

How to avoid expensive marketing mistakes

Marketing is as much about *what you shouldn't do* as it is about *what you should do*.

Recognise the difference and your marketing investment will pay better dividends. Marketing firm BrandQuest provide valuable insights into how the big boys do it.

Businesses, large and small, are guilty of wasting precious marketing dollars. At BrandQuest we see many of the common marketing pitfalls companies make. In almost every 'wasted dollars' scenario we have noticed a recurring theme – the lack of a robust and considered marketing strategy that guides everything from consistency of message to targeting, tonality, presentation and expectations.

This article discusses a number of benefits that are outcomes of a defined marketing strategy for your business – and if embraced will save you from wasting precious marketing dollars.

Targeting Everyone and Reaching No-One

Have you ever placed an advertisement or run a promotion and received little or no response in spite of having a terrific product or service offer? Well you're not the 'Lone Ranger'! Nine times out of ten the reason is quite simple – poor targeting or the 'scattergun' approach.

What do we mean by this?

Imagine a farmer sowing seeds widely across his whole field, taking no account of whether the soil is fertile, or

having furrowed the field, or which way the wind is blowing. It will come as no surprise if only some of the seeds take root and flourish.

The same applies to promoting your business and its products – you simply can't afford to waste valuable seed (ie: marketing dollars) in this manner. If you haven't decided exactly who you want to reach with your message and how best to reach them - you are unlikely to succeed and very likely to waste your investment in marketing.

Remember the common mantra: "The marketer who tries to be everything to everyone ends up being nothing to anyone."

One of the keys to marketing success is knowing your customers and target clients really well. Imagine them sitting in front of you. What do they look like? What do they talk about? What are they saying? What are their opinions?

By considering their mindset, we have a better knowledge of what really motivates their decision making when they begin to think of buying in your category or service? What really goes on inside their head at this time?

At BrandQuest we call this **Motivational Segmentation**.

Then you might add other influencers to gain a better insight into these potential customers. What influences them? Who's opinion do they value? And so on. This segmentation process assists with targeting because the better you understand what motivates your target audience the more likely you are to strike a chord with them.

Every successful business and marketer has a deep and insightful understanding of the market they operate in and carefully segment that market.

An example of how motivational segmentation could drive a business. Every shopping centre and every shopping strip in Australia has an optometrist. But how do they differentiate themselves – other than the name of the company, chain or proprietor?

Rather than, for example talking to everyone who wears prescription glasses you might segment down to people who are more motivated about how they LOOK rather than how they SEE. Further motivational segmentation might allow you to target FASHION CONSCIOUS women in a certain age group (rather than men and women or all women).

Now you have a specific target audience in mind you can really start to get into their mind – with motivational segmentation – and 'bring this customer to life'. You can imagine what kind of brands they admire and align with. What your store should look like as a result. What kind of sales people you need (and how they dress and present themselves). Hey, you could also now work with other marketers outside your category to present 'bundled offers' (ie: a makeover from the beauty shop when you buy a pair of X brand frames).

Now imagine what your marketing dollars can do and how you'll be able to decide where and when to invest them (Spring fashion season creates a whole new selling opportunity in this scenario) when you have this kind of segmentation analysis sitting inside your Marketing Strategy plans.

Segmentation allows your company to 'tailor your offer' in order to become differentiated, more meaningful and relevant to a discreet section (or sections) of the total market.

Having defined very clearly the benefits of targeting segments that you understand and want to communicate with, you'll be investing marketing dollars not wasting them!

Now let's explore another topic that BrandQuest see all too often – and one that is also very wasteful in terms of marketing dollars.

The Schizophrenic Marketer strikes again!

Not surprisingly many companies who operate WITHOUT a marketing strategy use their marketing communications (that can mean anything from answering the phone to brochure presentation, from web site to direct mail, from advertising to sales presentations) as some kind of very expensive market research testing process.

As a consequence there is no consistency of message, no consistency of tonality or look, a lack of consistency in 'customer benefits' communicated and all in all a lack of consistency for your overall brand communicated to people who have a need to buy.

You see it's not 'rocket science'. Customers are more likely to buy from you when they have a feeling of comfort from the messages and signals you send them.

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Brands are like people. A brand needs to be liked and welcomed. It needs to be understood. It needs to be trusted. And the key to understanding and trust is consistency.

Would you stay friends with a colleague who you never quite knew what they were about to say next – or how they would behave in different situations? Of course you wouldn't. So why would people feel attracted to your brand or business if it behaves with similar personality traits?

In marketing this consistency is conveyed in

- What you say
- How you say it
- Presentation (typography, brand colour palettes, tonality) and even
- Where you say it

All BrandQuest clients go through a 'brand audit' process to address this issue. The process takes the fundamental outcomes and agreements within the Brand Strategy (Positioning, Points-of-Difference, Marketplace, Segmentation, Brand architecture, Brand Essence, Personality and tonality) and then compares the current and recent marketing communications to see where there is, or isn't alignment and congruence. It is often at this stage that the schizophrenic marketing of the past is exposed.

Consistency and repetition are the hallmarks of brands and companies who build trust from their customers and whose customers come back time and time again because they consistently deliver and as an outcome their customers trust them. ie: they are not one thing one day and another thing another day. Or as we at BrandQuest like to consistently remind our clients:

REPETITION BUILDS REPUTATION.