



Marketing Smarts for 2008

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This is the year you are going to get ahead of the competition and grab more business. You need innovative ideas that can help you get there.

Here are 10 ways you can punch up your marketing plan this year:

- 1. Take a long hard look at your website.** You know you can improve it. The easiest way to make it better is by freshening up the content. Old material needs to go. Add a fresh case study or add some interesting photography.
- 2. Evaluate your "Googled" image.** Is your company easy to find on the Internet? Did you know that by investing as little as \$100 per month you can increase your standing on the search engines by 300 percent?
- 3. Get the word out.** Have any news that you can share? Target your local business press and your specific industry press with a news release. Adding a PR firm to your team is an economical way to increase your awareness in the media. Or appoint someone on staff to handle your PR efforts. Be sure that your news releases are about real news and are short and to the point, and are focused on facts. Remember that you must follow up with your targeted press to see results. It can take months to get the attention of a reporter, but it will be worth the effort.
- 4. Integrated Marketing?** It's the latest, hottest term in the marketing industry. It means marketing that connects you directly to your target market and customer base. It can be email marketing that offers something tangible to your current and prospective customers. Or it can be a points system, referral program or online contest that engages your market base. Involve your customers - that's the bottom line. Personalizing your efforts with your customers pays off.
- 5. Events that have a strong Return On Investment.** An important part of integrated marketing is the creation of events that get your customers together with you and your company. Face time helps keep and increase current customer business and encourages more business.
- 6. Ads with focus.** Create your advertising campaign with a specific target approach in mind. Select a segment of your business to aggressively promote and then market to a select audience. That makes measuring results easier and gives you more ammunition to move into other ad campaigns.
- 7. Smart thinking.** Take a day to look at your business with a new perspective. Make three new goals that you can implement this year and then do it.
- 8. Use technology to get ahead.** Are you using all the latest greatest tools to stay in front of your target audience? If you aren't already doing it, use Web 2.0 tools to stay out front. Create a profile on www.linkedin.com - a profile community for business, or www.poweredpage.com, a great way for business women to create and control a professional online image.
- 9. Create a marketing budget.** Many companies make marketing decisions based on opportunities. This year commit to planning ahead and creating an innovative plan that is an investment worthy of a strong return.
- 10. Don't hesitate to innovate.** Make 2008 the year that you will use a fresh approach in all that you do in your marketing. Fresh web content, purposeful advertising, Press initiatives, and a commitment to improving your Search Engine image. Whatever you choose to do, add a fresh perspective to make a real difference.