

WHITE PAPER

Resolving Five Common Marketing Challenges



F H COOPER®

Bold, Dynamic Marketing since 1980



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Companies like yours, are being bombarded daily with e-mails from marketing organizations touting their knowledge and experience in the business and technology sectors. They list their skills and special features but rarely do they talk about your company and how they can help you to deal with the many challenges that marketing presents. In researching this work, we came across a great many challenges listed by business and technology companies that not only demand attention but also need to be resolved.

THE OPPORTUNITY

Since many of the business and technology companies are dealing with these marketing challenges on a regular basis, it shows that they are not being resolved. Some are as simple as websites and content creation, others building a corporate brand, properly allocating marketing resources and choosing the right social media platforms. *Putting the customer first and helping them resolve these challenges is job one for any marketing organization.*

THE BENEFITS

Helping to implement the resolution of these challenges all contribute to a company's growth in different ways. Some require capital, some do not. It is good to remember that in some cases, benefits can be your competitive edge.

CALL TO ACTION

We are asking you to consider facing these challenges with the help and support of a knowledgeable and experienced business and technology marketing organization. Working together can result in raising your marketing, sales, and performance levels. These efforts dramatically can move your company forward confidently.

ABOUT F H COOPER

F H Cooper, a full service, business and technology marketing organization, provides clarity and transparency to you for the strategies we recommend and focuses on real-world, action-oriented solutions to support your sales and marketing efforts; we stand for responsiveness, performance excellence, innovative creativity, and integrity.

MANAGING YOUR WEBSITE

Background

First and foremost a website gives your company or product visibility. When potential customers are looking for a specific product or company, yours will come up with others. The website also provides you with credibility. It demonstrates that you are real. It gives the user your company profile, what you are about, and can show present or past clients. If you are a proficient writer and knowledgeable about your subject, you can include a periodic blog, usually a minimum of two or three times per month. The information on your website should always be current. By not doing this, it renders your website less useful to the potential user. If it is not continually updated, users will avoid it never to return.

Challenges

There are many useful aids to developing a website yourself. However, we suggest that you shop for website developers not only for price, but for samples of their work. A professional website that is colorful, informative, and easy to navigate, will generate more hits. *Be aware that a B2B website does not sell.* It does, however, convey to the user that your company, products or services are first class. If a visitor to your website is impressed, they will contact you personally for more input. Also keep in mind that in any given group of products, there are many competitors and each one is putting their best foot forward. In other words, competitive websites are vying for potential clients using all the bells and whistles available. Keep these things in mind when contemplating hiring a web developer. You should be looking for one that can develop a modern looking site, easy to navigate, complete with easy to find and understandable information about the company and the products.

Another element to consider is the “feel” of the website. A friend had a very informative website together with great graphics. Although technically correct, the site looked more like it belonged in the 1970s. It was shelved and a new website replaced it that was definitely 21st century. The difference was amazing. It drew a lot of “wows”!!! Memorable, yes, Informative, yes. Easy to follow, yes.

The Role of Search Engine Optimization (SEO)

One frequent complaint is that one’s website gets few views on search engines. A website’s placement on search engines can be the difference between success and obscurity. Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is a search engine marketing tool that allows search engines to find and “rank” websites on keyword searches. It is, however, essential to have a content strategy that includes blogging and social media interaction. When you have good content infrastructure, SEO tools can take already great content to the next level.

KEEPING UP WITH MARKETING AND INDUSTRY TRENDS

Background

As new trends appear on the market, it can be difficult for marketing managers to keep track of the changes and implement them in their own strategies. While embracing these changes would be to their benefit, keeping up with all new trends can be overwhelming. For example, inbound marketing agencies exist to do the research and detailed work involved in deciding which new inbound marketing trends to embrace, and how to implement them into a business's marketing.

While technology continues to advance at a rapid rate, many businesses still cling to traditional methods of operating. Although it may be exhausting to keep up with constantly shifting trends, it is the only way to keep competitive. Marketing trends are changing very fast and you must refine your strategies constantly if you want to stay ahead of the game. This should be done monthly.

Being Competitive

Prioritizing relationships will help you discover more sales opportunities and develop "go to" contacts for various types of expertise. When you need additional support, having a trusted network of specialists is invaluable.

Identifying your team's strengths and weaknesses, helps identify the skills each job requires compared to their actual skill level. This helps you determine if they have the expertise to do the job or will need additional training. Hiring "experts" externally is not out of the question. Take advantage of training opportunities. This will help keep you and our team up to date on the newest trends. Keep tabs on your competitors, too, to see what ideas they've followed and what directions they are pursuing. It is critical to stay on top of industry trends to maintain your reputation as an expert, attract top talent, and to continue to be successful.

Customer Feedback

Is that new trend working? One of the best ways to find out is to keep in touch with your customers. Find out how they are responding to some of these shifts. By gathering feedback, you can determine the success of a specific trend. Most importantly, you must be open to change or at least to new ideas and embrace them.

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HOW TO USE CONTENT MARKETING EFFECTIVELY

Background

In his book, *Epic Content Marketing*, Joe Pulizzi explains content marketing this way. “Your customers don’t care about you, your product, or your services. They care about themselves, their wants, and their needs. Content marketing is about creating interesting information your customers are passionate about, so they actually pay attention to you.”

In *The Digital Marketing Handbook*, Robert Bly describes content marketing as “a type of marketing that involves the creation and sharing of online material such as videos, blogs, articles, and social media posts. It differs from other types of marketing such as response and brand marketing, in that it does not explicitly promote a brand but is intended instead to stimulate interest in a product or service by creating helpful, informative content designed to solve a problem”.

Another description of Content Marketing from the Content Marketing Institute is, “content marketing is a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant, and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience—and, ultimately, to drive profitable customer action”.

When to Use It

Often, industrial buyers are looking for something very specific. In this case, mass marketing does not work. This requires a strategy that is more targeted and is niche-specific such as digital marketing. One aspect of digital marketing, content marketing, can address very specific subject matter without sounding like an advertisement. Content Marketing then can be targeted to very specific audience via market segmentation. This is the process of dividing a market of potential customers into groups, or segments, based on different characteristics and interests.

Common Content Examples

Some common examples of content include website articles, mobile apps, mobile content, e-books, infographics, annual reports, research papers, and podcasts.

Distribution Considerations

Once you have created the content, you need to market it. Some marketing suggestions might include:

- posting it to your website
- promoting it on social media
- targeting it to specific audiences via the use of search engines

THE IMPORTANCE OF BRANDING

Introduction

The creation of a brand for your product or service can dramatically increase your market share, increase your revenue stream, and add a high degree of value to your bottom line.

What is Branding?

In *Designing Brand Identity* (ISBN 978-1-118-41617-4) the author describes branding this way, "Branding is a disciplined process used to build awareness and extend customer loyalty. It requires a mandate from the top and readiness to invest in the future.

Branding is about seizing every opportunity to express why people should choose one brand over another. A desire to lead, outpace the competition, and give employees the best tools to reach customers are the reasons why companies leverage branding."

Building a Brand

A successful branding program is based on the concept of singularity. It creates in the mind of the prospect the perception that there is no product on the market quite like your product. Competition is fierce and consumers are overwhelmed with choices. When building a brand, the creators must think beyond the point of sales and use their business experience to deliver an engaging experience that no other competitor can replicate. Remember: *Brands are Built with Publicity and Sustained with Advertising.*

Considerations

The first thing you must do in building a brand is to define exactly what your brand is all about, and who is the brand's target demographics. This can help you develop your logo, website, social media presence and advertising campaign. Keep in mind as you are developing these things that every aspect must be integrated so that everything tells the same story. Eventually customers will know who you are and what you stand for. When consumers select a specific product, they often base their decision not only on price and service, but also on how a brand makes them feel. Once you have defined your brand, the next step is creating your visual identity. It should reflect your brand's personality and make it easy for consumers to recognize in stores, in print, and online.

Unique Uses of Branding

One unique use of branding is having the specific brand offered by a brand name store. For example, many Paloma Picasso and Elsa Peretti jewelry designs and collections are sold through Tiffany & Company. In this case, each brand achieves a high degree of visibility since the product and the store work off each other.

VALUE CREATION

Introduction

The need to create value for your company is a huge marketing challenge. It is an ongoing task. How do you do it? What do you need to know about it? Meeting the needs of your customer is one of the key principles of value creation. Companies need to listen to their customers and understand their requirements. There is no single applies-every-time formula for value creation. Some of the ingredients of the consolidated value of a company include its sales, marketing, personnel, intellectual property, and good will. These and other elements are considerations in the measurement and valuation of a business.

To keep value from eroding, companies have bought back shares, uncoupled mergers, jettisoned outdated facilities, and downsized personnel. Although these actions help, however, they DO NOT create new business, new revenue or new value.

Important Principles of Value Creation

Here are some of the more important principles we have learned about value creation:

- value creation is more than monetary
- change can dramatically affect value creation unless you manage it to your advantage
- to make any positive changes happen, you must know how to “sell” them to all your audiences, e.g. shareholders, stakeholders, bankers, etc.
- alliances provide an immediate solution to business expansion and ensuing value creation
- market research is important to help you validate goals, direction and to define your audience
- value creation is something you must work at all the time for it to be effective

Final Thoughts

The use of modeling tools specifically involving performance, growth and profitability, will suggest many areas in which to find value-creation opportunities. Company policies can and do impact the creation of value. Remember, a company is not just a compilation of buildings but rather a powerful force whose impact affects many people. It is a living member of the community in which it is located.

THE LAST WORD

An interesting observation in the B2B landscape is that more than 70% of millennials are the decision-makers or thought leaders of their respective organizations. This is a significant shift in the B2B marketing space today as compared to earlier times. Technology can be held responsible here as millennials are quite tech-savvy compared to Gen X. No matter who the decision-maker is, B2B businesses must keep making and impact upon their audience and succeed in getting their attention and engage them.

Although it sounds easy, growing a company in the face of so many existing and new challenges is a monumental undertaking. It is not for the faint-of-heart or any but the most confident of people. It demands decisions that are not always popular, it demands decisions that are not always born out of consensus, it sometimes demands a “me against the world” stand.

Today’s challenges not only come from national competitors, but from international companies seeking to create a channel for their products and services, often at the expense of those that already exist. The pressure on company executives continues to grow. The shareholders are not as forgiving as they once were. They are looking for quick results. Executives must introduce a dynamic, proactive corporate vision and make sure that their internal teams buy into it and embrace it.



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