

Ways to Promote Your Product or Service

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The marketing budget deserves careful consideration, because it not only serves to create market impressions; it is expected to generate revenues. Understanding the kinds of impacts that can be expected from various print and electronic media will help to manage this element of business expense.

It is important to understand that each market segment may react differently to the way a promotional message is presented. An exciting, aggressive or even humorous message may be perceived as offensive or insensitive even though it may be grammatically and politically correct.

The Print and Graphic Arts Media

Business cards and stationery are effective, inexpensive and professional promotional tools but use of these items should be restricted to personal contacts. Rubber stamps or staples are for impersonal, routine tasks and should not be used in any way with this media. Advertising specialties such as pens, key rings and calendars acknowledge goodwill in the form of a small gift, but these convey more image than information.

Many retailers prefer advertising in local newspaper because it provides maximum flexibility in terms of budget, timing, coupon feedback, product and price mix. The perception rate is high because the reader can get more than one impact from the same message.

Brochures, posters and packaging are cost effective ways to provide a combination of moving and static visual impact with the most versatile applications. Brochures inform, posters inspire and packaging validates the customer's buying decision.

Catalogues used by the mass merchandisers are expensive and designed for specific, targeted markets. The high quality graphics make the catalogue a reference product with portable but inflexible information. The catalogue style of advertising is more frequently used in promotional sales flyers.

Advertising in magazines is more expensive than in newspapers or on the radio, but it has the advantage of reaching a more specific audience (i.e. teens, women, crafters, etc.). Manufacturers tend to use this media to reinforce their brand names and trademarks in the market.

Business pages of your telephone book provide an interactive link to the primary electronic media; the telephone and the fax. The toll free 1-800 or 1-888 service invites extended markets, and implies modern services.

Increased use of cellular telecommunications is expected to influence a new wave of creative marketing tactics.

The Electronic Media

Radio is cost effective and the audiences are routinely loyal to a station's program format. The lack of visual impact makes the message more personal and conversational. Promotional events often build on the interactive links with the audience. Radio messages tend to develop a personality and convey a friendly, local relationship.

Television captures more audience time than any other medium and it has the powerful advantages of visual impact. It is generally believed that as much as 90% of a person's total perception is the result of images conveyed to the brain in one way or another.

The TV commercial is targeted at a home audience in a relaxed and suggestive atmosphere, by using short, repetitive, and high impact messages. Commercial spots are formatted in clusters of ten and fifteen second clips.

There is an increasing number of online directories available with which you can list your business. Not only are many of these directories available at reasonable rates, they allow customers from all parts of the province, country and world easy access to your business.

The Personal Efforts

Networking and "Word of Mouth" referrals are an effective way to reduce out of pocket costs and cultivate a clientele. The valued opinion of influential customers is the most important and cost effective promotion that a business can develop. Markets never buy anything; only customers buy products and services.

Community involvement expands the personal network of contacts and marketing intelligence; however, this should be the by-product of genuine interest in the community.

Special promotions and events can be made to work in concert with any one or a combination of the above promotional methods. This can be in the form of door prizes, welcoming gifts, free passes, free coffee, or even honouring a competitor's coupons.

The Market/Media Mix

Since most media reaches a wide range of people, the challenge for business is to anticipate the customer's needs in terms of typical behaviour patterns in human nature. Each media has a variety of strengths and weaknesses to consider. In some market situations a dollar spent on print media can out pull a dollar spent in electronic media and vice versa.

Concurrent planning must include methods to compare results with costs and competition. Even the smallest advertising budget will benefit with a marketing plan because it remains a vital part of the BUSINESS PLAN.

For further information regarding starting a business, contact the

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