



Effective Marketing is Business Development

By Patrick Zuluaga, [PMZ Marketing](#)

Think about this and sit up straight as you read this – **effective marketing is all about business development!** If you hear anything else from so called advertising consultants you should hold on to your wallet tightly and quickly make your get away. As a business professional, you must build your image and brand with effective marketing programs that generate real business revenue returns. Small and medium sized businesses simply can not afford to sustain 'feel good' image or brand building advertisements over a long haul.

Now more than ever you need to be smart about your marketing as you grapple with cutting costs. Many businesses take the self destructive action of cutting marketing expenses an easy way to achieve cost reduction. Without effective marketing your business will not grow to its full potential or at worst it will not survive. This is a common predicament for many business professionals, 'what can be done that will make the greatest impact on my business today in this economic climate?'

You are not alone. Ever business is grappling with this challenge at one level or another. What can you do? How can you get the right balance? How can you achieve effective marketing?

Well the answer is simple and obvious. Stop wasting money on marketing programs that do not bring results! So many businesses spend on marketing activities without a clear business objective and the ability to track results. Every marketing dollar spent must be scrutinised. You need to get smart about your marketing. Smart marketing is about maximising your business results in the most cost effective manner. You do not need mega-bucks to apply smart and effective marketing for your business. In fact, if you follow my guidelines you will achieve Better Marketing Results on your own marketing activities.

Successful business professionals have a secret behind their success. They use business systems that help them grow efficiently. Similarly, you need to have a marketing system or engine that effectively contributes to your business by generating qualified prospects into your prospecting sales funnel.

Let us focus on four key steps to building an effective marketing system or engine:

Focus on your Ideal Customer

Who is your ideal customer? You need to get this concept clearly. Who are you targeting? Why would they select your business versus your competition?



Frame in your mind the profile of the ideal customer for your business. Think about the attributes from a demographic¹ and psychographic² segmentation prospective. What is important in their selection criteria or decision to use your products or services over those of your competition?

If you do not have information to answer these questions you will need to seek answers to these questions with priority and vigour! Find the time to research or have someone else find out the answers for you.

Here is a hint: make sure you ask questions from your most valuable customers on why they selected your business and why they keep coming back.

Now develop a customer profile with detailed descriptions of your ideal customer's drivers and selection criteria. You must understand your ideal customer to allow you to formulate marketing messages that are relevant and will resonate with them. Until you understand your ideal customer intimately and what motivates them your marketing message will be muddled and ineffective. Your message must paint an emotive picture of your customer enjoying the benefits of your product or service.

Effective marketing uses highly targeted messages and offers to a clearly segmented audience using the communication mediums that your targeted customers use. Your potential customer must receive relevant messages of interest to them on the communications mediums they use. It is absolutely critical that you send them messages they want to receive not what you want to send them. You must use the communications mediums they use not the communications mediums you are familiar with or you prefer to use.

Apply Multi-Channel Marketing

At any one time you must have a least four channels to your target markets that are delivering the results for your business. Yes, you read that right **four** not **one**. You might be thinking to yourself that implementing one is already a struggle let alone four.

Remember that potential customers generally need an average of 7-touch points from your business before they become comfortable in contacting you about your products or services.

One-off marketing activities or advertisements are totally ineffective as a viable marketing program. Remember your marketing message will have to compete for the attention of the recipient who is inundated on a daily basis with countless messages and advertisements from a multitude of communication mediums. I often hear business professionals say "I have tried that once before and it did not work!" Why, because it got lost in everything that happens in the daily life of our

¹ Definition: Demographic segmentation - to segment a target market by age, sex, income, family size, home suburb, religion or political affiliations

² Definition: Psychographic segmentation - to segment a target market by social class, lifestyle, leisure, personality or consumer characteristics



targeted prospects and in most cases was neither interesting nor relevant to the recipient.

To be effective you need to reach out to your potential customers using a marketing system that allows you to be consistent over a number of channels that your target markets use.

Here are some examples to utilise for a multi-channel marketing strategy. These four channels to your market can achieve the best results when you utilise the AIDA³ direct marketing approach with your relevant messages or offers. Consider the following four channels to market or communication mediums to start with⁴:

Referral Marketing

For those of you who have been managing your business over a number of years you will recognise the value of referral marketing to your business. However, many business people take no action with this knowledge. Do not be one of them. There is a smarter way and that is to implement programs that will allow your business to go full-throttle on referral marketing as a driver for new business.

Look at implementing referral programs with incentives and rewards. Rewards can be informal such as sending flowers or chocolates or arranging a dinner for two for referrals that generate business. At the very least mailing a thank you card would be appropriate even if the referral did not turn to new business.

You could consider marketing with affiliate referral programs that are 'Pay for Performance' (i.e. paying commissions only on successful referral sales). These are formal arrangements that extend your ability to reach out to your target markets. Look for establishments or businesses in your local geographic area that are targeting similar markets and do not compete with your products or services. In many cases, their products and services may be complementary and beneficial overall for your customers.

Networking or Personal Selling

Everyone in your business must be able to network effectively whether in a social or business function. Make sure all staff is familiar and comfortable with your 'Unique Benefit Statement'. Formulate your 'Unique Benefit Statement' from your target customers' point of view "What's In It For Me?" The value of networking is in your opportunity to establish relationships that expand your market reach beyond your immediate networking circle.

³ A – attract their Attention, I – capture their Interest, D – create their Desire, A – provide a call to Action

⁴ Each target market has a preference for a communication medium and you will need to find out what these are while constantly keeping in touch as these may change over time.



Email or eNewsletter Marketing

I am not talking about blast or broadcast emails that have spawned the term SPAM. Don't be one of these. Properly implemented email marketing is focused on your recipient. It must deliver real value with relevant and interesting content for your target audience. Understand your customer and use the profiles you have developed earlier that define what they want and what motivates them to take action.

Inform and educate your customer's on the benefits that demonstrates the value you can deliver for them. One of the best and most cost effective communication mediums is eNewsletters. Make sure you have this communications medium in your plan as it works very well when properly implemented.

An approach that works for a consumer market is providing content that would be of interest to their lifestyle and leisure activities.

Here is another hint: people respond in greater numbers to a message related to the relief of pain or distress as compared to a more long lasting positive benefit.

Web Presence

Most businesses will have a website of some form yet the majority of these websites will not be contributing positively to the business. Get this underperforming marketing channel into shape and revamp your website into a properly functioning online web business presence. Make it an automated marketing engine for your business development.

Revisit and define your key business objective for your web presence. Once you have a clear business objective your next step is to develop an understanding of how it can be achieved on the Internet and to set goals to be attained for your electronic web pages in cyberspace. Every single web page must work hard for your business.

A good way to help you focus on this change is to view your online web presence as belonging to your target customers' – it is theirs not yours! Content must be oriented toward their relevant needs and interests not on what you want to say. Ensure that every web page meets this content test and is designed according to 'persuasion-conversion⁵' scenarios.

If your web designer or developer is unfamiliar with these design concepts find one that does – immediately!

⁵ Definition: Persuasion-Conversion is a concept in web design that funnels the web visitors thru increasing commitment points until they take the desired 'call to action' specified for the web page



Engage in Relationship Building with your Customers

In every communication with your customer make them feel important and appreciated. Every touch point should deliver value to your recipient. When they take up an offer send them a thank you note or card. Deliver real value and keep engaged and in touch with your customer. Engagement or interaction with your customer is keeping the conversation open with them. More than anything a customer moves on if they feel neglected and undervalued.

I mentioned earlier using the communication mediums that your customers prefer and these will include social networks. Engaging in relationship building will be enhanced by using the social networks that your customers use.

Remember you must keep in touch and add value with every touch point.

Test, Test and Test Again

The final step in building a marketing system or engine is to make sure that everything you do in marketing must be tested before you commit to a full scale campaign. Measuring and tracking the results against the business objective for your effort will allow you to manage and achieve Better Marketing Results by ramping up what is working and eliminating programs that are ineffective.

Apply these guidelines and you will get Better Marketing Results that make your marketing recession proof.

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I appreciate your feedback and would like to hear from you on how you are handling these marketing challenges, send your comments to patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au.

About the Author



Patrick Zuluaga has more than 20 years experience in marketing and business development roles with Australian and international companies. He is Director of PMZ Marketing, a consultancy focused on Small and Medium Enterprises to **help you succeed in business with better marketing results.**

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