you pay to continually have it updated. So why would you not want it seen by as many people as possible.

For more information on Website Optimisation, send an email to [Info@OnTheMark.com.au](mailto:Info@OnTheMark.com.au).

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