
5 Things Marketing Can't Do For You

by Michele Pariza Wacek

While there's no question a solid marketing program can increase your business, it can't fix everything. Below are 5 things marketing can't do for you:

1. Marketing can't make you an overnight success. Just because you start a marketing program doesn't mean you're immediately going to see your business explode. Marketing is about getting your name in front of your target market on a regular basis until they finally decide to give you a try.

On that note, if you're in trouble right now - sales are down, a new business isn't getting off the ground like you planned -- depending on how bad the trouble is a marketing program may not be enough to save you. A successful marketing program needs time to work and more likely than not, a little money as well. If you're panicked about one (or more likely both) you may need to start looking at other options.

2. Marketing is not about doing something once and forgetting about it. The very best marketers test. And test. And test.

For instance, maybe your Web site isn't converting visitors to customers as well as it should be. You could hire a copywriter to tweak it for you. You could test the different elements to see what raises your conversion level. That's one way to use testing. You can also test different headlines, different offers, etc.

3. Marketing can't fix a bad experience. This is a big one. If your customers have a lousy experience with your products or services or with your customer service reps or sales people, etc., that's it. Worse yet, not only have you lost a customer for good, that customer will probably tell others about their bad experience. So now you've lost more potential customers as well.

Marketing can get people in the door, but it can't ensure they'll have an experience they'll want to repeat. Before assuming more marketing is what you need, take a moment and make sure your current customers are truly satisfied with your business.

4. Marketing can't fix a flawed business. Much like tip number 3, marketing can't fix cash flow issues or staff problems.

Okay, I can hear all of you saying "Of course, marketing can't fix cash flow problems. Do you think we're stupid?" My answer is no, I don't think you're stupid at all. I think what happens is sometimes you get so caught up in the day-to-day challenges of running a business you can't see the forest for the trees.

Let me explain. Let's say you have a business that's struggling with cash flow. The first thing that springs to mind may be revving up marketing. After all, the idea behind marketing is to increase revenue. On the surface that makes sense. However, if you look a little closer, what you might find are expenses that are out of whack or not getting invoices out in a timely manner. So what you should be fixing is your accounting problems rather than changing your marketing.

5. Marketing can't make people buy things they either don't want or can't afford. It doesn't matter how great your product or service is, if you're selling to people who either don't have the

interest or the means to buy it, then your marketing is going to fail no matter how brilliant it may be.

So basically it all boils down to this, before you decide you need more marketing, take a few moments and make sure marketing is really the right solution for your business.

Creativity Exercise – Reality Check

Before you launch into a new marketing program, take some time to analyze what's really happening in your business. Do you really need a marketing program or is your problem:

- You aren't able to close the leads you have
- You aren't invoicing in a timely manner or following up with unpaid accounts
- Your customers aren't happy with the product or service
- Your customers are having a bad experience with technical support or something else in the process isn't working
- Your target market isn't right
- You aren't passionate about what you're doing anymore
- Your business has way too many expenses

And so on. Basically I just want you to make sure marketing really is your problem before you start fiddling with it.

If you want to grow your business, then you should be consistently marketing your business. But if you're using marketing as a Band-Aid for some other problem, then you could be headed for trouble.