

More Marketing With Less

By Alyssa Dver, author of "No Time Marketing: small business-sized steps in 30 minutes or less"

www.NoTimeMarketing.com

Marketing is not advertising. Its not direct mail, SEO, social networking or email newsletters. These are marketing tactics.

Marketing is generating qualified leads and helping prospects buy more quickly.

However, this is clearly easier said than done. Especially in today's challenging economic times, many businesses deliberately avoid marketing because they are strapped for both money and time. However, marketing can be done well with some relatively basic knowledge that ensures the objectives are clear and thereafter, the right tactics can deliver profitable leads and sales.

If we break down the above marketing definition, there are three main ingredients to every successful marketing program: 1. knowing who is a qualified prospect and why; 2. knowing where to find these prospects, 3. knowing what to say that will interest them.

1. Know who is qualified and why. Do you really know your prospects? Do you know their demographics? Can you segregate any subgroups? Do you know in the clients' words how or why they use your product? To determine this, talk directly with customers and prospects or conduct a survey over the phone or online. The more you know about who would buy your product and why, the better you can market to the right people with the right information. Free survey engines such as SurveyMonkey and Zoomerang are great for short and uncomplicated surveys.
2. Know where to find those people. Do your prospects belong to similar associations or clubs? Do they go to tradeshow? What magazines or websites do they read regularly? Again, you can ask your clients and prospects about these things in person or by using a survey. Two great ways to also find this out are to look at your competitors' websites to see where they've received media pickup and what events they attend. You can also set up a free Google Alert with keywords that describe your product or service as well as the names of your competitors. Google Alerts will then deliver a regular email reporting any web matches (you set the frequency). It's an easy way to stay abreast of your industry. You should also think outside the typical venues as well. If you think about your prospects and where they may gather besides industry events, you might find some very cost effective places to get their attention. A recent client of mine sells lakefront real estate. They go to events like fishing expos as they know their typical clients are often fishing hobbyists. In another example, a fellow marketing consultant gets a lot of her leads by putting her business card in small business oriented books at the library.
3. Know what to tell them. When you know where your prospects go for information, try to have your company represented there. Even if you can't afford to have a booth or run an ad, there are many ways to get inexpensive exposure. Write an article and pitch it to the target publications. Many accept outside material so go to their website to see their writer guidelines on that. If possible, attend association meetings and conferences. Offer

to present at them. However, before you embark on any outbound ventures, be sure that your message is clear. Use your customer and competitive knowledge to know who and why those people want to know about your offering. Speak in layman terms and test your message with friends and neighbors. Be sure to include why someone wants to buy your product or service instead of another- or should buy yours versus buying nothing at all.

While marketing can be overwhelming and made to seem quite complicated, it is often because we forget the basics in understanding why someone wants our offerings and how to convey that to them in straightforward ways. Whether in a down economy or one where we can loosen the purse strings, smart marketing isn't about sexy technology, the number of contacts, or other quantitative metrics. Its all about the quality of the marketing knowledge you have in understanding who, what, where and why people want what you have to offer. Only then can you apply the most cost effective marketing tactics to reach the best prospects and close profitable deals.

about the Author



Formerly a CMO for a public company, Dver is chief executive for [Mint Green Marketing](#) which consults for companies ranging from large multinationals to small startups. In 2007, BusinessWeek recognized Dver as one of 8 female entrepreneurs to watch. She authored the well-endorsed books, "[No Time Marketing](#)" and previously, "[Software Product Management Essentials](#)". A featured columnist for Software Magazine, she has also been published in Forbes, BusinessWeek, Entrepreneur, Promo Magazine, and dozens of others. Ms. Dver regularly presents at venues including The World Diversity Leadership Summit at the UN, The Women's Congress, The American Marketing and American Banking Associations, and Strategic Management Institute. A graduate of Wharton Business School, she is currently working towards her PhD at the University of East London.