**Getting Back To the Basics**

In my previous advertising blogs, much of the content focused on reaching a target group that has changed due to technology. But this blog will return to some basic questions every business must answer as it develops a marketing plan.

On average, we consumers are exposed to over 8,000 daily advertising messages! So, the question is: **How does a business’ marketing message cut through the noise?**

**Remember this- Market share is NEVER greater than share of mind.**

**John Wannamaker, the father of modern advertising, once said…**

**“Over half my advertising dollars are wasted; if I only knew which half, I’d be a much wealthier man.” Brands are mental associations, good and bad, triggered by a name.**

Coca Cola

Cadillac

Michelin

**Successful branding depends on your ability to speak to the customer in the customer's language about what matters to them.**

**The goal of branding is to be the name that the customer thinks of immediately and feels best about whenever they or anyone they know needs what you sell. Branding is about the message.**

* **What does your name stand for in the minds of the consumer?**

**The human mind retains an average of 3 choices for any product, service, or local business category. You're not even in the game i*f you’re not #1, #2, or #3!***

**“Over time, the human brain will begin to accept anything as truth if they hear it a minimum of 3 times within 7 nights of sleep.**

***TOMA Research*** **“Curve of Forgetfulness” – Thomas Ebbinghaus**

**Ebbinghaus found that people forget 75% of what they learned in the previous week. After three weeks, they forget 90%, and after four weeks, they forget 95%.**

**At SMI Advertising, our job is to help you get noticed and remembered. When we develop a plan for a client, we focus on these areas:**

**Being unique**

If we want to stand out in a prospect’s mind, we need to be a standout. So, what is it that makes you or your business special?

**Invent a new category**

Perhaps a business is having difficulty finding something unique because you’re swimming in a sea of competitors. So, what do you do? Jump out of that sea and into a new by creating a new category that you can own. A classic example from years ago is the 7-Up brand. For years they competed head-to-head with colas, always falling short. So, they created a new category – the UnCola.

**Be memorable**

Sometimes we get so creative with our company name that it’s difficult for people to remember what we do. As small business owners or entrepreneurs, one way to stand out is to create a label for ourselves. For example, in the old days, businesspeople were referred to by their occupation. There was the Window Washing man, the Plant lady, or the Firewood guy. Those labels made sense to us. *What nickname or label could you give yourself that’s simple and descriptive?*

**Repeat, repeat, repeat**

Design your marketing message to reflect your unique position. Then repeat your message over and over and over. Repetition breeds familiarity, and familiarity builds credibility.

**Consistency**

Along those same lines, once you’ve got reliable positioning language, please don’t change it. Sometimes we get tired or bored from using it all the time.

What is the best form of advertising?

The best form of advertising is the kind that generates the most business income proportional to the amount of money that can be spent (word of mouth costing the least).

To determine this, you must first ask yourself what you want to achieve through advertising objectives to increase a single service’s sales. Or is it to get consumers into your store or office to buy any of the products or services you offer?

To determine what form of advertising will achieve this, you have to ask yourself

* What specifically am I selling
* Who am I selling to? What is my target market (i.e., my customers’ geographic location, age, and gender)?
* Who are my competitors, and what are the benefits of my product over theirs?
* What should be the tone of my advertisement?

Your advertising might convey your product’s function to the consumer, where it is available, its price, and how it’s better than your competitor’s. It should hook your target.

We have seen new forms of advertising emerging. They are overtaking traditional media like television, newspapers, magazines, etc., because of a shift in the consumers’ choice to get entertainment and information. My previous blogs have detailed how difficult it is to reach specific groups due to this and how complicated and time-consuming marketing a business can be.

At SMI Advertising, we will meet with you to review your current situation and develop a strategy that will make your dollars work better.

Call me at (334) 409-0022 for a free consultation.

Larry Stevens

President

SMI Advertising