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If You Build It, They Will Come

Creating a marketing plan that increases leads and drives sales

By: Cindy Kremer Moen

Whether you are a new entrepreneur or a business owner who has just never taken the time, creating a marketing plan may seem like a daunting task. There really are only a few steps, though, for generating a simple plan that will make the most of every marketing dollar.

Write it down.

Whether you are creating a one-page document with goals, strategies and tactics or an elaborate spreadsheet with separate tabs for each project including tasks, deadlines and results, commit your plan to paper. When you write it down, you are more likely to take the steps needed to help your company reach those goals.

Make your plan multichannel.

Choose several different avenues to get the word out about your products and services. There are many paid and unpaid marketing channels across any industry available to companies: press releases, social media (Twitter, Facebook, LinkedIn), article writing, directory listings, newsletters, advertising over the web or in print, trade shows, direct mail, webinars, customer appreciation events or gifts, and more.

Decide on a budget.

Decide on budget that is reasonable and responsible for your company, and then design your plan to optimize it through paid and unpaid approaches. A typical marketing budget is between 1 and 7 percent of revenue.

Provide value.

As often as possible, provide items of value to your target customer. Demonstrate your expertise through in-depth white papers, case studies that illustrate how you solved a client's problem, webinars that provide best-practice tips, survey results that show trends in the industry, and blogs that are open to comments. Make these items downloadable from your website and require visitors to provide a bare minimum of contact information: name, company name and email address. Give these items out at trade shows, but make show attendees provide you with a business card first. If you offer software, provide free trials to people who give you contact information.

Make goals measurable.

Collect information on downloads from your site and use unique URLs to track traffic from ads, social media, email and directory listings. When the phone rings, make sure your sales team asks where the caller heard about you . . . and **record this information**. You can use the results to understand which opportunities brought in the most leads, and then make informed decisions for your next plan.



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Capture leads.

Whether you use an Excel spreadsheet, Outlook, or an online database like Salesforce, input every new lead (and record where it came from) on a frequent basis. Then use this database for free, repeatable marketing like email and sales calls.

About the Author

Cindy Kremer Moen is a senior account manager at Edge Legal Marketing. When she is not helping clients create strategic marketing plans and deliver on tactics, she is raising two active boys with her husband and running.



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