

MAKING MINCEMEAT OUT OF MARKETING



HOW TO MARKET YOUR BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS.....

In a nutshell, marketing your business is essential for success. Whether you are a large plc or a one man band, without marketing no-one knows who you are, what you do, where you do it and how much it will cost them to get it! Look around you – everywhere you look someone is marketing something. From a simple business card and the calendar on your wall to the giant billboards and illuminated displays in Piccadilly Circus.

You need to decide who your new customers are, how you will reach them, and once you have them, how you will keep them.

Simple.

Really, it is. Creating your marketing plan need not be rocket science – unless of course you are selling rockets.

1. Identify what your business is about, your objectives and a strategy for achieving those objectives.
2. Do a **SWOT** analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats). It can help to identify potential customers and what elements of your business are going to win them. Play to your strengths!
3. Be aware of your competitors at all times – what are their weaknesses, what makes them good at what they do, are there areas they don't cover both in geographical and product/service terms? Incorporate what you learn into your marketing plan.
4. Identify your target market but be realistic about it. Target a market segment that you feel is most likely to want what you have to offer and target them specifically. It is likely that you will already have existing customers in this segment.
5. Decide how you will position yourself in your chosen market segment, which may be based upon your strengths in the SWOT analysis. For example, it may be providing a flexible, local service or a quick delivery product.
6. Decide upon something that gives you a **USP** (unique selling point) and differentiates you from the competition. Use this to market yourself in conjunction with the **4P's** analysis.
7. Assess what resources you need. Perhaps get some external help with designing marketing literature, undertaking mailing campaigns, creating a brand and promoting your company. Do you have enough people to sell your products; do you have enough budget available?
8. Take control of your plan. Set yourself targets and milestones and stand back every so often to assess how it is all going.
9. Finally, marketing is an on-going project. It doesn't pay to dip in and out, and the moment that you take your eye off the ball you can be certain that one of your competitors is waiting in the wings to pick it up and run with it.





AFTER A LIST OF DO'S—A LIST OF DON'TS

- Don't make assumptions about what the customer wants.
- Don't ignore your competitors
- Don't try to compete on price alone
- Don't put all your eggs in one basket and rely on key customers
- Don't rush in without thinking about what you are trying to achieve
- Don't be complacent and make it easy for your competitors

IF IN DOUBT—USE THE IDIOT GUIDE!

- I** – Identify your competitors and target customer segments
- D** – Determine what you have that differentiates you from your competitors and if there is a market for it
- I** - Invest time and money in creating a vehicle to market your products and services
- O** - Offer incentives or special terms to draw customers in
- T** - Track your results and use them to tweak your marketing plan as necessary

MAKE A QUICK FIX—SPEEDY STEPS TO IMPROVE YOUR BUSINESS

Before targeting new market sectors have a look at your existing customer base. Can you be doing more for them? Who else is providing them products or services? It is a lot easier to develop your existing customers that to find new ones.

Keep the ones that you have got! Every business has key customers and a lot of businesses operate on the 80/20 rule (20% of their customers account for 80% of the business). Obviously, keeping these customers is very important – think about asking them to consider a Service Level Agreement or contract. Good practices should not only be confined to big businesses.

Talk to your customers! Find out what your existing customers love and hate about your business or products. After all, who is better placed to give you first hand feedback. But before you do: -

*Update your existing customer database and make sure it is current.
There is nothing more annoying than getting a letter addressed to someone who left three years ago!*



STAMP YOUR BRAND!

CREATE, COMMUNICATE & CUDDLE UP TO YOUR IDENTITY



"Create your own visual style... let it be unique for yourself and yet identifiable for others."
Orson Welles

WITHOUT OUR IDENTITY, WHO ARE WE?

Corporate identity is a valuable to a sole trader as to a High Street retailer or FTSE 100 company. It differentiates your business from your competitors and positions you as a solution to your customer's needs - and your visual identity does this more than any other medium.

Look at your logo. Does it still look as crisp and alive today as when it was first introduced, or does it pale besides other images you use to promote your products and services? Worse yet, have your competitors got a sexy logo that looks better than yours?

Top Tip - Pull together all of the tools that you use to communicate with the outside world – including fax headers, envelopes, invoices, brochures etc. Are they consistent? Does it look as though they originated from one company or are there different logos, colours and styles?

Your visual identity is a fundamental tool in communicating your business. It formulates ideas about your business before a word is spoken or read. Ask yourself how many times have you decided not to look at a website or go into a shop because it just didn't appeal visually?



"It is only shallow people who do not judge by appearances."
Oscar Wilde

LOGO DOES NOT HAVE TO BE A *!!@?* FOUR LETTER WORD!

As your business grows and changes shape your original identity may no longer apply. Perhaps you have invested in new equipment and are more modern in your approach to customers, or gone completely the other way and found a niche in selling retro items. A revamp or total redesign of your logo, identity and messaging can achieve renewed interest and generate new customers.

Before tackling a re-brand ask yourself: -

Who am I talking to? Be aware of your current and potential customer base and ask if they connect with your current visual identity. Has your customer base changed over time? Does your current logo leave a new audience stone cold?

Will it stand the test of time? Make sure your new logo is time proof without any ultra fashionable elements that will look dated next year (think white socks and slip-on shoes or rara skirts. See what I mean.)

STAMP YOUR BRAND & LOVE YOUR LOGO! CONTINUED.....



Will I alienate existing customers? Only if you don't tell them what you are doing - no-one likes to feel as though they are the last to know. If you are concerned about being too radical, consider keeping elements of your existing logo, such as the company colours.

LOVE YOUR LOGO AND BELIEVE THE HYPE!

Define Who You Are

Once you have decided that a re-brand is required think about what you would like your target market to picture when they are dealing with you – make a list of your core business items, key strengths, unique selling points and what you are hoping to accomplish.

Develop Your Logo

You are unique and special. Make your target market believe that too. So please, please, please – don't use a logo from Clip-Art!! Put some of your marketing budget towards having your own exclusive logo professionally designed. It will stand the test of time, interpret your business, products and services, look stunning and can be reproduced accurately on marketing and corporate print, vehicle decals, signage, packaging, labels and in lights at Piccadilly Circus! At A Local Printer we have bags of experience in creating fab logos. And don't be mistaken – it **doesn't** cost a fortune.



Communicate Your New Brand

Absolutely everything you do effects what your prospective customers will think of you, so make sure it is consistent and reflects your new brand – from the way you answer the telephone to the way you promote your services and products. Use your new logo and chosen colours on every print item that leaves your desk. Develop a tag line that helps to reinforce your message and use it on all your printed materials. Try to incorporate your logo and/or colours into as many things as possible – be creative!!!

Maintain Your Brand

Resist the temptation to tinker. By the time you are bored with it, it will have just started to be recognised by your target market. Consistency is key – it builds awareness and develops credibility. Continuousness is key – repeat your message over and over again. It can take as many as 15 contacts before a prospect remembers who you are, what you do and how you can help them!