

Basic Marketing 101 – Still True in 2010

When is the best time to think about purchasing advertising in any media? Hint: It's not when the sales rep has offered you their latest and best promotion. That great price they're offering can never compete with an effective marketing strategy. Ad reps are useful and needed, but they are geared to meet sales quotas. A well thought-out marketing strategy will help you avoid wasting money on advertising that doesn't bring you leads or sales.

Plan for Success

At its most basic level your marketing plan must address three interrelated areas – market, message and media. Get each part right and your marketing will be successful. Fail to get all parts right and your advertising dollars are wasted.

1. **Market** – Who is your market? Who has purchased from you in the past and who do you want to purchase from you in the future? If your product or service has mass appeal, your answer still cannot be EVERYBODY. Break it down. What characteristics do your customers share? How do they pay? How much do they purchase? How frequently? Where do they live? (You are capturing this information, right? And their phone number and email address?)

If you are advertising your business and have never tracked this information, STOP! Money invested in advertising that isn't traceable is money wasted for the small business. How will you know if your investment in advertising is well spent unless you track the results?

2. **Message** – What is the specific message to your market or to each of your markets? How does that message communicate why your customer should buy from you and not the guy down the street? Or from someone else's website?
3. **Media** - How will you get your message to your market(s)? What forms of media will be most effective to reach your target market? Think in terms of utilizing two or three forms of media over a set period of time – an advertising campaign rather than the scattershot approach.

Review, Replay, Repeat

Your individual market, message and media choices will change over time. Tracking and reviewing your advertising results will help you see what works and what doesn't. You'll notice trends and identify new target markets. Then it's back to the drawing board ... what's the message that'll reach this new market, and what media will be most effective to do so.

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Shari Voigt is the Marketing Director for Zero To Sixty Marketing LLC. As a collaborative of independent business owners, our goal is to help you maximize results while minimizing your expense. Our marketing and business communication services help businesses like yours get better results for their marketing investment.

Zero To Sixty Marketing LLC offers overall marketing strategy consultation and complete solutions for individual projects, such as newsletters, brochures, direct mail campaigns, press releases, and website search engine optimized (SEO) copy. We understand the unique needs of small businesses, the importance of cost-effective advertising, and public relations that gets results.

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