

Seven Steps For Creating Successful Marketing

1. Find the inherent drama within your offering.

After all, you plan to make money by selling a product or a service or both. The reasons people will want to buy from you should give you a clue as to the inherent drama in your product or service. Something about your offering must be inherently interesting or you wouldn't be putting it up for sale. In Mother Nature breakfast cereal, it is the high concentration of vitamins and minerals.

2. Translate that inherent drama into a meaningful benefit.

Always remember that people buy benefits, not features. People do not buy shampoo; people buy great-looking or clean or manageable hair. People do not buy cars; people buy speed, status, style, economy, performance, and power. Mothers of young kids do not buy cereal; they buy nutrition, though many buy anything at all they can get their kids to eat -- anything. So find the major benefit of your offering and write it down. It should come directly from the inherently dramatic feature. And even though you have four or five benefits, stick with one or two<three at most.

3. State your benefits as believably as possible.

There is a world of difference between honesty and believability. You can be 100 percent honest (as you should be) and people still may not believe you. You must go beyond honesty, beyond the barrier that advertising has erected by its tendency toward exaggeration, and state your benefit in such a way that it will be accepted beyond doubt. The company producing Mother Nature breakfast cereal might say, "A bowl of Mother Nature breakfast cereal provides your child with almost as many vitamins as a multi-vitamin pill." This statement begins with the inherent drama, turns it into a benefit, and is worded believably. The word almost lends believability.

4. Get people's attention.

People do not pay attention to advertising. They pay attention only to things that interest them. And sometimes they find those things in advertising. So you've just got to interest them. And while you're at it, be sure you interest them in your product or service, not just your advertising. I'm sure you're familiar with advertising that you remember for a product you do not remember. Many advertisers are guilty of creating advertising that's more interesting than whatever it is they are advertising. But you can prevent yourself from falling into that trap by memorizing this line: Forget the ad, is the product or service interesting? The Mother Nature company might put their point across by showing a picture of two hands breaking open a multivitamin capsule from which pour flakes that fall into an appetizing-looking bowl of cereal.

5. Motivate your audience to do something.

Tell them to visit the store, as the Mother Nature company might do. Tell them to make a phone call, fill in a coupon, write for more information, ask for your product by name, take a test drive, or come in for a free demonstration. Don't stop short. To make guerrilla marketing work, you must tell people exactly what you want them to do.

6. Be sure you are communicating clearly.

You may know what you're talking about, but do your readers or listeners? Recognize that people aren't really thinking about your business and that they'll only give about half their attention to your ad even when they are paying attention. Knock yourself out to make sure you are putting your message across. The Mother Nature company might show its ad to ten people and ask them what the main point is. If one person misunderstands, that means 10 percent of the audience will misunderstand. And if the ad goes out to 500,000 people, 50,000 will miss the main point. That's unacceptable. One hundred percent of the audience should get the main point. The company might accomplish this by stating in a headline or subhead, "Giving your kids Mother Nature breakfast cereal is like giving your kids vitamins only tastier." Zero ambiguity is your goal.

7. Measure your finished advertisement, commercial, letter, or brochure against your creative strategy.

The strategy is your blueprint. If your ad fails to fulfill the strategy, it's a lousy ad, no matter how much you love it. Scrap it and start again. All along, you should be using your creative strategy to guide you, to give you hints as to the content of your ad. If you don't, you may end up being creative in a vacuum. And that's not being creative at all. If your ad is in line with your strategy, you may then judge its other elements.

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