

Marketing needs targeted approach



By [Louise Robinson](#)

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With the proliferation of media and distribution channels, declining trust in advertising, multitasking by consumers and digital technologies that give users more control over their media time, it is no wonder that many businesses are left wondering how to get the right messages through to their customers.

Traditional models are being challenged, and the current economic climate makes it imperative that companies promote their products and services effectively. While most companies have a 'marketing' department, most are merely an offshoot of the sales team and, even though their past efforts may have been moderately successful, today's fragmented audiences and channels require a more targeted approach.

Customers have become more demanding, insisting on both off-the-shelf products and more complex, customised solutions - with different levels of sales support. Companies, accustomed to selling products and walking away, are being forced to prove how they add real value. Companies servicing larger managed accounts are exploring lower-cost ways to make clients happier and to generate sales growth.

Using data to predict behaviour

Organisations large and small are following the lead of business-to-consumer (B2C) retailers such as Amazon, by making smarter use of customer data to predict behaviour, drive sales and deepen relationships. The explosion of customer segments, products, media vehicles and distribution channels has made marketing more complex, more costly, and less effective.

Having the world's best product as a trade secret, because a company does not know how to take it to market, is as bad as having no product at all. The product and service options available to customers have doubled or even tripled, as globalisation has increased and building brands is not getting any easier.

Rising above the clutter without breaking the bank will require companies to get smarter about their marketing, requiring high-level marketing and PR services.

Marketing plan is essential

If you think that developing a strategic marketing plan is something only big corporations need to do, think again. You need one too. It will help you understand your business, your customers and your strategy for success better. We have seen this time and again with clients whose outcomes require a strategic, planned approach in addition to an effective sales team.

Most people fall into the trap of thinking that 'marketing' just means advertising, PR or promotion, but a marketing plan is so much more than that. It includes everything from understanding the market in which you sell your products and services, to choosing specific tactics you will use to reach that market. The discipline of marketing can often be complex and confusing. As a marketing veteran, I have seen countless marketing professionals become hung up on various aspects of marketing that have little impact on actual marketing results.

Similarly, many people over-complicate the process of marketing, and therefore never see a positive return on their marketing investment. Certain aspects of marketing are not easy; many require in-depth knowledge of a specific marketing discipline and companies should be selected on their ability to deliver results-driven marketing consulting and solutions.

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