

FIND BALANCE IN YOUR MARKETING

By **Bill Smith, APR**

As Buddy Holly sang, “It’s so easy to fall in love.” It’s as true in business as it is in life. We see something new and shiny and we want it, or we are introduced to a new best practice and want to implement it. It’s human nature.

This happens in marketing too. In fact, it may happen more frequently in marketing than in other aspects of business management. There’s always a hot new marketing approach, and with the rapid introduction of new marketing technologies, these trends seem to be introduced more and more frequently. The problem is, when organizations fall in love with the latest and greatest marketing trends, they often lose sight of the bigger picture. By becoming so focused on individual tactics, companies lose their grip on their strategic visions for marketing.

The growth of internet and mobile marketing is the latest example. The reach of the Internet is tremendous. And while it can be relatively expensive to develop an effective website and optimize it for mobile use, once it’s up, it’s generally simple and inexpensive to update. The web should be an important element of any organization’s marketing strategy, but it’s only one element.

While websites are easily accessible from anywhere by anyone, they can only be reached by those who know to look for them. They don’t provide exposure to potential customers who aren’t familiar with your organization in the first place.

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As powerful as these new marketing technologies can be, they only work effectively when used in conjunction with traditional marketing tactics such as public relations, direct marketing, and advertising. These are the marketing approaches that expose a company to new customers and inspire them to explore an organization’s web presence.

Public relations (PR), in

particular, is a powerful tool for reaching new customers. By generating publicity in consumer, business, and industry media, organizations can reach thousands—sometimes millions—of potential customers, strategic partners, and others with an interest in their products and services. PR can also help companies differentiate themselves from competitors. The beauty of PR is that it doesn’t cost anything to arrange for a story to be published or broadcast by a legitimate media outlet (watch out for outlets that charge for stories).

Likewise, direct marketing can be a very effective element of a balanced marketing program. In the old days (and unfortunately, I’m old enough to remember), this meant having brochures and newsletters printed and mailed. Today, services such as Constant Contact and Emma allow organizations to conveniently distribute e-newsletters or brochures to contacts and prospects via email. The process is much simpler, more convenient, and less expensive than when we had to use ink, paper, and stamps.

Unfortunately, marketing imbalance has become the norm for many organizations. They jump from tactic to tactic, hopping onto new trends and then lamenting that their marketing efforts aren’t working. As a consultant, I see this all the time: companies all too often undermine effective programs or build futile ones because they are infatuated with a new trend. I’ve even seen marketing consulting firms—professionals who should know better—fall into this trap!

Don’t despair if your organization’s marketing program has fallen out of balance. Just figure out what’s missing and how you can integrate all of the appropriate marketing approaches. Once balance is restored, you’ll find that your organization’s marketing program will get back on track. **P**



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