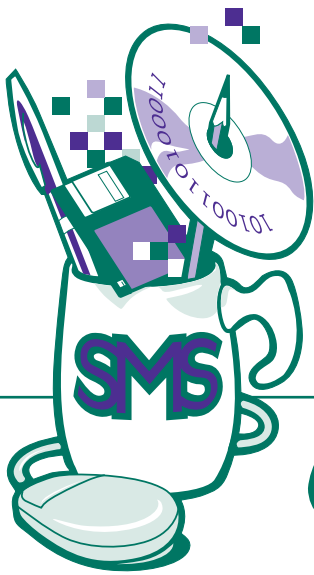


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MARKET

Settings

A newsletter directed to SMS clients and prospects to communicate topics of common interest.

Spring 2002

Making Every Promotional Dollar Count

Shooting from the hip is often an expensive and inefficient way to spend valuable advertising and promotional dollars. Here are some tips that can help you get more bang for your bucks.

Use the Right Promotional Tool for the Job

Take a close look at your space advertising expenditures. Do you seem to be getting less and less response for more and more dollars? Maybe it's time to spend those dollars in more efficient ways. *How?* To start with, use journal advertising only for its highest -and best- use, building corporate image. In business-to-business, high tech, and industrial markets space advertisements are a more expensive but less efficient way to sell products. There! I've said it! Now, don't think I mean cut out your space advertising. I simply mean use it for what it does best, not for what it does less well.

Distribute Your Promotional Dollars Across the Entire Marketing Mix of Promotional Activities to Create a Balanced and Effective Plan

Here are some important pros and cons that can help you realign those scarce promotional dollars.

Advertising

PROS: Good for important new product line roll-outs, quick spreading of information to market areas, and building corporate image. Quick establishment of corporate entity into new market areas.

CONS: Ads do not sell products well, generate high inquiry numbers, or last very long in the marketplace. Advertisements are expensive to create and expensive to run. Poorly written and designed ads may negatively impact corporate image. Smaller fractional space may send wrong image message.

Direct Mail

PROS: Greater latitude of copy claims possible and more detailed sales message. Can carry specific response vehicle or direct the reader to other actions. Campaigns can target specific users with repetitive selling messages and can solicit orders. A very controllable method that permits analysis of responses. Can be used inexpensively to test market, products or services to a specific audience. Low cost mailers or letters can be used frequently to keep company name and products in front of users. Direct mail sells products.

CONS: Care must be taken to select proper lists and audiences. Postage costs can add up quickly. Preparation costs can be high for intricate or off-size mailers. Multiple mailings are required to new audiences to create credibility and a comfort level sufficient to allow responses.

Publicity

PROS: Absolutely the best way to generate large numbers of prospect inquiries. Identifies new or emerging markets for products and services. Lowest cost promotional item. Longest life in the marketplace. Best ratio of return for dollars expended. Low preparation costs. Low prep and mailing costs allow frequent use. Creates a selling presence in many markets. Properly written releases appear to be written by journal editorial staff and convey the impression of independent approval from a second party.

CONS: Lack of placement control—they appear sporadically. Copy must not make strong claims or puff product.

Trade Shows

PROS: Interactive display creates positive corporate image. Great place to see market forces in action, i.e., competitors and prospects interacting.

CONS: Highest cost per inquiry of all promotional activities. Time consuming. Difficult to coordinate booth personnel activities. Booth costs, space costs, staff costs, shipping, setup, tear down, personnel transportation and housing, and time away from territory costs make trade shows extremely expensive with many hidden costs.

Postcard Decks

PROS: Hybrid advertising direct mail technique produces higher numbers of prequalified leads than ads alone. Allows one to reach specific magazine readerships at lower cost. Lower cost preparation. Card can sell product. Can be used with ads to increase response. Good leads produced with other market information if desired. These work well for dollars expended.

CONS: Limited life. Message can get lost in deck of competitors. Some cards are returned without names.

Conclusion

A quick look at the principle promotional methods above indicates that different products—or product lines or markets—may require a different mix of methods to get the best return for each dollar spent. The bottom line is that a balanced plan needs to be created that will allocate assets (dollars) to different activities depending on desired outcomes. Even a poor plan is better than no plan; but SMS can help you create a working plan with proven activities that will allow you to maximize your budget dollars, effectively penetrate markets, and permit activity evaluations as the plan progresses.

Contact your SMS client representative or give us a call today for some help that will reflect favorably on your bottom line.

—Bob Norton

The above article is set in Gill Sans.

Spreading the Word

Bob Norton, SMS founder and President had an article published dealing with hints and tips on making web sites more productive in an issue of NJ Technology Magazine. This magazine has a more than 17,000 technical readership in the surrounding tri-state area.

SMS is a member of NJTC and Bob Norton is active in the technology center being developed at Rowan University. The following article is being published in the upcoming May issue of NJ Technology Magazine.



Think Small For Success

Yeah, I know this seems to fly into the face of everything we've learned, but after more years in marketing that I'd care to admit, I'm more than ever convinced of the wisdom of thinking small for successful management.

Let's take a quick look at the logic behind that statement.

Who pays more attention to every dollar spent, large companies or small companies? Who works harder for every sale, large companies or small companies? Who needs fewer people involved in decisions? (this one is really important) Who has to figure out special approaches to markets and sales? Who has to make every decision count? Who can least afford to gamble on sales? OK, by now I'm sure you get the idea; but "thinking small" doesn't really pertain to how much you spend in the marketplace or the size of your company. Not at all. Thinking small can make you more competitive and profitable—no matter how large or small your company or how much money you have to spend. It can help you make your efforts in the right places.

Smaller is Quicker

Now, I don't mean to say that every small company is quicker in the marketplace than every big company, but the quickest moving companies are those that assign decision making authority and responsibility to the fewest number of people. Usually the larger the decision making committee, the longer it takes to make decisions. Smaller companies have smaller committees.

Why Should You Care?

Well, in a nutshell, those who can move quickest to anticipate and meet market demand are usually rewarded with better profits, greater market-share, and a lower cost of sales. If that's not enough, there is always the accompanying valuable positive corporate image that labels your company as one who not only knows the market but can respond quickly to demand. Having that kind of reputation is extremely valuable and those kinds of companies get more opportunities to be first based on their past performance.

Companies who think small more frequently sell directly and tend to the small details of customer relationships better. They also stay in touch with their markets so that they can anticipate the next growth opportunity as well as the next market shift or contraction. They emphasize their service capability as they move quicker and look for spots in the marketplace where they can sell more. They are not satisfied with just selling the large accounts because they know there is a danger lurking in every large account. They realize that many large accounts come to feel that they "own" their vendors, and in no small way they sometimes do. As a consequence, small thinking says "let me have 200 small accounts that don't press one for discounts, lower prices, and other profit reducing benefits, and if I lose one or two I may not notice it; and where I can I'll sell certain items to the large users as a bonus". Companies who sell through distribution need to stay visible in their markets so that they maintain market intelligence and a stronger corporate image.

Sure, it's more expensive to broaden your market by increasing your customer base; but if you do it, you might sleep better—especially when the economy hits a down cycle.

Don't misunderstand me, I am not suggesting that you ignore large users; but when you get them, infiltrate them and expand the dimensions and the interface of your relationship. That's a small company technique that pays off. Detailing is even more important at big accounts than it is at small ones.

Thinking Small Helps You Plan

Most small thinking companies budget very carefully and they closely monitor the results obtained for the time and dollars expended. That's something everyone should do, but many companies—large and small—work without marketing support plans. In point of fact, the actual plan may be less important than the thinking that goes into the planning, but it just makes sense to write it down. Even a poor plan is better than no plan because it lets you review your program to see if it worked. Without a plan you suddenly realize the money was spent; but you may not recall—or even be able to tell—what worked and what almost worked; but didn't.

The Final Analysis

I wanted to call this section "The Final Analysis" because so many people use the statement "In the Final Analysis". Well, in here all I have left to say is don't make your company small if it is large and don't stop trying to make your company large if it is small. Rather, just think small—or smart—about your market and its options, stay in touch with your markets, maintain your visibility and don't let the "big picture" blind you. Remember, many big pictures are created by lots of small brush strokes, or pixels if you wish. Thinking small can help you succeed.

The above article is set in Optima.

Compact and POWERFUL: The SMS Business Card CD Package

A novel new idea assumes its rightful place in high-tech marketing lore.

It's been said that good things come in small packages, and since the birth of the computer chip somewhere in that now legendary place called Silicon Valley, the teaming of electronic and digital technology has proven that adage true time and time again. In fact, the average desktop computer now holds roughly five to ten times more computing power than was used to put the first man on the moon. So is the lesson here, "Go small or go home?" SMS is looking to find out.

By now you've probably seen them popping up in magazines and in store promotions. Maybe you've actually considered researching and producing one for your company. Possibilities aside, there's no denying that the business card-sized CD that fits improbably in any CD tray

looks like a pretty cool marketing tool if its usefulness can outweigh the novelty of its cuteness. Other questions abound as well: "How much does it cost to make one?" "What file size can it handle?" "What can it do?"

Well...we're glad you asked. The SMS studio team has worked up a little package that can get you and your company all the answers you need. By creating a dummy company, (Widgets Inc.), a sample disc (seen here on the left) takes you through a brief, high-energy commercial, accomplishing the dual task of explaining what SMS can produce for your company while at the same time allowing the user to click around and play.

"Play is a good word," says Kevin Pyles, one of the producers and writers of the program. "The idea is to match the irresistibility of the outside package with a highly useful but fun way to explore a company's products and services. We felt that it would not only be a great way to make an impression at a trade show or mailed to new prospects, but due to the relatively short time frame of production, it's a great follow up tool as well."

The CD package includes: a brief, multimedia overview of your company, 5 screens of product and services information with photography, 5 pieces of literature stored as printable PDF files, a company overview screen, creative design, printing and replication of 500 CD's in plastic sleeves.

So how much is all of this going to cost? Probably much less than one might think. Quotations have been very affordable due to the planning and formatting of the material. "The CD is based on a basic design framework that's been predetermined, creating a "template scenario," adds Kevin. "Once we have all the material we need, the rest goes quickly. This keeps the price way down. Of course, we want to work with companies to give them what they want. Nothing is set totally in stone, but the sample disc gives them a good idea of what's possible."

Get a free quotation on creating this new and exciting selling tool for your company today.

The above article is set in Eurostile.



Actual Size.

To receive a free sample, call 856-697-1257, or visit our web site at www.smsmktg.com under the Special Promotions section.

SMS
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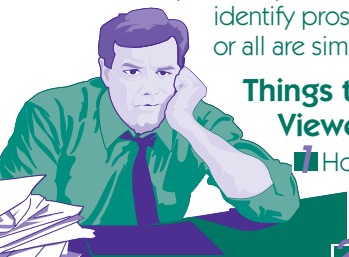
the latest news from

VIDEO/MEDIA

The Web is Becoming an Important Marketing Tool.

Does Your Web Site Need Some Updating?

Many web sites that were created before some of the new web design and production programs lack some of the appeal—and other important techniques—that keep viewers on the site and turn them into prospects or buyers. Many also lack the ability to identify prospect movement or all are simply “hits”.



Things that Turn Viewers Off

- 1 Home page too long to load and come up
- 2 Poor navigation system takes too long to move from section to section
- 3 Command menu confusing
- 4 Static photos or drawings
- 5 Large charts take too long to load and/or are confusing
- 6 Lack of current material

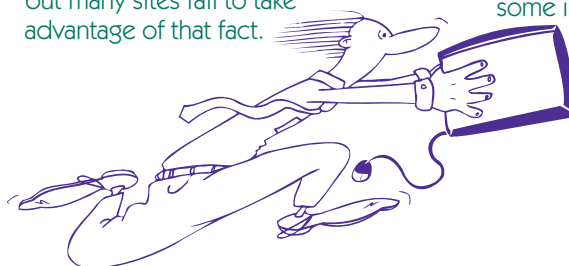
The list could go on, and on, but the sad fact is that many sites simply do not represent their companies and sell their strengths. They are “telling” sites not “selling” sites.

New Technology Can Make Your Site Inviting

A great deal of new and improved technology is currently available that can turn your site into a fast moving, exciting location that viewers will spend more time on.

User's Computers are Faster than Ever. Does Your Site Use that Speed to Your Advantage?

Many computers that are presently in use are appreciably faster and more capable of utilizing video streaming techniques, flash programming, and other modern, graphic solutions to faster and better site appearance and rapid navigation. In short, modern computers can view a wide variety of new approaches, but many sites fail to take advantage of that fact.



Is Your Web Site a Modern, Effective Marketing Tool? What They See is What You Are.

Unless it is, you may be missing some sales activity. Virtually all promotional activities drive more and more prospects to web sites. Rather than simply circling “bingo” card numbers or requesting literature, prospects are going to web sites to qualify vendors and/or purchase products. The impressions that they form as a result of your site colors what they think of your company and your products.

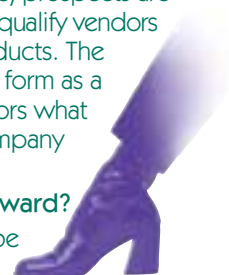
Is your best foot forward?

Of course, SMS will be glad to review your site and suggest changes and improvements that will help it be more effective. Contact your SMS client representative or call today for some information on how your site

can be refreshed... and kept that way.

—Kevin Pyles

The above article is set in Kabel.



Color Chips

illustrations by Dave Ricci

