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Wait for the Results, and they Really Will Come!



By Carolyn West Price

We've all heard the saying, "Patience is a virtue," but in this era of faxes, emails, overnighting, and voice mails, how virtuous are we? It seems we all want it yesterday, regardless

of what "it" even is.

I suggest, however, that we not only put these rushed efforts in perspective in general, (whether we're the vendor or the customer), but business owners and marketing managers must take a step back and re-think patience when it comes to marketing. Remember, building a brand by creating awareness and credibility...by making memorable impressions...takes time.

That is, educating a market is not something most of us can do overnight, as the Super Bowl advertisers pray they do; in fact, the more limited the budget, the more reliance you will necessarily have on non-advertising means of communicating your message with your target markets.

Too often, a business owner says to me, "Well, I ran a couple ads, but nobody called or came in so I don't want to run in that paper--it just doesn't work." I have to say, in response, no matter what paper you ran a couple

ads in, that is problem number one--a couple ads. A couple ads anywhere does not comply with the cardinal rule of advertising--repetition, repetition, repetition. Second, sight unseen, I have no idea if the ad even had a call to action or was visually eye-catching. So before I can, in good conscience, say a publication's ad campaign did not work because of the publication, we need to look at the ad and the campaign commitment.

I can't tell you the number of times, despite me sharing this repetition concept with clients, that I've gotten calls one day into a 2-week radio campaign, asking me to pull the commercial. Three spots have run and they expect the phone to ring off the wall....it just doesn't happen that way.

If you are planning to do any advertising, be sure to budget enough to invest in good creative and artwork and enough to run the ad repetitively--a campaign. Remember, it takes a minimum of 7-13 "touches" before you're even on a person's radar screen, depending upon the relevance of your offer to their needs and the uniqueness of the ad so it pops from the clutter.

My next suggestion, is force yourself to be patient to let the campaign run its course. I'm not saying to keep dumping money campaign after campaign if the results are disappointing, but at least with good creative, a call to action, and frequency, you've at

least gotten your assessment down to the media itself more accurately than the hasty accusations noted above.

Another suggestion is to be sure to complement your advertising with other marketing so you can stretch your budget, reinforce your expertise, and achieve the "I see you everywhere" reaction. Rest assured that public relations, promotions, good corporate i.d. materials, and extraordinary customer relations are essential parts of any well-rounded marketing plan.

On the subject of customer relations, I say "extraordinary!" for a very simple reason. Assuming your advertising and other marketing work, and customers come your way, bad service is the quickest way to lose them forever (not to mention the word of mouth that will prevent others from responding to your ads if they even thought about doing so). Invest in training, empower your employees to be customer problem-solvers, and reward their efforts with perks and pay that keep them on your payroll

All in all, remember patience is a virtue that we should all remember, no matter how busy we are or how anxious we are to build the business. Pulling a campaign prematurely simply ensures you'll waste money...and who wants to do that?

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