

with columnist **Robert Ciccone**

Path to success paved with 10 marketing stones



The success factors of marketing are the same, whether you are a Fortune-100 company or a start-up operating out of your basement.

The following is a guide to help you succeed in your marketing and maximize your profit potential.

Adopt a marketing mindset

The marketing mindset is a philosophy where you understand that you are not in the business of doing whatever it is you do. For example, if you are a house painter, you are not in the business of painting houses, but rather, first and foremost, you are in the business of marketing and selling painting. So realize that you are not a widget maker, you are a marketer of widgets.

Narrow your focus

Profile your ideal client and focus all efforts on them. Who are they? Where are they? How do they think? What do they read? What do they watch? What interests them? What do they buy and why? Having one niche, one feature and one market is almost always better than trying to satisfy everyone.

Differentiate yourself

What sets your company apart from any other in your industry? To

succeed, it is critical that you create and sustain a competitive advantage. You must be able to answer this question: why should someone do business with you versus all other choices available?

Determine the lifetime value of your customers

The "lifetime" value of the customer refers to the measure of worth (value) over the lifetime of your business relationship with that customer. Knowing how much profit a customer represents for the life of your relationship tells you how much time, effort and expense you can afford to invest in acquiring customers and marketing to them.

Build on multiple marketing pillars

Do not rely on just one or two marketing sources or pillars. It is not good enough to just have a website. Use all the marketing vehicles available to you: direct mail, joint ventures, networking, media advertising, outside sales reps and public relations, to name a few. Diversifying your approach will keep your company solid during times when one method or another is not producing as well as it should.

Test everything

You can't assume what motivates

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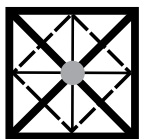
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the marketplace – you must discover what will motivate it by testing different approaches. Test headline against headline, offer against offer, ad copy against ad copy, bonus against bonus, guarantee against guarantee, and script against script. Change one element at a time.

Take your message to the media

Add some celebrity to your company name. Local newspapers and television are always looking for stories and topics of interest. Learn to write press releases or call your local media outlet about a special aspect of your business. The payoff is great – this type of exposure is free and adds a tremendous amount of credibility to you and your company.

Sustain contact with customers

Develop a system to keep in constant contact with your target audience. Continuous contact is proven to have a significant positive impact on order size, frequency of purchase, loyalty and referrals. Make sure your target audience knows who you are, where you are and how to find you when they are ready to buy.

Partner for success

Often you can find new customers through joint ventures or alliances with other companies. Alliances

help you generate ongoing referrals for your business. Find complementary companies with complementary customer bases and join forces – create cross-promotions, share endorsements, work each other's databases.

Study marketing success

Leaders in every industry are constantly educating themselves. Read, study, find role models – there are thousands of people who have done it, books in print and online, clues and proven tactics just waiting for you to discover. If you want to excel, invest in your education, make marketing a study and have the courage to test your findings in the real-world lab called your marketplace.

So, there you have it. Ten strategies that should fast-track you to business growth and success.

Robert Ciccone is the president and founder of Success Unlimited Sales and Marketing Group (www.susmg.com). He is also the creator of the Marketing for Profit Program, a three-part results program that provides the marketing systems, tools and ongoing support to help participants effectively build, manage and operate a profitable business (www.susmg.com/MarketingForProfit). Robert can be reached at 604-535-2111 or rob@susmg.com.

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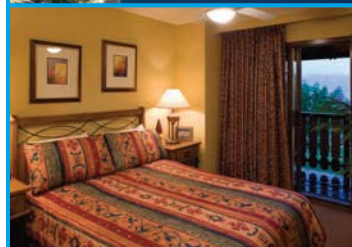


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