

Open the doorway to growth



In the final article that explores the “big” factors that influence business growth, Andrew Scott, Managing Director of marketing

consultancy firm Purplex, discusses the 5 essential strategies that stimulate growth.

Last month we looked at the ‘Marketing Wave’ – the reason why many companies don’t grow – and discussed the three key steps to growth – creating leads, converting leads to customers, and retaining and developing customers.

This month we look at the specific marketing strategies required to stimulate growth. Firstly, we need to dispel certain myths. The first myth is that during difficult market conditions and economic uncertainty, companies should cut their marketing spend. The opposite is true – while your competitors hide in the background, afraid to invest in marketing, this is the best time to step up your marketing activity. Indeed, those companies who invest in marketing during recession and difficult times tend to do much better when the economy improves.

The second myth is to assume your customers see marketing as you do. You

don’t favour email marketing, so neither will your customers. You’re a supporter of PR, therefore your customers will respond best to PR. The truth is it doesn’t matter what you think – to grow successfully you must connect with customers in the way that works best for them. Using a blend of marketing tools – the marketing mix – is an essential part of your growth strategy.

1. THE BASICS

Before investing a penny, consider how your business looks and reacts to customers. How quickly do you respond to enquiries and customer requests? If a potential new customer emails or faxes an enquiry, do you call them immediately to confirm you’ve received it? If you pass an enquiry to the sales or estimating department and it takes a day to get back to the customer, you’re in danger of losing business before you even start.

People do business with people, not products. So be sure the people who answer the phone, talk to customers or deliver your products are warm, friendly and positively represent your company. Delivery drivers spend more time with your customers than your sales people. What are they saying about your business?

2. WEBSITE

Over 80% of your potential customers will now check out your website before contacting you. What if 50% of people who responded to your advertising or promotion didn’t take it any further because your website was poorly designed or out-of-date? Take a long, hard look at your website. Even better, ask your best customers to do it for you, and let them tell you what they like, and don’t like. Once you’ve refreshed and updated your website, don’t let it go stale. Add news, stories, updates and downloads regularly.

3. ADVERTISING

Press advertising improves your credibility as well as generating enquiries. Quality,





well designed advertising planned ahead will dramatically improve your results. Think in terms of advertising campaigns with a clear objective, rather than randomly placed adverts. Once you've selected your advertising medium, the key is simple: invest in good graphic design and good copy-writing. The best newspapers and magazines won't give you any response if you have a poorly designed advert.

4. PUBLIC RELATIONS

PR is one of the most potent tools your business can use to build your brand and position your business in the minds of customers. Developing a medium and long-term PR strategy will dramatically enhance your company's reputation and strengthen your relationships with existing customers. New customers are more receptive and as your company profile and awareness grows, so too will your business. A steady stream of well written news stories, opinion

pieces and features will strengthen your business reputation and enhance the value proposition of your company – but it won't happen overnight, so take a medium to long term view.

5. DIRECT MARKETING

To generate immediate response, use direct mail and email marketing. Both work well and will appeal to different audiences. Well designed, quality direct marketing will generate instant response and sales leads, however it is easy to get it wrong and you can easily waste a great deal of time and money. The two most important elements of your direct marketing are the quality and accuracy of the data (mailing or email list) and the call-to-action (how do you want people to respond?).

CONCLUSION

By adopting the strategies outlined in this series of articles, your business can enjoy sustained growth, better profit margins and a stronger customer base. As your competitors scramble to catch up, your business will be ahead of the game.

To view the full series of Purplex articles visit www.purplexmarketing.co.uk

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