

There are often many marketing problems that small businesses can face including; failing to plan, not having the time to manage marketing properly and not knowing how to measure what works and what doesn't. This combined with mixed messages and untargeted approaches can limit the success of your business.

We've put together our selection of marketing tips for 2011, these are not a given for every business but just might help you gain some perspective on your marketing ahead of the new year.....

Twelve marketing tips for 2011

1. **Identify a plan** – don't fail to plan, it doesn't have to be complicated just identify what you are selling, where, to whom, for how much and how you're going to tell customers and potential customers about it over the next 12 months.
2. **Identify and understand your customers** – who are they? where are they? what do they read? And remember there are great marketing strategies for getting new customers but don't forget to nurture your relationships with your existing ones!
3. **Communicate a clear message** – keep it simple and make it easy for customers to understand what it is you are selling – and what you are selling are the benefits of your product or service, not the features!
4. **Measure, measure, measure**....you'll only know how to invest in marketing which gets you results if you MEASURE the results. Track your marketing to identify where and how your sales are being generated.
5. **Engage with customers via social marketing tools** – there's more to just setting up a twitter and facebook account, you need to communicate with your customers...and this needs to be two-way communication, don't sell at them.
6. **Go out and meet with your customers**...or at least call them, take them to lunch or for a coffee. With the pace of online communication and a hectic world we can forget the power and benefits of meeting with people face to face.
7. **Network** – get out and meet with individuals in your target market whether this is at networking clubs, tradeshow and exhibitions or conferences.
8. **Follow-up** – if you don't, you've wasted all that networking time creating opportunities which you won't reap the success from because you haven't followed up. And don't stop at once...80% of sales are made on the 5th to 12th contact.
9. **Create a point of difference**...or 2...or 3...or 4 – 68% of people leave a business because of indifference
10. **Create an offer** – offer existing customers a special offer for their loyalty whilst offering potential customers a special introductory package or promotion. However, make sure your offer is sustainable and not damaging to your future business positioning or custom.
11. **Publicity** – getting your name and business profile in local papers and magazines which your target customers read all helps position you as the expert, and helps generate awareness and interest which you can then convert to desire and action to purchase.
12. **Internet marketing** – embrace the world of internet marketing, if you don't your competitors will be – use pay per click advertising to attract more customers to your website, make sure your website creates an impact when they get there, use Google alerts to keep up to date with industry news and competitors!, and integrate your email marketing with your online campaigns.

For more marketing tips or further information please contact us at debbie@nrgmarketingsolutions.co.uk