

How to motivate your prospects to contact you

Every one of us has competition. And with each passing day, our clients and prospects have more and more choices presented to them. Since that will not change anytime soon (if ever), it's critical for us to differentiate ourselves from our competition. Starting now!

Whose perspective is important? Not yours!

It's important we look at things from our clients' perspective, not ours. Even though we proudly say we offer incredible convenience, does it really matter to our customers if what they're looking for is a one-of-a-kind thingamajig? To market ourselves well, we need to do two things:

- 1) Find out what's really important to our customers, and
- 2) Distinguish ourselves from our competition.

But how should we start? By using guerrilla tactics (meaning any way we can), we must get our hands on our competitors' marketing materials to see what *they're* saying about themselves. This way we know what we're up against, and we can see things from our prospect's perspective. Of course, nothing can replace hearing what's important directly from our customers. That's why we need to take our clients to lunch for a one-on-one session, and budget it under "research."

What do you sell *your* clients?

Hint: It's not the product you make or the service you offer.

One of the first laws of marketing has always been to emphasize benefits—not just features. Let's use lawn service as an example: In your ads, not only would you tell someone how green you make their grass, you'd also tell them how *envious* the results will make their neighbors.

This example illustrates how an effective message should concentrate on the image aspect as much as the details. The goal should be to reach our prospects on both an intellectual and emotional level—because many decisions are made with a healthy dose of emotion, then justified with logic. If you doubt that concept, explain why people buy Mercedes and BMWs instead of Hondas. Any car will get us where we're going, but certain cars make us feel so much better about getting there. The bottom line is: If we get our audience to relate to what we're saying, they'll respond to what we're offering.

Tell them what you do in 5 seconds.

Another goal of self-promotion is to whittle our message down to those bare essentials that matter most to our audiences. While a web site enables a visitor who has sought us out to learn everything about our services, with an ad, we don't have the luxury of telling our whole story. Essentially, we have 5 seconds to pique someone's interest enough to get them to call. What would *you* say if you only had 5 seconds to make your prospect want to find out more?

continued

A while ago, I met a woman who had an insurance business. Her name was Kathi Reddy, and she summarized her business by saying, “Insurance is like a parachute. If you don’t have it when you need it, it’s too late.” That gem was a wonderful way to summarize her business in a memorable way. (By the way, I’ve heard the same is true when it comes to needing a good reputation.)

Tell them often.

Usually, it’s difficult to know where our prospects are in their decision-making process, or even who is considering buying our product or using our services. This is why we should continually strive to keep our names in front of our audiences—whether it’s speaking to a group, using email or direct mail, or advertising.

When it comes to advertising, studies sponsored by business and trade publications have found we need to run an ad three to six times for our presence to register with their readers. And it doesn’t have to be the same message. An ad series with different headlines offers us the chance to reach different audiences, or the same audience with multiple messages. Direct mail can be as simple as a series of postcards—but either way, continuity is the key.

Remember, how we market *ourselves* speaks loud and clear about how our prospects like to present *themselves*. When we understand their hot buttons, we’ll be able to communicate what’s important to them. And when our marketing messages are done well, we make a memorable impression that resonates with our audience and motivates them to respond.

And *that’s* how you can motivate your prospects to contact you.