

Your Advertising Campaign

Making Tracks

With the economy a hot topic around every corner these days, the frightening trend among small businesses has been to all but abandon their marketing and advertising campaigns. This is despite a multitude of case studies and proven research demonstrating that brands who persevere in a down-turned economy will rise above their competitors as the dust settles.

Owner-operators especially have the majority of their livelihoods invested within the four walls of their business. Why would they stop inviting people to participate? With the exception of very few long-established neighborhood businesses, most can't just cease to exist. Rather than eliminating the totality of their campaigns, we are recommending these businesses move their marketing dollars towards targeted, direct marketing campaigns that automate measurable results.

Some of these include:

PURL (Personalized Uniform Resource Locators)

The alternative to traditional direct mail, PURLs allow you to take most of the control back in the sales process and stop waiting for your direct mail recipient to come to you. A recipient's name is appended to your Web site via a variable data printing process. If your prospect is John Smith, then the URL may be vip.yourbusiness/johnsmith. When your prospect sees his name attached to your website and can't help but log in, he is greeted again personally on a landing page designed to look like your website.

On the other end, you instantly receive email notification that the prospect is online. If you pick up the phone and call John, your chances of bringing him into your business increase exponentially. Additionally, data collection elements can be added to this landing page to find out more about John's interests and, in the end, you can generate a full report to see how well this direct mail campaign worked for you.

Cost: Set up averages \$1,500.00. Per piece mailings including postage average .75 per piece.



TEXT MESSAGING

Texting allows you to build a data base and market back to the same with your messages. Say you are a flat bread pizza shop and you offer a pizza of the week recipe to your foodie consumer. By simply posting a sign in your shop with this offer and a request to text PIZZA to 55555 you will gather the information (cell phone number and name) of the interested customers taking you up on this offer.

Now each week when you send out your recipe, you are repeatedly marketing. You also have their information to send a text out on a Saturday evening reminding everyone to order early before the big game tomorrow. Taking only seconds of production time, it is fantastic for the business owner who needs to be able to make a fast decision. Daily, weekly, or monthly, you can log into your portal and review automatically tracked information that will tell you how well your promotions are working for you.

The economically wonderful thing about the world of text messaging is that you are only paying for the contacts that want to receive information from you. Cost: Set up averages \$750.00 and each contact made is around 10 cents.

SOCIAL MEDIA

If it wasn't enough that we had to jump on board with our own websites 10 years ago (or face a complete lack of credibility for not having one), we now are quickly seeing businesses of all kinds using an advanced web version called 2.0. Blogging and social networking are among the largest of the most common participation. A website is information out content, you telling the prospect what you want to say while they passively view your site. A blog however gives your customer base, and even those on the outside with interest in your industry, an opportunity to share feelings and ideas on a particular subject matter. It allows you to interact directly with your customers in a social network of other potential prospects giving you an instant measurement of online traffic.

Tracking and measured response mechanisms can be built in to the blog in a variety of ways.

From "sign up to receive" forms to more advanced click-through technology, you can gather a variety of information from visitors based on what your goals are for data collection. While not as customizable or immediately interactive as blogs, websites like Facebook or MySpace are great complements to your web 2.0 portfolio.

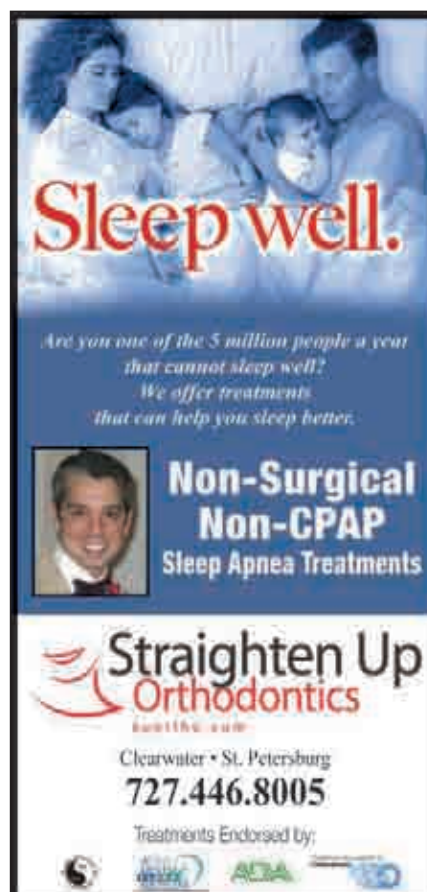
They offer you an online social network to reach out and find not only customers, but other valuable business relationships per your particular industry or interests. These low cost, easy-to-maintain methods of marketing (and networking) will shape the next generation of business and dramatically reduce mass media costs. (Check out how many commercial impressions you could generate on YouTube for \$0.00 out of pocket).

Cost: Varies based on programming, but averages can range from FREE to \$2,000 for a strong, well-equipped setup and professional maintenance.

Whichever vehicle(s) you choose to drive your marketing, remember one simple truth: customers can't buy from you if they can't find you. Keep marketing. By employing targeted marketing methods with response-tracking and measurement features, you can better control costs and make smarter decisions with each new investment.

More public relations information at
www.BABM.com/publicrelations

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