

If you are communicating for your website, brochures, sales letters, reports, presentations, emails, postcards and so on here are,

9 Deadly Marketing Sins Small Businesses Make and How to Overcome Each One

By Daron Powers

Fact: You want a profitable business. Communication and marketing are key elements in attracting more business. Yet it's easy to become embroiled in the day-to-day—and often next to impossible to find the time to focus on the bigger picture.

Fact: You're not alone.

Fact: Whether your goal is to survive, thrive or both, marketing and promo must be done consistently. You can do it yourself, delegate, or bring in a professional. However you choose, it's wise to have some basic marketing knowledge in your hip pocket... Yes?

1. Copying the competitor's promo

Why should prospects buy from you?

If you look and sound just like your competitor, then you are perceived as no better or no worse. I've seen countless business people copy others when they are not sure what to say or how to say it.

To overcome that "me too" syndrome leading to consumer apathy, you must communicate with authenticity and credibility. Get to the heart and soul of what actually makes you stand out and...

Establish your expertise and authority.

- a. Give your prospects a reason to trust you.
- b. Teach your prospects what you know.
- c. Help them to make the best possible decision when buying what you provide.

2. Boring communication

Open any newspaper, magazine ad, website promo, flyer, brochure and you'll see and hear things like...

"Buy from us because we have the highest quality, best service, most professional, most excellent warranty, in business since 1910, family owned and operated, licensed, degreed, we do it right the first time," blah, blah, blah.

This is genuinely "boring" because these phrases are overused.

Lose the dull lifeless meaningless language.

- a. Join the conversation already going on in your customer's mind.
- b. Detail precisely what it is that sets you apart from your competition.
- c. Position yourself as an "expert," or "authority," otherwise you're merely a commodity, just like all the rest.

3. Falling in love with pretty design

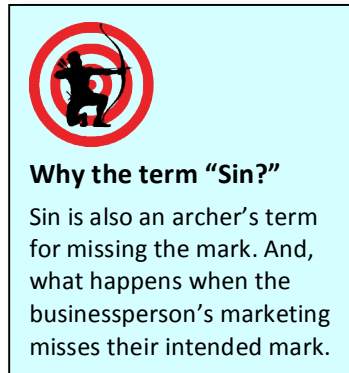
Some graphic artists *claim* they do marketing. However, websites or promo that look attractive may in fact *be missing actual pulling power*. Remember a major goal in marketing is to *communicate in a way that moves your intended audience to action*.

Focus on content first, then graphical design.

Make sure your communication and promo follows this marketing equation...

Interrupt, Engage, Educate and Offer.

There are proven principles that lead your business to consistent results. Know and apply those principles or find a competent authority to guide you. It's far less expensive than wasting your time and money through trial and error.



4. Lack of measurement

If you don't know what ads or promo are working, then how can you improve your message or direct your marketing resources where you'll get the biggest bang for your buck? Why throw good money after bad?

Track what actually works.

Ask prospects, clients and customers how they heard about you and make notes. Continually review and repeat what actually works.

5. Commissioned salespeople writing your ads and promotion

Their primary job is to *sell as much ad space as they can*. They just don't have the resources or time to *dig deep* enough to *truly understand what makes your business unique in the eyes of customers*. As a result, your communication can easily be filled with boring or predictable language that doesn't *break through* your prospect's *preoccupation barrier*.

Sit down with a marketing professional before you place the ad. Develop or update your targeted marketing plan so it bridges the "confidence gap" of skeptical prospects. Again, educate your target audience.

6. Dabbling in marketing

Dabbling in marketing leads to poor and costly decisions. Sometimes you just don't know what you don't know (in this case marketing). The point is...

Stick to What You do Well.

Listen, you can't be expected to be an expert at everything. Be honest with yourself. Enlist qualified professionals who are passionate about marketing and actually do it for a living. They can take your business to a whole new level in a way you simply can't when dabbling or spreading yourself too thin.

7. Delegating away marketing

I've seen business owners leave it to their sales representatives (even staff or office manager) to come up with marketing tactics and tools. Business suffers. Frustration grows. Why? Salespeople are hired to *close the business*.

Free Your Sales Reps to Close More Business.

As the business owner or key player, it's your responsibility to develop the marketing strategy, tactics and tools. When you do that you make your average reps good, your good reps great and your great reps superstars.

8. Marketing as an "afterthought"

Effective marketing is essential investment that attracts a steady flow of prospects. It must be developed and regularly updated. Business people spend lots of money on equipment, people, leases, products, training, vehicles, computers, software, accountants, attorneys, etc. Then when it comes to promotion... skimpy resources make marketing an afterthought.

Good marketing should differentiate you, your products, services, and attract potential buyers. It's essential to growing your business.

Build marketing, consistent communication and promo into your budget.

9. The belief that marketing is just blowing smoke and flat out doesn't work

Absolutely not true. If you feel that way, then you probably have the right product/service but the wrong information. Marketing does in fact work.

However, the toughest part for smart business people to fully grasp is the importance of developing your communication message—*what you say, how you say it, and who you say it to.*

"You can have brilliant ideas, but if you can't get them across, your ideas will not get you anywhere."

— Lee Iacocca

Without effective messaging, you are likely to waste tons of money on pretty websites, glossy brochures, fancy flyers, flashy video, and so on.

Spending money on the delivery system for your message *before you have an effective message* to send is a plan for disaster.

Truth is that without competent guidance or a powerful strategy, communicating your message is a hit or miss proposition.

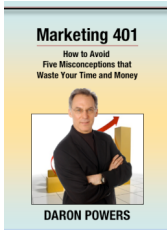
Fortunately...

You don't have to know it all!

Like medicine, accounting or the law, *marketing is an acquired skill.* If you don't have the time, focus or energy to learn how to communicate your expertise with precision, you are not alone. Avoid the stress. Get qualified help.

Free yourself and your staff to concentrate on what you do best. ☺

Follow up resources to this article include:

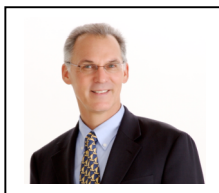


1.) How To Find Competent Help To Promote Your Business: 9 Tips for Selecting a Top Notch Marketing Coach/Strategist to Help You Grow Your Business

2.) The Marketing 401 Report: How to Avoid Five Misconceptions that Waste Your Time and Money: • Reach your target audience • Break through the promo clutter • Bridge the consumer confidence gap • Do it yourself marketing • Define your competitive edge and more. Report is available as an audio CD or Mp3 download. Get more information at my website at Daronpowers.com.

Daron Powers: Author, Speaker, Marketing Coach & Strategist

I hope you found helpful marketing advice in this article. There are plenty more ideas where this came from. My passion is to help cement your product, service or brand into the hearts and minds of your targeted audience—minus the hype; To make you the “go to” authority.



We work together, step-by-step revealing little known secrets about your business to place you and your expertise at the top of your prospect's mind, in your category, so your business thrives. The bottom line is to help you reach out and let a steady stream of business come to you.

"The aim of good marketing is to know and understand the customer so well the product or service fits him and sells itself."

— Peter F. Drucker

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