

.COLE *INFORMATION*

Marketing Playbook

FOR SMALL BUSINESSES



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Helping business find new customers

Congratulations!



If you've picked up Cole Information's Marketing Playbook for Small Businesses and scanned the contents, you've taken the first step in standing out among your competition in today's marketing world. Read on for practical, easy-to-incorporate tips in developing and maintaining your online presence, suggestions for direct mail, mobile marketing and an effective telemarketing solution. For more than 60 years, Cole Information has been helping businesses find new customers.

Social Media

HAVE YOU JOINED THE CONVERSATION?

The surge in popularity of online sites including Facebook, Twitter, foursquare, YouTube and blogs are changing the way millions communicate. People are posting status updates, uploading pictures, videos or checking in, creating and engaging in online conversations with family, friends and even total strangers.

Businesses are also finding success with these relatively free and easy-to-use social media platforms. There are plenty of ways to engage and receive feedback with both current customers and reach out to new ones to grow your business.

Web Marketing

NURTURE YOUR WEBSITE

While social media is the *now* place to have a presence, updating and maintaining your online brand is also vital. With that in mind, when was the last time you:

- Updated or refreshed your website content?
- Explored pay per click ads?

You don't have to hire a full-time IT wiz to accomplish either a website refresh or pay per click advertising. Rather you can successfully manage your online presence by simply contracting with

a web developer and a little know-how. In addition, numerous low-cost or free tools allow you to discover what pages of your website are working, which pages need to be tweaked and what keywords are influencing your customers to click on your site. Invest some time and energy in exploring just how consumers are finding your business, how long they're staying on your website and adjust to maintain your relevance. Hubspot's Website Grader and www.google.com/analytics provide great tools and insight to help you get started and improve your online presence.

PAY PER CLICK

It happens whenever you search the Internet. You type a word or phrase into a search engine, hit enter and immediately "sponsored" ads of local businesses pop up below and to the right of the screen. These sponsored links or ads are known as pay per click marketing and when done correctly, can create awareness and generate leads to your website.

Develop A Marketing Plan

Growing your business involves attracting new customers and retaining your current ones. A solid marketing plan can help with both and saves time, money and preparation.

When developing your marketing plan, spend some time and think of your ideal target audience, your direct competition, your budget and what makes you stand out from the competition.



Scan to check out our **FREE webinars on Small Business Marketing 101** which include a number of topics including *The Power of Word of Mouth Marketing, Not Biting Off More Than You Can Chew and Avoiding Sales Burn Out.*



Make It Work For You

SOCIAL MEDIA

- Spend some time developing and cultivating a presence on one or more social media sites.
- Poll your customers and find out how they use social media.
- Generate leads, grow business and improve your companies bottom line in just 10-minutes a day.

WEB MARKETING

- Develop a keyword strategy: Words or phrases that sum up your product/service.
- Incorporate those keywords into your website.
- SEO: Search engine optimization refers to using industry specific keywords on your website and social spaces to increase your search engine visibility.
- Monitor what's being said about your business, brand or industry. Make changes based on this valuable feedback.

HELPFUL LINKS

- www.websitegrader.com
- www.googlekeywordtool.com
- www.google.com/analytics
- <http://adwords.google.com>
- <http://advertising.microsoft.com>
- www.google.com/alerts

CREATE YOUR Own Space

CREATE A FACEBOOK PAGE:
Facebook.com/pages/create.php
SETUP A TWITTER ACCOUNT:
Twitter.com/signup

Direct Response

DOES IT REALLY WORK?

To be successful, direct marketing needs to get the right message to the right people.

By testing and tracking to find the right message, and using highly specific targeting technologies, direct marketing can grow your small business.

TRADITIONAL AVENUES

Direct Mail...

continues to be an effective marketing strategy that 80% of American consumers engage with everyday. It is most effective when it's personable.

Email Blasts...

on a regular basis to your customer base can be effective at keeping you at the top of consumers minds. Be sure to include news about your product or service, tips or tricks.

- **CONSISTENCY:** Research shows it takes around seven impressions to make a sale. In other words, the more people see your brand, the more they will keep you top of mind when/if they need your service. If you sign off a certain way, use certain colors or a tagline, stick to it. It's important to be consistent in all your advertising including direct mail.

- **UNFORGETTABLE:** You're an expert in your field, so why not take advantage of this when you target your prospects? A magnet that has your town/cities favorite team's schedule on it and your contact information may be just the thing to make you stand out. They'll be sure to hang it on their fridge or a place they can easily reference. Or maybe it's a door hanger with tips for creating a more efficient home; there are endless opportunities to reach out with unique marketing materials.

- **CALL TO ACTION:** Give your prospects a reason to call within a certain timeframe. For example, if you inform a prospect by postcard that Halloween is approaching in October, include in the mailer, "Order/Schedule by October 15th to receive your exclusive discount." Then follow up by phone a few weeks after you sent the mailer to ensure they received it, have any questions or want to make an appointment.



Don't bite off more than you can chew.

For example, if you're sending out direct mail, try sending 50 postcards per day. Use the revenue generated from that campaign to fund the next one. As more revenue is generated, you can send out more direct mail pieces. Just don't dive in all at once.

TRY SOMETHING NEW WITH MOBILE MARKETING

Two-Dimensional Barcodes...

QR or quick response codes and Microsoft Tag are two popular examples. When done correctly, two-dimensional barcodes can be an excellent way to add online interaction to your print marketing campaign. Consumers scan the image through an application or reader they've downloaded on their Smartphone. The link takes them to a video, coupon, email or website that tells more about the product or service. QR codes are relatively easy and inexpensive to create and customize.

Since this is a relatively new concept, you need instructions to accompany the code:

- QR code reader: www.Getscanlife.com
- Microsoft Tag Reader: <http://gettag.mobi>

SMS or Short Messaging Service...

is another way to gain consumers' attention. Who doesn't send and receive texts? At only 160 characters, the open rate on text averages 97% and many times, the short message is read within four minutes. Using SMS marketing software and a keyword that fits with your business and promotion, you can successfully implement a SMS campaign to text promotions or coupons to your customers and prospects.

Test. Measure. Test. Measure. Repeat.

There is no magic formula that will tell you how to do your direct marketing campaigns. But you can statistically determine what works best by tracking the response rates when using different images, copy and offers.

A good rule of thumb is to test two different versions of your mail piece by sending each version to 10% of your prospects. Whichever gets the better response, send that one to the remaining 80% of your prospects.



Telemarketing

DOES IT REALLY WORK?

Cold calling a random group of people usually wastes your time and resources. Rather, to implement a successful telemarketing campaign, call the right people at the right time.

CALL THE RIGHT PEOPLE

Uncover the people who are most likely to do business with you through referrals and targeting:

• Referrals

Many people are hesitant to do business with someone they don't have some sort of relationship with already. Asking your customers to suggest someone to you who *they* know overcomes this barrier. Your customer *does* have a relationship with them. And you have a relationship with your customer.

It's not very difficult to get referrals, if you just ask. For example, try calling a current customer to wish them a Happy Birthday. Then tell them something like this:

"Could you help me out? One of the ways I build my business is to ask customers whom I've helped save money to refer me to a friend. Is there someone you can think of that my product/service would help them save money?"

It's hard to say no to someone who wants to help their friend save money!

Here's an example script:

"I just saved (name) some money on their (product). He's a good customer of mine and he recommended I call you to see if I could save you some money as well."

"Hi, I'm (your name) with your local (industry). We've been serving the (city, county, etc) area for over (x) years. If you are thinking of buying (product) soon, we'd love the opportunity to provide you with a free estimate and show you how we could save you money."

Other useful sentences to try:

- "If you haven't had your (product) reviewed in a few years, we could help you out with that as well."
- "We just saved your neighbor (name) some money on his (product), and we thought we could save you some, too."
- "Could I set up an appointment to stop by and prepare an estimate for you? I think we would be able to save you some money."
- "Would there be a good time when I could ask you a few questions to prepare your free quote?"
- "I currently have (product) in (x) homes in your area.."
- "Would it be OK if I sent you an estimate?"

• Targeting

Given your experience, the way you do business, and other factors, you serve the needs of certain people better - and more profitably than others. Targeting by demographics is an excellent way to focus in on this type of prospect. Take a look at your best customers:

- How old are they?
- Where do they live?
- How much is their home worth?

Finding basic trends such as these can be helpful in deciding which prospects to target.

The people most like your best customers are the most likely to become your best new customers!

CALL AT THE RIGHT TIME

Consumers don't think about your product all year round like you do. You need to target your prospects when they are thinking about buying, not when you are thinking about selling.



Think about trigger events which cause consumers to think about your business.

Do-Not-Call Registry (DNC)

The National Do Not Call Registry allows US consumers to register their phone numbers to limit the number of telemarketing calls they receive. It was put into effect in 2003 by the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), and made it illegal for businesses to call prospects who had registered their phone number on the list.

(This excludes customers. For other exceptions or details, go to www.donotcall.gov.)

Subscription Account Number (SAN)

is an identification number indicating a yearly subscription to the DNC registry. Any organization that uses the telephone for consumer prospecting must register with the FTC and receive a SAN. Your SAN is free for up to five area codes.

When making phone calls for your telemarketing campaigns, try using different wordings, messages and offers. Keep track of how different messages perform. A simple tally will help you identify which message works best. You can then use that message on the rest of your calls.

Something you should include in all of your scripts is that you are located right in their neighborhood. You know the area. You care about the community and your customers. This will help prospects relate to you and trust you.



Getting Started

OVERCOMING OBJECTIONS

Inevitably, prospects will have objections.

But you have solutions to some of those objections. Not a crafty, clever way of tricking the prospect into believing their concern is out of place, but a real solution. It's amazing what you can learn if you just "*listen to*" your customer, instead of "*selling at them*." You know your products. You know your services. Be flexible! Find out how you can actually match what you can offer to what your prospect needs.

FOLLOWING UP

Whether it's because of forgetfulness, laziness or fear of appearing pushy, many people do not follow up with their prospects. Even those who do follow up do so "just to touch base." Calls should be made with purpose; state the purpose of yours. This is a great opportunity to differentiate yourself from other businesses. You care. You are different. **Take the initiative.**

Marketing Schedule

You have plenty to worry about in running your business. Investing time now to decide what you want to do with your marketing will save you both time and energy later. It's helpful to physically write out a schedule (Excel works great for this) in which you plan out all your marketing activities. If you're not used to planning out a year in advance, start by planning out a quarter at a time. Schedule your advertising, public relations, referrals and social media activities on it, including what days you will do which activity. Seeing your schedule in writing is in itself a strong motivator to actually keeping it.

It's important to be strategic and intentional in your marketing. Sticking to your marketing schedule will help you do that. Here are two more tips for getting started:

Schedule Your Phone Calls.

Scheduling sales calls, or follow-up calls, in advance helps avoid prospects falling through the cracks (not to mention taking the strain off your memory). For sales, make a selling schedule, or dedicate an hour each day to making sales calls. For follow-ups, try updating your Outlook appointments with the next time you plan on calling your prospect as soon *as you get off the phone with them*. That way you won't forget.

Strategically Manage Your Time.

There is a difference between being busy and being productive. Manage your time in a way that you spend it being productive. Do the things that will pay off. Determine your priorities, then manage your time accordingly. Your marketing schedule and scheduling your phone calls will help tremendously in time management.

CALCULATIONS FOR SUCCESS

Tracking performance is vital in operating a business efficiently. Here are some quick calculations that will help you track your performance, in order to find what works for you and what doesn't. Then you can do more of what works based on your own proven results.

Close Ratio

Close Ratio is a calculation used to determine your effectiveness in completing a sale. It is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Close Ratio} = (\text{Number of Sales Leads} / \text{Number of Sales}) \times 100$$

For example, let's say you called 50 leads last week, and of those leads, you closed (or made) 5 sales. That means your close ratio was:

$$(50 / 5) \times 100 = 10$$

That means the close ratio on your phone campaign was 10%. The same calculation can be made for visitors to your business, your website, etc.

Return on Investment (ROI)

ROI is an important calculation used to determine how effective an investment is. It is calculated as follows:

$$\text{Return on Investment} = \frac{[(\text{Revenue Generated} - \text{Initial Investment}) / \text{Initial Investment}] \times 100}{}$$

So for example, if you spent \$500 on a direct mail campaign which generated \$700 of revenue for you, it would be calculated as:

$$\text{ROI} = [(700 - 500) / 500] \times 100 = 40$$

That means your direct mail campaign had an ROI of 40%. You can use calculations such as

close ratio and ROI to track and determine what activities result in higher profits for your business. After determining what results in higher profits, you can do more of that activity, and less of other, less productive activities.

Meeting Your Goals

Do you get that panicked feeling towards the end of each month, wondering if you are going to meet your sales goals? Instead of wondering *if*, make a plan on *how* you are going to meet your goals. After tracking your close ratio for a few months, you will come up with a fairly reliable average for your business. You can plug that number, along with your sales goal into the following formula to calculate how many phone calls you should be making to meet your goal.

$$\# \text{ of Phone Calls} = (\text{Close Ratio} / 100) \times \text{Sales Goal}$$

For example, let's say you found your close ratio was 12%. And your goal was \$5,000 per month. Then the number of phone calls you would need to make in order to meet your goal that month would be calculated as follows:

$$\# \text{ of Phone Calls} = (12 / 100) \times 5000 = 600$$

That means, to make your sales goal for the month, you will need to make 600 phone calls throughout the course of that month. That may sound like a lot, but when broken up into bite-sized pieces each day (600 phone calls / 30 days), that's only 20 calls per day. Breaking it down will make it easier to make sure you are staying on track to meet your goals.

Our Solutions

Cole Information provides powerful solutions for finding quality prospects at a low cost. Different features and entire products have been developed to help new businesses overcome some of the obstacles previously discussed. For example, Cole Information can help you find the right people, determine the right time to contact those people, target the most profitable prospects and help with DNC regulations.

Resources

Scan to jump
to the websites
listed below.



Here are some other businesses and additional resources which our customers have found useful in cost-effectively finding new customers.



ColeCommunity.com

Connect with other Cole Information customers and small business owners. Learn about ways to find new customers, watch videos and sign up for future webinars.



YouTube.com/coleinformation

Watch training videos to learn how to build the most effective prospect list possible while taking advantage of Cole Information's high-quality data and innovative technology. These videos will help you specifically target the prospects most likely to become your customers.



PostcardBuilder.com

PostcardBuilder lets you inexpensively create, print and mail fully customizable high-quality postcards for your direct marketing campaigns. Test different images, offers and copy for best results. They also offer valuable direct marketing insights through online articles, as well as personal phone assistance.



DialYourLeads.com

Dial Your Leads will help you connect with your leads instantly. Consumers are more likely to buy from the first person who contacts them and Dial Your Leads will contact your leads, then transfer you the call right away.

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