

## Top 5 Biggest Marketing Mistakes Companies Make

When marketing efforts are not successful, many companies wonder why... They sent out direct mail, or refreshed their Web site, or attended a trade show, but are left disappointed and frustrated with languishing sales and underused resources.

*Why isn't the phone ringing?* Because marketing efforts must be more than a disconnected series of tasks. Effective marketing is not a single activity, but a well choreographed effort that takes planning, consistency, and fortitude to accomplish.

Put the power of marketing to work for your company by avoiding the **five biggest marketing mistakes** we've seen companies make:

### **#1 Marketing without a strategy in place.**

**Common Mistake:** *Believing your product does everything, your target market is anyone who has money to spend, and you don't have competition.* Because companies are frustrated by a lack of revenue, they often equate limiting their target market with limiting opportunity. The fact is, for marketing efforts to succeed, you must define a target market segment where your product has the most relevance and the best competitive advantage! Most of us can simply not afford to market everything to anyone along with delusions that we are the only option for our customers to consider.

### **#2 Being inconsistent with your brand.**

**Common Mistake:** *Changing your company's positioning depending on the audience, marketing vehicle used, or person delivering it.* Although some companies have actually gone through the steps of clearly outlining their company's positioning language, we find that many individuals within that company still have their own version. And this "customized" statement can change depending on who is receiving the information. The result? A confused audience—unsure of who you are and what your company does—that is unable to convey your offering to anyone else. Brand awareness is only built by CONSISTENTLY communicating your company's position and identity each and every time, so that eventually your "listeners" will repeat your positioning exactly as you intend them to repeat it.

### **#3 Not integrating marketing with sales efforts.**

**Common Mistake:** *Developing marketing programs or materials that fizzle out in the sales process and never get used.* Often marketing teams spend a considerable amount of time, effort, and perhaps most importantly, money to create a collateral kit and sales presentation for a new program or product offering. The sales team rejects the materials, because they don't address the most compelling selling points, and produces their own one-off presentations and brochures that send mixed messages to prospects and customers. To further illustrate the point, many times a marketing team will launch a new direct mail program to "generate sales leads" for the sales team, only to find that the sales team doesn't follow up on them because they don't feel the leads are "qualified." Not having a clear integration between sales and marketing can only result in failed marketing programs, costing you lost revenue opportunities and wasted expenses.

### **#4 Marketing something you don't actually have operationally.**

**Common Mistake:** *Aggressively marketing a skill set, technology, product, or service that has not been tested or validated, or is simply not available yet...the "we could offer that syndrome."* Your marketing team has created eye-catching materials, compelling positioning, and an aggressive campaign for the launch of a new company offering. The campaign is very successful; however operations cannot handle the demands. They are either under-staffed, or worse—they do not have the skill sets or ability to deliver on the new program. Or maybe the product itself is not available in time, or has many production problems. This not only upsets your customers, it demoralizes your sales and marketing team. They stop selling and the pipeline dries up.

### **#5 Not using the marketing mix effectively.**

**Common Mistake:** *Fixating on only one marketing vehicle to promote a company and/or its products.* Many marketing plans we see only focus on one activity like direct mail, or advertising, or public relations, or cold calling, and do not use several or all of these vehicles together in concert. Putting your eggs in only one basket may generate some leads for your company, but this strategy will ultimately limit your ability to maximize sales opportunities within a target market. Your customers need to see and learn about your company through a few different vehicles before they will be finally prompted to respond to your offer.