

Is anybody out there?

How to Sharpen you marketing message

Marketing is not an easy thing to grasp and certainly not an exact science. It is very difficult to predict the market response to an advertisement, but there are some guidelines. It is particularly hard for Manufactures to truly understand their customer's needs. In many cases there is a disconnection between the manufacturer and their customers. An explanation can be that the products go through several layers of distribution before they finally reach the customer. The disconnection often leads to random marketing, which clearly is a very ineffective way to reach existing customers and certainly a less efficient way to connect with new prospects.

The Job of marketing:

To create demand among qualified prospects in the target market and drive them to the appropriate sales channel.

So far so good but how are **you** really doing? Could **your** marketing approach be centered on the famous "hope" based advertising model?

- We hope the right people will see it
- We hope the right people noticed what we sell
- We hope the right people understand what we want to tell
- We hope the right people care enough to contact us

I think we can agree that the above mention 'hope' based advertising is not desirable. However what should you do? Good question. Here are four ways you could loose your audience and four ways to reach your audience

Four ways you can loose your audience – Have you lost yours?

1. Have you failed to differentiate?

If you can not tell why the customer should choose you, then how should they know?

The easy way to know is to substitute your name with the name of a competitor. If your ad is still true, you need to change the ad. Try to ask yourself what your unique selling proposition is and then mention it.

2. Does your message reflect your customer's reality?

Do you reflect the customer you want to reach in your ad, or do you attract people who are not potential buyers?

Reflect on the reason **your** customers buy **your** product in **your** ad.

3. How many platitudes do you use?

Do you use key words just connected to your product, or do you use platitudes such as:

<i>Premier</i>	<i>Out of the</i>	<i>Highly</i>
<i>World</i>	<i>box</i>	<i>flexible</i>
<i>leading</i>	<i>Customer</i>	<i>Highly</i>
<i>Best of</i>	<i>centric</i>	<i>advanced</i>
<i>breed</i>	<i>Ground</i>	<i>Fully</i>
<i>Innovative</i>	<i>breaking</i>	<i>integrated</i>
<i>solutions</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>	<i>The Best</i>
<i>Next</i>	<i>class</i>	<i>service in</i>
<i>generation</i>	<i>Enterprise</i>	<i>the industry</i>
<i>Leading</i>	<i>wide</i>	<i>Customer</i>
<i>edge</i>	<i>Highly</i>	<i>centric</i>
<i>State of the</i>	<i>scalable</i>	<i>....</i>
<i>art</i>		<i>....</i>

Be specific when you describe response time, repair/replacement time and other services and avoid the platitudes.

4. Are you specific or do you alienate the customer by having 'cute' products?

Bigger investments need specific information.

Four ways to reach your audience

What should **your** message do? It should:

- Interrupt
- Engage
- Educate
- Offer a solution

1. Interrupt by getting customers attention drawn to your ad because of an image or a phrase that are unusual, unfamiliar or troubling.

2. Engage the customer with relevant information's. Quickly clarify and explain how you can help them with their business needs.

3. Educate the customers on how your solution helps them solve their business needs. Also note that some customers are at the beginning of this continuous education while others are in an advanced state of their education.

4. Offer. Make the next step easy and at low risk for the prospect. After the education phase, demonstrate proof of concept and/or initiate a low cost and risk free pilot program

Next time you look at other ads or maybe your own try to evaluate on the following assessment questions.

Reaching/Loosing your audience	Yes	Neutral	No
Does the ad interrupt you?			
Does the ad engage you?			
Does the ad educate you?			
Does that ad encourage you to the next step?			
Does the ad differentiate (stand the test of logo substitution)?			
Does it address the reality of the customer?			
None or few platitudes?			
No Alienation of the customers?			
Does it reach your target group?			

Mostly yes and you should be on the right track. To continue you have to keep adjusting to be on the front edge.

Mostly neutral answers. You most likely will not reach the target customer. Your ad have to change to direct the target customer your way.

Mostly no. You will not reach your target customer. You have to find out why?

In all cases we can help you to sharpen your marketing message. We can help you with surveys on customer needs, competitors and more.

This paper was written by Henrik Vestermark from The Other Solutions, Inc www.TheOtherSolutions.com

For comments, discussion or consulting please contact me at:

Henrik Vestermark



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866 E Tuweep St
Meridian, ID 83642
USA

Phone: +1 208 887 4780

Email: hve@theothersolutions.com

Web: www.theothersolutions.com

Skype: henrikvestermark

About the Author.

Henrik Vestermark has been working in the wide format scanner industry since 1988 and has experience in all aspects of the scanner market and past experience in development, sales & marketing for a wide format scanner manufacturer. In 2006 Henrik Vestermark started his own company The Other Solutions focusing on delivery of affordable solutions and consultancy to the IT and wide format market, specializing on business needs and justification.