



## **Top Ten Marketing Mistakes And How to Avoid Them**

One of the most frequent questions I am asked by clients is, "How can I get the edge in marketing?" It comes out when I tell audiences that I can help them triple their coverage. Also, I recently started mentoring speakers in marketing their careers. As I speak to different groups in the US and Canada and meet with other speakers I am amazed at the futile attempts being made in marketing. It is not so much that people don't know what to do, they do the wrong things and then repeat them with the misguided perception that more of the same is better. I thought we all learned in the 1990s that doing the same thing over and over again, expecting different results is insanity. Doing it more only produces more of the same results - and more insanity.

There are the ten mistakes I witness in marketing whether you are in sales or in a corporate structure. Whether you deliver a good or a service these errors will plague you until you learn from them and move on to better methods. Here is a list of the top ten things you *shouldn't* do to be a marketing genius:

**1. Direct mail.** When was the last time you actually read a flyer addressed to you with a label on it? We are inundated with direct mail daily. I have found that mailing out identical pieces doesn't bring near the responses I get from direct calls on the phone. When I first started my business, I read the book *Guerilla Marketing*, by Jay Conrad Levinson. He suggested that sales people send out two dollar bills to prospective clients and then follow up with a phone call within a week. Apparently the uniqueness of the two dollar bills would attract attention and give you the opportunity to turn the phrase, "Want me to help you make more money?" I immediately ran into problems, like secretaries who pocketed the bills, CEO's who never got the letter and companies that wouldn't accept the "gift." By the way, CEO's want to make more money than two dollars, and aren't impressed with the measly bill. Direct mail is a good follow up, but I don't use it for my primary targeting method.

**2. Pay someone else to do your marketing for you.** I was talking with a group of speakers at a National Speakers Association meeting several years ago. I told them how they could market their careers with very little effort. Two weeks later a woman contacted me from the group to tell me she was so excited about what she heard me say that she had hired a "marketing pro"/stranger to market her career for her. To this

day her speaking career hasn't gotten off the ground (but the marketing pro has made a lucrative career off her and several others). No one sells me better than me. I have an assistant, Marti, who does some of my marketing (along with about a billion other necessary tasks each day). I trained her. She is the second best person at marketing me. She has a stake in my success. She gets a commission off of the business either of us signs. We refuse to pay someone for a marketing service. "Nobody does it better," as the song says.

**3. Waiting until you are "ready" to market.** I have helped hundreds of sales women and sales men achieve their dreams. Along the way I hear some of the lamest excuses for why they don't jump in and start marketing themselves. One of the most frustrating excuses I hear for inactivity is, "I'm not ready yet to start calling on clients." Ready? Ready for what? Ready to make a fortune? It makes me think they are afraid of success. Maybe some people are. I told one man that he could have been working all over the world instead of standing there talking to me. I was mentoring a woman who told me in November that she was waiting until January to start marketing because THAT was going to begin her "Year of Marketing." I told her that every year is my year of marketing! Even if you don't have all the slick materials; if you don't have the killer web site; if you don't have all of your ducks lined up, go ahead and start marketing (No one is going to hire you on the first call anyway). The universe allows you to put something out there that is not perfect and work on it over a period of time. Look at all the revisions of Microsoft Windows. Remember Windows 3.0, 3.1, 95, 98, 2000, ME and XP?

**4. Assume all people buy the same way.** Everyone is unique. People are individuals and they don't buy identically. It is a mistake to assume that everyone is just like you. There are four personality/behavior styles. I use the **DiSC assessment** to teach sales enhancements. The assessment produces a profile which groups people into the four styles: **D - Dominant**, people who want all the answers and the bottom line immediately. They buy what they want and from whomever makes them feel important. **I - Influencers** who buy what is the most popular item or the most flashy. They buy according to how friendly the sales person is. **S - Steady**, people who buy through the relationship they have with the product or sales person. They buy from trusted individuals who take the time to get to know them and their needs. **C - Conscientious**, people who shop around and look at the specifications. They buy very targeted and will compare details and how prompt and professional the sales person is. If you know these styles of behavior, you can communicate with them more effectively and design your marketing to reach out beyond just one or two styles. An example is Geico Insurance Company who runs three different advertising campaigns to target different styles of viewers (The cavemen, the gecko, the CEO who talks straight about their products).

**5. Ineffective voicemail.** I called a client the first week of May and got this response: "Thank you for calling. I will be out for the holidays, but will return on January 3." If you don't know the date, please don't try to teach it to the rest of us. I called another client and their voicemail was tied into their home phone. You press 1 to reach their wife, 2 to

reach their children and 3 to leave a message for the business. Really. Their business, which supports their household is number three. Please get a dedicated line if you work out of the home. I believe that if someone gets your voicemail, they are stuck listening to you and should learn something about your business or what you sell. Leave messages that get customers calling you back to find out more. Leave messages that give pertinent information without going through an unending loop of buttons to press or useless people to speak to.

**6. Waiting for people to call you after you have given them your business card.** I use a business card as an introduction and a brief advertisement - and nothing else. I rarely expect anyone to contact me when they get my card. It is an attention-grabber. Jeffrey Gitomer, Sales Guru, says that your card should get people's attention from a distance. If it looks like an ordinary card, you have already lost their attention. I usually don't have my card with me. I prefer in a sales environment to get the prospect's card. My friend Al Walker says he does the same thing. He depends on other people to give him their card so he can contact them. If you are depending on your prospects to call you from just receiving your card, you will be waiting a very long time - and going hungry in the meantime. I love this quote I heard at a conference: "Passive sales people have hungry children."

**7. Web site that looks like everyone else's.** In today's world you HAVE to stand out. Everybody has a web site. Well, almost everybody. If you don't have one yet, stop reading this now and get one. The most popular question I am asked by prospective clients is, "What is your web site address?" First, buy a domain name. This is harder to do today because the best names are taken, or are too expensive to purchase (I witnessed motivational speaker.com go for \$45,000 last month in an auction). Once you get the name, hook up with a web host who will do what you want him to do. Spend a lot of time researching what you like and don't like. Some people want many bells and whistles. Others want straight information. Put yourself in the place of your clients and prospects. What would you want to find first? Do something unusual and unnatural so that people will remark about your site. Use key words that attract visits. If you can't get what you need to give it pizzazz, then fire your web host and get one who will give it to you.

**8. Keep doing more of what doesn't work.** Wasn't it Albert Einstein who said the definition of insane is doing the same thing over and over expecting different results? When I started out in the speaking business, a friend told me to make calls, make more calls and then make even more calls. He was partly correct. I amended his advice with: Make calls, make better calls, make more better calls. Okay the grammar probably is bad there, but you get the idea. Practicing something poorly doesn't make you better at it. You don't get improved results. If you have a bad swing in golf, practicing that same swing more often doesn't result in hitting the ball better. You just keep hitting bad more often. You don't get better, you simply get more frustrated. You have to improve the mistake in your swing to be better. In my marketing I try to improve with every call; with every marketing piece; with every day. I tell my mentoring clients that I never turn down a marketing method that works. I utilize several that get results from calling prospects,

sending out a monthly newsletter, mailing out a magazine publicity piece, *Leader's Team Journal*, to networking, asking for referrals and using my website as a 24/7 information center about me. Find what is working for you and do it better. Find what isn't working and quit wasting time on it...now.

**9. Selling something no one cares about.** Two important questions to make you successful: 1. Ask your prospects what is keeping them awake at night? 2. Ask your clients what their number one complaint from their customers is? Those are the two businesses you need to be in. Solving the problems that keep your prospects up at night and solving the problems your clients are getting complaints on. If you provide those two services, you will have more business than you can handle. If your product or service doesn't satisfy one of those two needs, you probably are having trouble selling it. What keeps a CEO up at night is what he/she will pay anything to get solved. What your best customers complain about most often, is what they will pay anything to get satisfied from you. The only way to find the answers, though, is to ask them. If you aren't on the phone or in their office asking, you are being beaten by someone who has probably already read this article.

**10. Continually marketing to anybody.** The best sales people have narrowed down their target. They know who the best client is for their product or service. They go after them, and only them. I worked in another industry for years and the biggest problem in getting new people was the lack of knowing the target audience. The ongoing argument was, "Who are we trying to get here?" Finally, I had enough and went out on my own. My assistant's husband is a deer hunter. You ask him how to be successful and he will tell you. You have to know your target: how it thinks, where it goes and what you need to get it the first time. If you were going deer hunting, you wouldn't take a shot gun with you and shoot in every direction hoping to finally hit a deer, would you? Of course not, you choose ammunition that zeroes in on your prey; you wait for the right moment and you aim carefully. In the same way, when you market yourself, how specific are you? What is your target group or audience? What do they need most? What are their greatest problems? What are they willing to pay anything for to solve those problems? Where do they go most often? Oh yes, and, why aren't you there solving their problems right now?

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