

Business Marketing Insight

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Bolster Your Image: Newsletters

As a writer with 14 years of experience, I have seen numerous businesses that would have otherwise captured the majority of the marketplace flounder due to lack of press.

Getting press is easy—it requires little more than your being seen as an expert in your field. Yet how to go about creating that image?

Several ways exist. One of the easiest ways is to provide expert advice in trade or association magazines in your industry. If you are quoted repeatedly in articles, people begin to believe that you know your stuff. It's a great way to show prospective clients that they're getting more than just a service—they're getting an expert, as well.

Another way to impress would-be clients is through a company

newsletter. Many organizations send out quarterly updates on their business. Mixing company news with industry news is a superb way of establishing yourself as a commanding presence in your industry. Many newsletters include legislative updates where appropriate. One company I know sends out a monthly newsletter that includes nothing but links to stories within that market space. Yet the company itself only does a minimal amount of work compiling the links.



Photo: Chris2K

White papers are another method of showing your smarts. White papers are informative re-

Welcome to our premiere issue!

Welcome to **Business Marketing Insight**, a quarterly publication designed to help you address the intricacies of your business communications effort. Inside, you will find helpful information on a number of corporate communications issues. Hopefully some of what you learn here will help you to identify steps that will enhance your marketing strategies, or perhaps will encourage you to put together that much-needed communications plan.

In my years as a communications specialist, I've seen companies pour huge amounts of revenue into their product line, yet skimp on marketing, as though simply having a great product will be enough. It is my hope that you will come to value what a sound communications outline can do for your business.

If you have any suggestions for future topics, or any comments on any of our publications, feel free to contact me directly.

—Lori Widmer, Editor

Marketing Plans 101

You have a great product/service, and you have happy customers to prove it. Yet you don't have much business. What's going wrong? Perhaps the answer is in your marketing. You *do* have a marketing plan, right? If so, then you're

well on your way to seeing positive results. If not, read on.

The basis of all good marketing plans begins with defining your goals. It's much more than simply wanting to make more money. You need to define specific goals, such

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Newsletters (cont.)

search papers written on a particular topic within your industry. They are lengthy—anywhere from four to forty pages and then some—and are meant to educate as well as to serve as an advertisement of the company's business acumen.

Email news can be a fast, effective way of promoting your company as an industry leader. E-newsletters can be designed to look just like a printed newsletter, which gives your business a professional image. Much of the same news that is included in a print newsletter can be included in an e-newsletter. The big advantage to e-news; breaking news stories can be included, which shows your readers that you're deeply involved in the industry.

Press releases are a tried-and-true method of

bringing your name to the forefront. Press releases are your way of getting your foot in the door with media contacts. In many cases, reporters and journalists will use press releases as a way of finding expert sources for their articles.

An effective press release includes an announcement by your company, quotes by one or more experts in the company, and contact information.

Bringing your image to the forefront requires work, but a little effort goes a long way. You will reach a wider audience, which will in turn result in more business.

—L. W.

Marketing 101 (cont.)

as meeting a percentage quota or introducing and marketing a new product. Once you determine your needs, you're ready to plan.

All business plans should devote the first page or so to describing the business, its market mix, target market, and an analysis of current and past successes and failures with marketing. After this, it's time to map out the proposed budget for the marketing strategy, which can be summed up in a paragraph or more. Then comes the meat of the plan: the promotional mix.

The promotional mix should outline what types of media will be used, and it should break down the mix into time frames. For example, a promotional mix might break down the strategy into two halves of a six-month period, detailing which types of media will be utilized and in what way. Press releases or email newsletters can make up the first half of the strategy, followed by an online presence that ties in with the emailed promotions.

A detailed promotional strategy should be included, and it will detail the specific types of media to be utilized. Samples of press releases and newsletter content can be included. Here also is where any print advertising would be discussed, along with proposed ads and slogans or logos.

A good plan should include a timeline. When building your timeline, consider the types of media you'll be ap-

proaching, and the order in which you'll be contacting each. The more detailed, the better. An example would be to begin media contact with queries. A timeframe of say one week querying, one week of follow-up calls, etc.



Along with a detailed written account of your timeline, be sure to include a calendar. A visual reference is often much easier to follow than a written one.

Once you've made the plan, you're nowhere near finished. The key to a successful marketing plan isn't just to put it on paper—you need to make sure that your plan is working. Every marketing plan should have a tracking schedule. How often are you going to measure the progress of your marketing plan? What will those measures be? Will you want to use focus groups? Will you be comparing last year's sales figures against this year's?

Once you determine your tracking plan, decide your course of action should your results not be what you'd expected. Keeping on top of the developments of your marketing plan will allow you to amend it to better reflect where your business is going.

Questions? Contact: loridwidmer@comcast.net

It's Like Greek To Me

How many times have you read through a translated document only to find that the translations weren't quite in line with the true meaning? In many cases, translations are taken quite literally, and meanings are easily twisted.

The same goes for your business documents. With more businesses taking on international clients, clarity of message is extremely critical. Make sure your documents are clear of any miscommunication or grammar and punctuation problems.

If you've hired a translator for your documents, you should also consider hiring an editor to clean up the grammar. While you may be able to read it with the grammatical errors, it's quite easy for others to mis-

understand what message you're trying to convey.

If you have a corporate communications department, enlist their help to edit the document for grammar and clarity of message. If you choose to hire an editor, there are several available online at places such as Guru.com or About.com's Freelance Writing Board.

—L.W.



About LDW Publishing

Let's face it—communication just comes naturally for some of us. If you're struggling to find the right way to convey your message, let an expert help. With over 14 years of experience in the communications market, LDW Publishing/Lori Widmer Writing and Editing has the ability to convey what you're thinking, even if you're unsure how to put it.

We offer newsletters, press releases, white papers, articles, brochures, advertisements, and all types of writing and editing that can enhance your image, and help to bring you the results you desire. We've worked with some of the largest corporations in the world today, and we've worked with one-man shops. Our work has appeared in print and online, and in many corporate communications publications. We

work as outsourced staff, so there's no overhead—only an added value to your communications plan.

Don't have a plan? We can help you to develop a strategic marketing plan, and we can implement it for you. We offer a full-sized public relations service without the full-sized expense.

Call or write today. We'd be happy to discuss your needs with you. Powerful words create powerful images. When words fail you, we can help.

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