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in a series

marketing strategies

Small Business Marketing: 10 Ways to Be Successful

1. Be Understood. Can you describe your business, product or service in clear simple language? Can you do it in just one short sentence or phrase? If not, you're in trouble. Potential customers may not have the time or attention span to listen to a complex explanation. Go through the exercise of crafting a brief position statement that clearly and succinctly states what you do, or what you offer. Ask a few people unfamiliar with your business to take a look at it and let you know if it does the job. If not, keep refining.

2. Be Mission Focused. Do you know who your customers are? Do you understand what motivates them? Do you know exactly what message you need to craft to create appeal for your product or service? When you can answer "yes" to these questions, you can establish your marketing mission, including objectives and strategies that have the greatest potential to be effective.

3. Be Smart. Are your decisions based on your mission and plan? If not, you may be wasting money and time. Spend your marketing dollars only on items that fit your strategy. Aim them at your specific targets. Stay focused. Whether it's a web site, ad, direct mail promotion, brochure, radio or T.V. advertising, be sure you understand how that purchase is building your brand and fitting into your plan.

4. Be Different. Is your product new or different in some way? Advertising professionals call this your "unique product differential." If you don't have one, it may be hard to draw attention to what you're selling. The same is true of your advertising and marketing. In today's crowded marketplace, you need to find creative ways to stand out.

5. Be Consistent. Do you have a brand identity? Today's marketing is all about the brand. That means you need to communicate a consistent image of your company, product and service. Be sure that everything you put into the market is uniform in its presentation. This applies to your logo, advertising, brochures, color schemes, giveaways and more. Think of it as your company or product personality. Let your customers and prospects get to know you and easily identify with you.

6. Be Generous. Are you visible in the community? Generosity can provide great returns. Get your business or your employees involved in community activities or causes. While they're helping out, have them wear a t-shirt with your company name. Give them water bottles with your logo. Create a press release about your efforts. Keep your self-promotion subtle, but don't be invisible. Most importantly, choose efforts that somehow have a tie in to your business, product or service.

7. Be Connected. Are you networking? Get out there and meet and greet. There's nothing more

effective than making a personal connection. Join the local Chamber of Commerce, a trade association, or other organization where you can meet prospective customers. Better yet, volunteer for a committee or activity. You'll gain greater visibility and earn respect.

8. Be Repetitious. Are you repeating yourself? Good! It's been proven over and over that it takes constant repetition of messages before a prospective customer pays attention and takes action. So, don't run an ad one time and expect the phone to ring. Choose your marketing vehicles carefully, and make sure you can afford to keep your message out there on a consistent basis.

9. Be a Leader. Are you an expert in your field? Let your market know! You can show your leadership in your area by accepting speaking engagements, contributing articles to trade or consumer publications, or offering yourself as an interview source.

10. Be Active. Are you complacent? If so, you're in trouble. Customers are a moving target. Trends and attitudes are constantly changing. And people are always looking for the next best thing. Stay on top of what's happening, and tweak your product or service every so often to keep pace. In most cases, same-old, same-old doesn't cut it. To stay in front, keep raising the bar, and aim for new, improved, bigger or better.



★ epps advertising builds long-term relationships with clients to help them grow in an ever-changing marketplace.