

One on One Marketing

The Internet, targeted cable commercials, niche magazine ads, and direct mail have all become marketing staples in the effort companies are putting forth to establish a one-on-one relationship with their customers and potential customers. The theory behind this personalized approach is that as consumers have more choices and competition is intensified, people will be more likely to base buying decisions not on factors such as price and convenience (which are being neutralized), but rather on emotional comfort and level of attachment. If a company can make a customer feel like there is a mutual and appreciated relationship, the thinking goes, the customer will have a comfort level that will encourage buying and earn loyalty.

Tudog's sense is that one-on-one marketing is a useful approach when possible but that it is just one of a number of strategies that can go into the structuring and execution of a comprehensive, integrated marketing plan. The usefulness of one-on-one marketing is that it can serve to excite certain customers, leading to incidental, but highly engaged product supporters who are vocal and excited in their enthusiasm for the company and its products. This Buzz effect is not to be underestimated and can help drive a company to the heights of success.

With this in mind, Tudog has decided to explore One-on-One marketing and present in this article some useful tips regarding its execution.

1. Target the Customer, Not the Market

As marketers our instinct is to perform a statistical analysis of some sort, determine which market makes for an attractive prospect and then target the market through awareness and interest creating messages. The One-on-One approach challenges us to abandon this traditional way of operating and focus instead on the individual – crafting messages that are compelling and meaningful to people not as they identify themselves within their community or societal segment, but rather as they see themselves as individuals.

2. Develop Your Database

Although a very traditional marketing act, the development of a database for One-on-One marketing is not so that you can blast e-mails or direct mail pieces in high volume campaigns intending on hitting a certain percentage (between 0.5 – 2%) of the large targeted audience, but rather so you can keep track of personal data such as birthdays and preferences – making your communications more personal and meaningful.

3. Rid Yourself of the Uninterested

The traditional broader based marketing programs are not interested in relationships with customers and therefore have no need or interest in getting rid of the names of people who have no demonstrated (or even indicated) an interest in the company and its products. By getting rid of the people who are not interested you are not only freeing up resources that will let you focus on those who are interested, you are also making the meaning of your communications more genuine, as they are being sent only to those who truly have an interest.

4, Celebrate Your Supporters

There have been a number of instances in recent marketing campaigns when the product was driven not by the company's marketing campaign, but rather by the enthusiasm and active promotion being done by customers. These supporters are not only entitled to support – demonstrated perhaps through discounts or recognition – they must be embraced so as to encourage others to serve similar roles as cheerleaders.

5. Develop Friend-Brings-A-Friend Campaigns

When you are engaged in One-on-One marketing the most effective way to spread the message is by having your target bring your message to someone else. You can achieve this through some organic loyalty that develops around the customer's enthusiasm and satisfaction with your product (or identification with your company) or you can promote this through your marketing by encouraging the spreading of the word, providing incentives for sharing the word, and highlighting those (recognition) who are most active and effective at spreading the word.

6. Talk – Don't Preach

The magic of One-on-One marketing is that the tradition role of persuasion is replaced by dialogue and the attempt to win over the customer through demonstration of quality or benefits. The removal of the mass mentality factor places additional pressure on the marketing team to construct an image and create materials that are able to speak directly to smaller groups of people (individually). The statement of claims needs to be replaced with compelling remarks that speak directly to the needs or wants of one specific person. Any hint of preaching or any transparent attempt to persuade will lead to an abandoned opportunity.

One-on-One marketing is more specialized than most companies require and are structured to properly execute. The benefits it holds are limited enough so that the urge to engage in it is offset by the anticipated results. When it is useful however, it can be a very powerful and effective strategy. For this reason it should be considered when the need to reach out to small, influential groups of people exists.