

Maximize Your Advertising Dollar

Plan Your Program: Before jumping head first into a full-blown marketing program, be sure you have a solid plan in writing. Among other things, your plan should include target market, media, timing, messaging, and a mechanism for measuring the success of your program. Effective planning can identify potential problems in your marketing efforts and keep your costs down.

Leverage Your Brand: Your company name and image in the marketplace is your brand. It's what your customers and prospects know and trust. All of your marketing material should present your brand in a consistent look and feel to maximize awareness levels and enhance credibility, resulting in more sales.

Use Loyalty Programs: Your customers are the reason you are in business. Implementing a customer loyalty program is a relatively inexpensive way to enhance customer satisfaction with your brand and will help overcome any inertia associated with future purchases of your product or service.

Cross-Sell Your Customers: Studies show that satisfied customers seek out and expect to be offered related products from companies with whom they currently do business. Make your customers and your bottom line happy by cross-selling other products to your current customer base.

Utilize Direct Marketing: If properly implemented, a direct marketing program can be a very efficient method for identifying prospects and new customers. The keys to a successful direct marketing program include having the right list, the right direct mail package, and the right offer for your target customer group.

Creative Testing: Testing is one of the most overlooked facets of advertising. Any company that spends more than \$5,000 a year on advertising should have a creative test strategy and an established methodology for measuring the success of each advertising medium. Without such a mechanism in place, it is difficult to fully analyze your advertising efforts and determine what medium, list, offer, etc. is most efficient on a per sale or per quote basis.

Promotional Items: Most companies today use imprinted promotional items to promote their business. With a minimal investment, the right promotional item given to your prospects or current customers will increase brand awareness levels, resulting in increased sales. Using imprinted promotional items to entice prospects to call for more information is often an efficient method for increasing sales opportunities.



Public Relations: Who wouldn't want free media? If you have a new product, new client, new location or anything that is newsworthy, why not let the world know. By developing a press release and notifying members of the media, you may have an opportunity to get your name and company in the newspaper at no cost.

General Advertising: General advertising (TV, radio, space ads, etc) enables your message to be viewed by tens of thousands at the same time. While general advertising can be relatively expensive, it is an efficient method for distributing your message to a large audience.

Adapt to Change: You should be able to be easily and rapidly change your advertising plan without any interruption in your business. This nimble and flexible plan will enable your business to continually capitalize on market conditions.

Monitor Program Results: Continually review and monitor media results and modify your plan when needed. Your advertising dollars are limited, so they're better spent on media that are providing results.

Thank Your Customers: Thanking your customers not only increases customer satisfaction levels, but a simple thank you letter further engrains your brand in your customers mind, leading to repeat business, customer referrals, and increased sales.

Surveys: Surveys can provide a plethora of useful information about your business model. In addition to the standard customer satisfaction surveys, try surveying customers who didn't purchase your product or service. Their responses may highlight an opportunity to significantly increase your sales.

USP: What is your organization's USP or unique selling proposition? In other words, what sets you apart from the competition? Be sure all of your marketing material adequately explains your USP to prospects in terms they understand.

