



Know Your Audience

Marketer be sure. When targeting your marketing and public relations plans it is essential to be clear about who comprises the optimal target audience. That means aiming to reach those key individuals who are the actual decision makers, as well as those who have the greatest influence on purchase decisions.

It is not uncommon to find marketing messages and strategies aiming at the wrong function or level in an organization rather than at those who advocate for, make the deal and/or arrange for the contract or purchase order to be signed.

Next, even more refining is needed for creating marketing messages and design, and choosing placement vehicles. Gathering demographic, business practice and lifestyle information can help you reach your targets when they least expect it and are most accessible.

Then, create a marketing plan that communicates your company and product benefits in language that is meaningful, appealing to the right audience where they will be most receptive to it!

Know When a Big Opportunity is a Good Opportunity

Be smart when selecting your marketing mix to optimally reach the target audience. Be wary of high profile media and promotion programs that appeal to many, but have little relevance to your customers or objectives. Choose marketing strategies that give your brand a lift to communicate product uniqueness and benefits, entertain and generate customer interest, and provide a platform to speak to “pre-qualified” prospects. In addition, be open to focused non-glamorous opportunities that may reach the target and at just the right time. Even if the concept isn't "sexy".

Assess Audience Preferences

Aim for a bull's eye! Use formal and informal research to know a bit more about your target and refine the marketing strategy.

Ideally, your company or product group will conduct market research to profile target customers with their characteristics, demographics and preferences.

If formal research isn't part of your company's modus operandi, then engage your sales team to develop an informal target profile. A simple questionnaire could be designed for sales representatives to interview a pre-determined number and variety of existing customers and prospects.

Be sure to emphasize your “ideal” customer in this process to be sure you gear your program to your most potentially loyal, profitable, strategic customer mix.

Questions should ask about the following:

- Do your targets have professional or personal interests, lifestyle habits or fit in a particular demographic group that leads to an opportune marketing opportunity?
- Are they members of an executive club or professional association?
- Are they parents, hobbyists or sports fans?
- Are they cell, PDA or GPS users?
- Which key brand messages are most meaningful and likely to lead to a purchase decision?
- What media (radio, TV, print, web) they look at, how often, which are their favorite, most frequent media outlets (ask to name top three programs, publications, sites, etc. in each of the media type categories)?
- How much time do they spend in their car, airplane and at travel destinations? This will help you determine if drive time radio, airplane magazines and broadcast sponsorships are right to reach them.
- While you are at it, learning about interests and hobbies could help you determine the best gifts for occasions, promotion, holidays and appreciation.