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Top 10 best practices that savvy marketers know about

Includes your three FREE bonus exercises courtesy of Sherry Prescott-Willis, author, *Market This!*



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Top 10 best practices that savvy marketers know about

1. Keep persistent, stay consistent

Whatever you are telling your customers, keep it consistent. Be as persistent as you want with your marketing messages and campaigns, but make sure that your messaging is consistent. Don't confuse your customers! Any place that a customer can read or hear about your product or service needs to have the same messaging. That means your website, your collateral, your presentations, your blog, your phone conversations, your webinars. Keep your message consistent everywhere!

2. Don't underestimate the power of Google

It's estimated that over 200 million people use Google every day and on average, these people use Google five to ten times a day! What's the chance your customer will find you online? If you've done your Google homework, your chances are high. Getting quality website traffic depends on keyword phrases. Take the time to associate keyword phrases that users might be using to search your product or service on the Internet. Then, talk to your website programmer or specialist to be certain those keyword phrases have been entered for association with your website.

3. Social media should be part of your marketing strategy

Social media are Internet and mobile tools that enable people to share and collaborate information. Examples of social media websites such as Facebook, MySpace and YouTube can give a boost to your brand and its credibility. But, you need to get on these websites and post quality information that may be of interest to your potential and existing customers. Social media websites are a great place to read about recommendations about existing and new brands. If your product or service gets mentioned in a conversation on a social media website, this is an excellent opportunity for you to interact and get people to your website to learn more about how great your product or service really is!

4. Nurturing leads is a necessity

Lead generation is not just about collecting leads! Once you collect great leads at trade shows, conferences and online events, make sure to stay current with their contact information in your database. Then communicate with these leads frequently! Communicate with leads through newsletters and news alerts to update them about your product or service. Get to know them and they will get to know you. The better you know your leads, the easier it will be to market to them and convert them into being future customers!

5. Know what your customers are reading

What are your customers reading online and to whom are they listening? What periodicals are they reading? What online publications do they rely on and use to get information to make informed decisions? Understand where your customers and potential customers go to mine resources and information that will lead them to your product or service. Whether it be an online magazine or a conference newsletter, you want to know what influences your customers to buy your product or use your service.

6. Make your brand stand out!

Your brand is more than your logo and tag line. It's what your product or service represents to customers. Make sure that you make the effort to make your brand stand out among competitors. Your brand should convey your business values and give customers a sense that your product or service is credible, valuable and will be around for a long time. When you are not available to talk to about your product or service, your brand will represent you, so make sure that it represents the integrity of your product or service well!

7. Web 2.0 Is not a fad

Web 2.0 is a new way of using Internet technology to enhance collaboration and information sharing for people. Through Web 2.0, many new tools have been developed that can help people become better marketers. Web 2.0 tools such as networking websites, video sharing (YouTube), wikis, blogs and webcasts can all enhance your brand and make your company more accessible! All of these new Web 2.0 tools are making it easier for your product or service to be discovered by customers. Learn how to use Web 2.0 technologies, embrace them and use them in your marketing efforts!

8. Online surveys work

Want to know how your customers feel about your product or service? Submit an online survey to find out. Online customer surveys can be a quick and easy way for you to find out what your customers are thinking and feeling. Surveys are also a great way to gauge your customer's interest in your features, products, benefits and pricing. There are a number of reasonably priced online survey companies, such as Survey Monkey and Zoomerang that have ready-to-go survey templates that are simple to use. They are quick, fast and easy and will record your respondent's feedback. Use them!

9. Keep up with current trends

What are trends saying about the need for your product or service? Check newspapers, online publications and analyst reports to see what you can find. What's happening in the news that may influence why customers would need to buy your product or service? Keeping current on trends can help you to decide how to more effectively market to your customers. By understanding trends you can also be a resource for your customers when they need an expert to give them advice on the best product or service to purchase. Stay current!

10. Get out there!

It's okay to try new marketing techniques when trying to reach customers. If you don't try new techniques, you will never know if they will work for your business, so don't be afraid to get out there and make mistakes. Good marketers know that they sometimes have to take a risk to find out what works best for customers and learn from the things that are working well. Your marketing techniques and plans will evolve as to the degree that your business evolves, so don't be afraid to try new things.

Bonus Exercises

#1:

Test your Google power

Use the following three bonus exercises to gain valuable insight into your business today!

Google is a powerful tool that customers use daily to get information on products and services. Since it is the most well-known search engine on the web, think about how many potential customers might learn about your product or service! A recent study indicates that on average, people are using Google five to ten times a day! If that's the case, think about this-what key search words are your customers and potential customers using to find information about *your* product or service?

How do your customers see you?

Let's test to see how your customers see you online when using Google as a search engine. Go to www.google.com. Enter the name of your product or service.

When entering the name of my product or service, Google results show the following:

List the top five keywords or phrases that you think a potential customer would type into Google to find out about your product or service:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

When using these top five keywords, does your product or service come up in the first two pages?

Are there other words and phrases that you can think of that a potential customer may use to research your product or service in Google?

Reflection: When you entered in those five words, how did your product or service show up on the first few pages? What can you do to improve your Google presence with keywords? If your product or service does not show up in a Google search, do some more homework. Talk to your customers and find out how they view your product or service and what language and keywords they use to enter into Google. Then come up with a list of as many possible variations of those phrases as possible. Next, evaluate how you can add these key words to your website search capabilities with a Search Engine Optimization (SEO) expert and/or working with your website programmer.

Bonus Exercises

#2: Lead generation

How do you collect leads (prospect customers) for your product or service? Is it at trade shows, seminars, Teleseminars, webcasts or other events? Once you collect those great leads, where do they go? If you compile them into a giant database, that's great news. But how often do you refresh that database?

Keeping a clean database of leads

Your database of leads can only help you with your marketing campaigns and efforts if it is current and accurate. Next, how often do you refresh your database and make changes to keep it current?

How often do you look at your database in a twelve-month period?

What percentage of your leads are prospect and current customers?

What percentage of your leads are networking contacts that can help you to promote your product or service?

Reflection: You should be reviewing your database on a quarterly basis, making sure to keep leads that are in your target audience and can provide some networking value. You should have a larger percentage of leads compared to potential customers. You do want to keep leads that may help you to promote your product and/or talk to potential customers about your product or service. When you review your database, ask yourself this: How can these leads provide value for my business? How can these leads help to increase revenue for my product or service?

Bonus Exercises

#3: Talking to your database of leads

So you have a great database of leads, but do you use that database to communicate to your leads? The prospects in your database are potential customers, so it's important to communicate with them frequently. E-newsletters, surveys and email campaigns are all great ways to talk to prospect customers, but make sure you communicate with them often. Once you set up a program to communicate to your leads, keep your outreach efforts consistent.

Communicating to your leads

How often do you reach out to prospect customers in a twelve month period?

What types of marketing tools do you have set up to reach out to your prospect customers on a regular basis? (for example, newsletter, eblast campaign, reports, promotions, etc...)

What kind of information can you use in a newsletter or email campaigns that would add value to your prospect customer's life?

Reflection: Do you communicate with your leads about your product or service via email correspondence, direct mail and/or e-newsletters? If not, think about ways that you can reach out to them on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. It's easy to keep them updated with news such as a new promotion, product discount or information piece that you've created. You can also update them on conferences and speaking opportunities that they may be interested in attending to find out more information about your product or service. The key is to give them information that will add value. Remember that when you communicate with your leads, you are communicating with your next best customer.