

## Chapter 1

# Making the Most of Your Marketing

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### *In This Chapter*

- ▶ Focusing your marketing by understanding your customers
  - ▶ Clarifying what your marketing is trying to achieve
  - ▶ Leveraging your marketing with focus and control
  - ▶ Identifying your customer touchpoints
  - ▶ Maximising the appeal of your product, service or business
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**E**ven though you're reading Chapter 1 of a book called *Marketing For Dummies*, you're probably already 'doing' quite a bit of marketing, maybe without even knowing it. If you have a product or service that's selling, know who your best customers are and what they want, and have plans to develop new products for them or to find more customers, then you're already addressing some of the fundamentals of marketing. Many companies, and even some of the biggest ones, mistake marketing for advertising. But promotion is just one aspect of marketing; many of the other elements that go into doing good marketing are things that you may think of as essential and everyday parts of doing business, such as setting prices and getting your product into the hands of your customers.

You may be good at doing some or all of these things, but unless you're co-ordinating all of these activities under a formal marketing framework, your efforts aren't nearly as efficient or effective as they could be. Your marketing activity (by which we mean everything about your business that makes a difference to your customers) is crucial because it's what gets your business from where it is now to where you want it to be. In this chapter, we go over lots of simple, quick steps you can take to make progress with your marketing activities.

## Your Marketing Strategy: A Map to Success



Any marketing you do needs to be based on a *marketing strategy*, which is the big-picture idea driving your success. In order to make your marketing strategy happen, you need to work out how you're going to achieve it, which involves writing up a *marketing plan*.

We like to use a simple analogy to stress the importance of doing all this in a co-ordinated way, which involves a destination, a starting point and a map. Your marketing strategy is your destination – where you want to be by a certain time. Your marketing plan is your map, which tells you where you are now, and sets the best course to get to your destination. This analogy is effective because it demonstrates the importance of getting everything working together. You can have a destination and try to feel your way to it, but you'll get there quicker and more efficiently if you know where you're starting from, what the most direct route is and what obstacles lie in your way. Our map analogy has a final part: you can plan the most perfect route to your destination, but unless you start putting one foot in front of the other you'll never get there!

## Knowing Your Customer

Many definitions of marketing have been created by experts with too much time on their hands. The Chartered Institute of Marketing (CIM), the international body for marketing and business development, defines marketing as 'the management process responsible for identifying, anticipating and satisfying customer requirements profitably'. Wow. We prefer our own, simpler version – 'selling more stuff to more people'. We're being a little unfair to the wordier version, because it does reflect one of the more important changes in modern marketing. You don't get very far in business these days by just making stuff and then finding people to buy it. Instead, you've got to find out what customers want from you and then create a product to meet those needs. This view is the difference between being what the experts call product-orientated and customer-orientated.

Whether you're product- or customer-orientated, however, the first and most important principle of marketing is this: know your customer. When you understand how customers think and what they like, you can develop products or services that meet those needs and come up with appropriate and appealing ways to communicate them.



## The ultimate campaign

Old Spice aftershave is a brand with a lot of history that has recently been given a very modern makeover. As a result, it saw its sales double in summer 2010 by using a clever combination of marketing methods to reposition the 73-year-old brand as relevant for men today.

Old Spice's owner, Procter & Gamble, began with a TV ad airing during the Super Bowl in February 2010. The very silly ad featured a bare-chested, attractive, deep-voiced man who promised women that he was 'the man your man could smell like'. It spoofed serious, over-the-top fragrance ads with the man appearing on a posh boat, dripping in diamonds.

The company didn't just use TV. The ad was uploaded to video site YouTube, where it was viewed by millions of people. The Old Spice man utilised social networks like Twitter and Facebook and offered funny updates about his manliness.

Five months later, when the Old Spice man already had a significant following, the company then got him to 'answer' his fans' questions on Twitter and Facebook. The brand produced 180 videos of the Old Spice man answering real-time questions in less than two days.

This was a bold move in a traditional area like selling fragrance, where most ads tend to be beautiful, posed shots in glossy magazines. But it paid off. More than 35 million people watched the videos in their first week online and sales went up by 107 per cent in a month.

This campaign is notable because it was less about spending vast amounts of money on expensive TV ads and more about amazing strategic marketing, using multiple communication methods. It captured shoppers' imaginations and made them reconsider buying a long-established product that had fallen out of favour. And the enormous rise in sales tells a story we can all understand.



You need to understand your customer on two levels: the rational, functional dimension of making a purchase decision, and the irrational, emotional dimension. Every purchase, whether of a fizzy drink, a software program, a consulting service, a book or a manufacturing part, has both rational and emotional elements. So to truly know your customer, you need to explore two primary questions:

- ✓ **How do they feel about your product?** Does it make them feel good? Do they like its personality? Do they like how it makes them feel about themselves?
- ✓ **What do they think about your product?** Do they understand it? Do they think its features and benefits are superior to those of the competition and can meet their needs? Do they think that your product is good value given its benefits and costs?

Sometimes, one of these dimensions dominates for the customer you want to sell to. In other instances, all dimensions are equally important. Which is true of your customers? Depending on your customers, you need to take one of the three following approaches:

- ✓ **Informational approach:** The approach you use if your customers buy in a rational manner. This is the case for many business-to-business (B2B) marketers. This approach involves showing the product and talking about its benefits. Comparisons to worse alternatives are a great idea when using an informational approach. Use this approach when you think buyers are going to make a careful, thoughtful, informed purchase decision or when you have strong evidence in favour of their buying *your* product or service instead of others.
- ✓ **Emotional approach:** This approach pushes emotional instead of rational buttons. For example, a marketer of virus-scanning software may try to scare computer users by asking them in a headline, 'What would it cost you if a virus destroyed everything on your computer right now?' That emotional appeal can be much more powerful than a pile of statistics about the frequency and type of viruses on the web. Use an emotional approach when your customers have strong feelings you can tap into and relate to your product or service, or when you think people are going to make an impulsive decision.
- ✓ **Balanced mix:** This approach uses a combination of informational and emotional appeals. We'd choose this approach to sell anti-virus software, and many other products, because it engages both the rational and emotional sides of the buyer's mind. For example, after a scare-tactic (emotional) headline asking, 'What would it cost you if a virus destroyed everything on your computer right now?' we'd follow up with a few statistics such as, 'One out of every ten computer users suffers a catastrophic virus attack each year.' The facts reinforce the nervous feelings the headline evoked, helping move the prospect toward purchase.

Decide which of these three approaches to use and then use it consistently in all your communications. When in doubt, use the balanced mix to hedge your bets.

## *Getting focused*

You begin to organise and focus your marketing activities when you define as clearly as possible who you're targeting with your marketing. Your marketing may include sales, service, product design and packaging, all marketing and media communications and anything else that helps win loyal customers. Marketing can encompass tens to hundreds of contributing elements, so you need a clear focus to keep them all on target. Remember that your target is a clearly defined customer.



To help you focus, write a detailed description of this customer, as if you were developing their character for use in a novel or screenplay you plan to write. (The plot of this story is, of course, that the character falls in love – with your product.)

When you try to identify distinct groups of customers to whom your product or service may appeal, you're using segmentation, and the cake can be cut in any number of ways. If your customers are other businesses, then you can group them by the type of product or service they offer or by the industry sector they're in. If your customers are people, the common ways to define them are by demographics (age and location), socio-economic status or by attitude and behaviour. Whichever way you try to identify the group or groups of customers most likely to buy from you, the objective is the same: to create a specific product and tailored marketing message that will have the best effect on them.

You further increase your focus when you decide whether your target customers prefer marketing that takes a rational, information-based approach, an emotional, personality-based approach, or a balanced mix of the two. By simply being clear about whom to target and whether to market to them in an informational or emotional manner, you've taken a great leap in providing a clear focus. You know whom to target, and you have an important clue as to how to target them and communicate with them in every element of your marketing.

Another aspect of your customer focus is whether you want to emphasise attracting new customers, or retaining and growing existing customers. One or the other may need to dominate your marketing, or perhaps you need to balance the two. Marketing to new prospects is usually a different sort of challenge to communicating with and satisfying existing customers, so knowing what is most important helps you to improve the effectiveness of your marketing.

As a marketer, you face a great many decisions. Marketing tends to be fragmented, so that marketing efforts spring up with every good idea or customer demand, rather like rabbits. In most organisations, hundreds of marketing rabbits are running around, each one in a slightly different direction from any other. Focus gets every element of your marketing moving in the right direction.

## ***Finding out why customers like you***

In marketing, always think about what you do well, and make sure you build on your strengths in everything you do.

You can't be all things to all customers. You can't be the best on every rational and emotional dimension. If you try to meet the competition on their ground, you remain in second place. So now we want you to clearly and succinctly define (notes, please!) what your special strength or advantage is. Start your sentence like this: 'My product (or service) is special because. . . .'

The way you complete that sentence reflects whatever it is that's outstanding about your product or business. Use this strength-based method to add an additional degree of focus to your marketing. Take a minute to think about what makes your firm or product special and different, and why customers have been attracted to that excellence in the past. Then make sure your marketing leverages that strength wherever possible.



For example, if you're known for good customer service, make sure to train, recognise and reward good service in your employees and to emphasise good service in all communications with your customers and prospects. A photo of a friendly, helpful employee could be featured in your advertising, in brochures and on your web page, because friendliness personifies your excellence in customer service. You can also quote customer testimonials that praise your service. You may want to offer a satisfaction guarantee of some sort, too. Focus on your strength in all that you do and your marketing becomes more profitable.

## *Working out the best way to find customers*

We periodically survey managers of successful businesses to ask them about their marketing practices. And the first and most revealing question we ask is, 'What is the best way to attract customers?' Now, the interesting thing about this question is that the answer differs for every successful business. So, you need to answer this question yourself; you can't look up the answer in a book.



Take a look at the following list to see some of the most common answers – things that businesses often say are most effective at bringing in the customers:

- ✓ **Referrals:** Customers sell the product (see coverage of word of mouth in Chapter 15 for how to stimulate them).
- ✓ **Trade shows and professional association meetings:** Contacts sell the product (see Chapter 16).
- ✓ **Sales calls:** Salespeople sell the product (see Chapter 20).
- ✓ **TV, radio or print ads:** Advertising sells the product (see the chapters in Part III).
- ✓ **Product demonstrations, trial coupons or distribution of free samples:** Product sells itself (see Chapters 17 and 18).
- ✓ **Websites, social media and newsletters:** Internet information sells the product (see Chapter 10).
- ✓ **Placement and appearance of buildings/shops:** Location sells the product (see Chapter 19).

As the preceding list indicates, each business has a different optimal formula for attracting customers. However, in every case, successful businesses report that one or two methods work best – their marketing is therefore dominated by one or two effective ways of attracting customers. These businesses put one-third to two-thirds of their marketing resources into the top ways of attracting customers and then use other marketing methods to support and leverage their most effective method. Successful businesses don't spend any time or money on marketing activities inconsistent with their best method or that rob resources from it.



You need to find the one best way to attract customers to your business. If you already know that way, you may not be focusing your marketing around it fully. So you need to make another action note and answer another question: what is your best way to attract customers and how can you focus your marketing to take fuller advantage of it?

When you answer this question, you're taking yet another important step toward highly focused marketing that leverages your resources as much as possible. Your marketing can probably be divided into three lists of activities:

- ✓ Works best
- ✓ Helpful
- ✓ Doesn't work

If you reorganise last year's budget into these categories, you may well find that your spending isn't concentrated near the top of your list. If not, then you can try to move your focus and spending up. Think of this approach as a *marketing pyramid* and try to move your spending up it so that your marketing resources are concentrated near the top where you get the most successful results. What does your marketing pyramid look like? Can you move up this pyramid by shifting resources and investments to higher-achieving marketing activities?

## Defining Your Marketing Methods

Peter Drucker, who passed away in 2005 and was one of few justly famous management gurus, defined marketing as the whole firm, taken from the customer's point of view. This definition is powerful, because it reminds you that your view from the inside is likely to be very different from the customer's view. Your own view is totally irrelevant to customers. The success of any business comes down to what customers do and they can only act based on what they see. That's why marketing and advertising gurus often say, 'perception is everything'. You must find ways to listen to your customers and to understand their perceptions of your firm and offerings, because your customers (not you) need to define your marketing methods.



This section requires you to think about and write down some ideas, so get out a pencil and paper, smartphone or iPad to jot down notes while you're reading.

## *Finding your customer touchpoints*

From the customer's point of view, identify the components of your marketing. (The components include everything and anything that the customer sees, hears, talks to, uses or otherwise interacts with.) Each customer interaction, exposure or contact is what we call a touchpoint, where good marketing can help build customer interest and loyalty.

We want to warn you that, if you have a marketing plan or budget already, it probably doesn't reflect this customer perspective accurately. For example, in many firms, the marketing department is separate from product development, yet customers interact with your products so, to them, this is a key component of your marketing.

Similarly, some of the people who sell your product may not be in your plan or even on your company's payroll. A salesperson in the field, a distributor, a wholesaler or anyone else who sells, delivers, represents, repairs or services your product is on the marketing frontline from the customer's perspective. All of these people may be seen to represent or even *be* the product, from the customer's point of view. Are they all representing your firm and product properly – with the focus and professionalism you want? Are they available when and where needed? Are they likeable? Is their presentation and personality consistent with your strategy for your marketing? If not, you must find ways to improve these people's impact on the customer, even though you may not have formal authority over them.

## *Analysing your seven Ps*

In marketing, points of contact between the customer and your communications, products and people are the only things that really matter. These interactions with you constitute your marketing, from the customer's point of view. These are *touchpoints*, and we find that most of them aren't itemised in a firm's marketing budget or plan.



When does your customer interact with your people or product, or information about your people or product? Take a few minutes to make up your master list of touchpoints, which will form the basis of a more extensive and accurate marketing plan. To help you create this list, we suggest you use the seven Ps of marketing: product, price, place, promotion, people, process and physical presence. Now think about your touchpoints using these seven Ps.





There used to be just four Ps of marketing (product, price, place and promotion), which are sometimes referred to as the *marketing mix*. Every marketing expert seems to have his or her own set of Ps, and wants to interfere with what is a very useful framework for trying to target a specific group of customers with a specific product. All these different ideas are okay – marketing is about challenging orthodoxy, after all. But don't get too hung up on which set of Ps is the right one. The list we give here is the most up to date and covers all the key touchpoints.

### ***Product***

What aspects of the product itself are important and have an influence on customer perception or purchase intentions? Include tangible features that relate to how well the product is meeting current and future customer needs, and intangibles like personality, look and feel and also packaging. Remember that first impressions are important for initial purchase, but performance of the product over time is more important for repurchase and referrals.



List the aspects (both rational features and emotional impressions) of your product that influence customer perception.

### ***Price***

What does it cost the customer to obtain and use your product? The list price is often an important element of the customer's perception of price, but it isn't the only one. Discounts and special offers are part of the list of price-based touchpoints, too. Don't forget any extra costs the customer may have to incur, such as the cost of switching from another product to yours. This can really affect the customer's perception of how attractive your product is. (If you can find ways to make switching from the competitor's product to yours easier or cheaper, you may be able to charge more for your product and still make more sales.)



List the aspects of price that influence customer perception.

### ***Place***

When and where is your product available to customers? Place is a big influence because most of the time, customers aren't actively shopping for your product. Nobody runs around all day, every day, looking for what you want to sell. When someone wants something, they are most strongly influenced by what is available. Getting the place and timing right is a big part of success in marketing and often very difficult. When and where do you currently make your product available to customers?



List the aspects of place (in both time and space) that influence accessibility of your product.

### ***Promotion***

This fourth P incorporates any and all ways you choose to communicate to customers. Do you advertise? Send mailings? Hand out brochures? Promotion includes all aspects of communicating with customers: advertising, personal selling, direct marketing, sales promotion and public relations. Do distributors or other marketing partners also communicate with your customer? If so, include their promotional materials and methods because they help shape the customer's perception, too. What about other routine elements of customer communication, such as bills? Routine admin forms part of the impression your marketing communications make as well.



List all the ways you have to promote your offering by communicating with customers and prospects.

### ***People***

Almost all businesses offer a variety of human contacts to customers and prospective customers, including salespeople, receptionists, service and support personnel, collections, and sometimes shipping, billing, repair or other staff, too. All these points of human contact are important parts of marketing, even though they may not all be working well to help keep your marketing focused and effective right now. People need to be trained and motivated to put across the right image for your marketing and that's down to you, not them.



List all the points of human contact that may be important to the success of your marketing.

### ***Process***

You need to think not only about the point when customers buy your product, but everything that happens before and after that. These are the processes through which you connect the product with the customer. Are you identifying prospective customers properly and professionally? Do you keep them informed about deliveries and can you avoid delays? Do you have a proper complaints procedure to alert you to dissatisfaction early on? All these issues aren't as back-office as many companies believe, and they all affect the way your customers perceive your business.



List all the processes involved in delivering your products and services to the customer.

### ***Physical presence***

Not all businesses make a tangible product and this latest addition to the list of marketing Ps covers those organisations and the image they portray to customers. Physical presence means your company's premises and vehicles,

and even the appearance of your staff. If you offer services rather than tangible products, you need to provide prospective customers with an image communicating what your organisation represents (you do anyway, you probably just haven't thought about it or formally planned it).



List all the physical spaces viewed by your customers, from your reception area through to your delivery vehicles and drivers.

## *Adding to your list*

You need to find efficient, effective ways to positively influence customer perception. You want to use elements of your marketing to motivate customers to buy and use your product (service, firm or whatever). The list of your current touchpoints for each of your seven Ps is just a starting point on your journey to an optimal marketing mix.

Now ask yourself what else can be added. Think about each of the Ps and try to add more possible touchpoints. Look to competitors or successful marketers from outside your product category and industry for some fresh ideas. The longer your list of possibilities, the more likely you are to find really good things to include in your marketing.



For example, the energy drink Red Bull uses student ambassadors to talk about the product to other students and to run marketing activities such as sampling campaigns on university campuses. The company makes heavy use of advertising as well, but finds that using students to target other students is an effective way of communicating credibly with its core audience.

Can you think of one or more new ways to reach and influence your customers and prospects in each of the seven Ps? If so, add them to your list as possibilities for your future marketing activity.

## *Determining what works best for each P*

Within each of the seven Ps of marketing, one or two things have the biggest impact and give you the most improvement for your effort. Make your best guess or do some research to find out what works best.

Observe the results from different activities in an experimental way and then focus on those activities that produce the best results. Or you can ask customers or industry experts their opinion to find out what elements of each of the Ps have the biggest impact on your customers and their purchase decisions.

Should you concentrate your resources on a bigger presence at industry trade shows or build up your website? Should you use print advertising or hire a public relations consultant to get editorial coverage? The answers to these questions depend on what works best for your marketing strategy, customers and industry.

## *Deciding which P is most important*

Ask yourself which of the seven Ps needs to be most important in your marketing. If you've already identified what customers like about you (for example, your special quality or a distinct point of difference from competitors), this may point you toward one of the Ps.

The company that sells the quality of its service, for example, obviously needs to emphasise people and processes in its marketing and business plan. In contrast, the company whose products are technically superior needs to make sure its marketing investments focus on maintaining the product edge.



Don't be tempted to make price the main focus of your marketing. Many marketers emphasise discounts and low prices to attract customers. But price is a dangerous emphasis for any marketing activity; you're buying customers instead of winning them. That approach is a very, very hard way to make a profit in business. So, unless you actually have a sustainable cost advantage (a rare thing in business), don't allow low prices, coupons and discounts to dominate your marketing. Price reasonably, use discounts and vouchers sparingly and look for other things to focus on in your marketing.

## *Catching the uncontrolled Ps*

You can easily lose control of one or more of the seven Ps. In fact, you may never have had control of them in the first place! Small companies often have to use intermediaries or part-time sales staff, while big companies have so many employees that aligning them all behind the image they want to portray to customers can be difficult. Does your marketing display this kind of inconsistency and does it also miss opportunities to get the message across fully and well? If so, you can increase your marketing effectiveness by eliminating these pockets of inconsistency to prevent out-of-control marketing. Given the reality that some of your touchpoints may be partially or fully uncontrolled right now, draw up a list of inconsistent and/or uncontrolled elements of your marketing. You'll probably find some in each of the seven Ps – these inconsistencies are common. If you can make even one of the elements work better and more consistently with your overall marketing plan and its focus, you're improving the effectiveness of your marketing. Use Table 1-1 to draw up your list.

**Table 1-1                      Getting Your Marketing in Focus*****Customer Focus***

Define your customers clearly: Who are they?  
Where and when do they want to buy?

Are they new customers, existing customers or a  
balanced mix of both?

Understand what emotional elements make them  
buy: What personality should your brand have? How  
should customers feel about your product?

Understand what functional elements make them  
buy: What features do they want and need? What  
information do they need to see in order to make  
their decision?

***Product Attraction***

What attracts customers to your product?

What is your special brilliance that sets you apart  
in the marketplace?

Do you reflect your brilliance through all of your  
marketing efforts?

***Most Effective Methods***

What is the most effective thing you can do to  
attract customers?

What is the most effective thing you can do to  
retain customers?

Which of the seven Ps (product, price, place,  
promotion, people, process, physical presence) is  
most important in attracting and retaining customers?

***Controlling Points of Contact***

What are all the ways you can reach and  
influence customers?

Are you using the best of these right now?

Do you need to increase the focus and consistency  
of some of these points of contact with customers?

What can you do to improve your control over all  
the elements that influence customer opinion of  
your product?

***Action Items***

Draw up a list of things you can do based on  
this analysis to maximise the effectiveness of  
your marketing.

## *Clarifying Your Marketing Expectations*

When you make improvements to your marketing, what kind of results can you expect? As a general rule, the percentage change in your marketing activity will at best correspond with the percentage change you see in sales. For example, if you only change 5 per cent of your marketing from one year to the next, you can't expect to see more than a 5 per cent increase in sales over whatever their natural base would be.

### *Projecting improvements above base sales*

*Base sales* are what you can reasonably count on if you maintain the status quo in your marketing. If, for example, you've seen steady growth in sales of 3 to 6 per cent per year (varying a bit with the economic cycle), then you may reasonably project sales growth of 4 per cent next year, presuming everything else stays the same. But things rarely do stay the same, so you may want to look for any threats from new competitors, changing technology, shifting customer needs and so on, and be careful to adjust your natural base downward if you anticipate any such threats materialising next year. Your base, if you don't change your marketing, may even be a negative growth rate, because competitors and customers tend to change even if you don't.



When you have a good handle on what your base may be for a status quo sales projection, you can begin to adjust it upward to reflect any improvements you introduce. Be careful in using this tactic, however, because some of the improvements are fairly clearly linked to future sales, while others aren't. If you've tested or tried something already, then you have some real experience upon which to project the improvement's impact. If you're trying something that is quite new to you, be very cautious and conservative about your projections at first, until you have your own hard numbers and real-world experience to go on.

### *Planning to fail, understanding why and trying again*



Start small with new ideas and methods in marketing so that you can afford to fail and gain knowledge from the experience and then adjust and try again. Effective marketing formulas are usually developed through a combination of planning and experimentation, not just from planning alone. In marketing, you don't have to feel bad about making mistakes, as long as you recognise what went wrong and take away useful lessons.

We're positive pessimists in relation to marketing. Our philosophy is, 'what can go wrong, will go wrong . . . and we'll be fine!' We advise you to avoid being too heavily committed to any single plan or investment. Keep as much

flexibility in your marketing as you can. For example, don't buy ads too far in advance even though doing so makes them cheaper, because if sales drop, you don't want to be stuck with the financial commitment to a big ad campaign. Favouring monthly commissions for salespeople and distributors is also wise, because then their pay is variable with your sales and goes down if sales fall, which means you don't have to be entirely right about your sales projections.

Flexibility, cautious optimism and contingency planning give you the knowledge that you can survive the worst. That way, you have the confidence to be a creative, innovative marketer with the courage to grow your business and optimise your marketing. And you can afford to profit from your mistakes.



Don't expect to solve all your company's problems through your marketing. If the product is flawed from the customer's perspective, the best thing you can do as a marketer is to present the evidence and encourage your company to improve the product. Marketing can't make a dog win a horse race, so don't let others in your company try to tell you otherwise.

## *Finding More Ways to Maximise Your Marketing Impact*

We want to end this chapter by sharing our conviction that you can improve your marketing and increase the sales and profits of your business in an infinite number of ways. The preceding sections look at some of the most important ways to focus your marketing, but we want to encourage you to keep searching for more ideas and to implement as many good ideas as you can.



Here, for example, are some additional ways to make the most of your marketing:

- ✓ **Talk to some of your best customers:** Do they have any good ideas for you? (Ignore the ideas that are overly expensive, however. You can't count on even a good customer to worry about your bottom line.)
- ✓ **Thank customers for their business:** A friendly 'Thank you' and a smile, a card, note, email, message on Facebook or polite covering letter stuffed into the invoice envelope are all ways to tell your customers you appreciate their business, and people tend to go where they're appreciated and may spread the news – Word of Mouth (WOM) is a powerful tool.
- ✓ **Change your marketing territory:** Are you spread too thinly to be visible and effective? If so, narrow your focus to your core region or customer type. But if you have expansion potential, try broadening your reach bit by bit to grow your territory.
- ✓ **Get more referrals:** Spend time talking to and helping out people who can send customers your way. Always make sure you thank anyone who sends you a lead. Positive reinforcement increases the behaviour.

- ✔ **Make your marketing more attractive (professional, creative, polished, clear, well written and well produced):** Often, marketing activities can work better simply by upgrading the look and feel of all the communications and other components. (Did you know that the best-dressed consultants get paid two to five times as much as the average in their fields?)
- ✔ **Be pleasant, to attract and retain business:** Make sure your people have a positive, caring attitude to customers. If they don't, their negativity is certainly losing you business. Don't let people work against your marketing – spend time making sure they understand that they can control its success. Use training and good management to help them take a positive, helpful and productive approach to all customer interactions.
- ✔ **Offer a memorable experience for your customer or client:** Make sure that doing business with you is a pleasant, memorable experience. Plan to do something that makes it memorable (in a good way, please!).
- ✔ **Know what you want to be best at and invest in being the best:** Who needs you if you're ordinary or average? Success comes from being clearly, enticingly better at something than any other company or product. Even if only a small thing makes you special, know what it is and make sure you retain that excellence. It is why you deserve the sale.
- ✔ **Try to cross-sell additional products (or related services) to your customer base:** Increasing the average size of a purchase or order is a great way to improve the effectiveness of your marketing. But keep the cross-sell soft and natural. Don't sell junk that isn't clearly within your focus or to your customer's benefit.
- ✔ **Debrief customers who complain or who desert you:** Why were they unhappy? Could you have done something simple to retain them? (But ignore the customers who don't match your target customer profile because you can't be all things to all people.) A well-handled complaint can teach you a lot and may even turn an angry customer into one of your most loyal – research reveals that customers who've been 'turned around' will even become ambassadors for your business, and spread the word about how good your service is.

Every time you put your marketing hat on, seek to make at least a small improvement in how marketing is done in your organisation and for your customers.



Marketing activity needs to constantly evolve and improve. Most companies fall far short of their full potential, which is why for every hundred businesses, only a few really succeed and grow. The others don't have the right marketing needed to maximise their success. Think big in your marketing. You can always do something more to improve your effectiveness and your results.