

## Offensive Business Practices

The title of this article might lead one to believe that this is going to be a rant against all the horrible business practices out there that are both deceptive and offensive. While it would make for very interesting reading, Tudog generally likes to stick to topics that are helpful in assisting our client to improve their revenues. So, the offensive business practices discussed here are all about the pro-active measures a company can take to grab and hold on to the initiative in a competitive environment. Sorry if it disappoints you, but it's that kind of offensive we're talking about.

Taking the offensive in a business environment allows you to gain (and if you're smart, maintain) an advantage on the competitive playing field. There are guidelines and hints that will help you successfully implement your offensive action. Here are just a few thoughts:

### 1. Choose the Right Time

Remember, the primary reason to go on the offensive is to gain an advantage. To do so, you need to select a time when you are at your optimal strength and most able to go on the offensive. If you can coincide that time to a moment when your competitors are weak, even better. But first and foremost, you must determine that you have the strength (as in manpower, resources, time) to fight and win the battle you are about to initiate.

### 2. Choose the Right Place

Almost as important as the timing is the place. Should you launch in the press, at a trade show, in the marketplace? All of these options (and others) will determine both the effectiveness of your unexpected blow and how the competition will react. You need to select your place to maximize your impact.

### 3. Have Substance

It is important to make sure your offensive has substance and provides a real benefit to a genuine need. It makes no sense to pick a fight that will not win you any customers because you did not offer anything to them that they find of value. You need to hit the competition with a "double whammy" blow by cutting into their market position and their market share.

### 4. Fight to Win the Battle, Not the War

The point here is that you need to keep the objectives of your offensive modest. Don't try to launch a blow that will be so huge that it knocks your competitors out. All you want is to knock them off balance and be able to pick up some of their customers and a leadership role in your sector. If you try to win too much too soon, you may end up with nothing. So make sure you try to win small battles and not an all out war.

### 5. Be Ready to Reap the Rewards

Make sure you have the capacity (manufacturing, inventory, customer service, etc.) in place to reap the rewards of your action. It makes no sense to go on the offensive and

then squander the rewards of victory by not having the infrastructure in place to handle the added volume.

## 6. Be Able to Sustain the Fight

Nobody fights in a vacuum. Every move you make will be countered by a reactive move by your competitors. Make sure you have the wherewithal to sustain the fight you started. Nothing looks worse than initiating a marketing war and having to admit defeat because you couldn't endure the fight you started.

There are 4 stages to an offensive action, and each phase needs to be expertly executed. They are:

### 1. Establish Your Target

You need to know who you are targeting and focus on your target. Like any sort of shot, if it isn't lined up and your aim is off, you're going to miss.

### 2. Use the Element of Surprise

Make sure your target doesn't see you coming. If you have hinted that you may be acting, take into account your competitor may be preparing their reaction – or worse, a pre-emptive strike.

### 3. Keep Moving

Like any target, you can't be hit if you're not staying still. Make sure your plan has momentum and that you know what your subsequent moves are. You cannot launch your opening shot and wait for the reaction. If you don't give them time to react to your first move (because you are already on your second move), you will knock them off balance and keep them that way.

### 4. Once You Catch Them, Don't Let Go

Make sure that you keep going after your competition, even (or especially) when they show signs of fatigue. You have to keep your campaign active by using all your tactics that have proven effective.

Your marketing team needs to go beyond the traditional role of raising awareness and creating interest to actually instigating new opportunities. One way to do that is to be well positioned to take advantage of the opportunities you create by shaking up the competition. To achieve this, all you need to do is be offensive.