

MARKETING NEWS

Providing business owners with effective and cost efficient marketing strategies



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LVisions is dedicated to assisting companies of all sizes with increasing clientele and improving customer relations through various marketing plans with low cost strategies. Services offered:

- Marketing Plans
- Business Plans
- Website Strategies
- Marketing Collateral Content/Design
- Referral & Retention Programs
- Advertising/Media Plans
- Administrative services to support marketing plan

LVisions also offers project management for all types of projects. If we suggest it, we can implement it.



Greetings: From The Desk of Latrice Lovelace

Hello and greetings to all. We are heading into the last quarter of 2011 which I like to consider the time for reflection and planning. A time to look at what went really well in previous quarters and what could we have done better. If you're starting a business this planning period is critical for your success. Just as the economic market has changed the entire marketing landscape has changed as well. How and where you spend your money will determine your effectiveness and success in the upcoming year..

This newsletter will help you start planning and focusing on key areas. We also want you to understand new techniques and technology related to marketing your business, and of course how to stay ahead of the marketing curve or at least to put on it. Falling behind will put your success at risk.

Most businesses fail within the first 2 years due to lack of planning and resources. Most common are: lack of an effective foundation (business plan), no research on the product or service (marketing plan), and no strategy to manage funds (budgeting and cash forecasting).

We are in a time where your next dollar spent should make sense. The impulse of spending haphazardly has diminished. If you can grasp this concept you

will have the opportunity to put some of your dreams into action.

Point to remember: the only time you should not have a marketing plan is when you're going out of business.

*Until next time:
Be Blessed & Prosperous,
Latrice*

Remember to join me in social media land.

In This Issue:

- Key planning areas
- The marketing landscape
- New Marketing Tools
- Staying ahead or on the marketing curve

Key Planning Areas

Website Effectiveness, Market Awareness, and Technology

Website Effectiveness

If you do not have a website - Are you truly in business in this age? If you have a website and you're not keeping it fresh and interactive, again are you truly in business in this age? Review your website for the following:

1. SEO (Search engine optimization) - how easily are you found on the internet? Use key words and tags
2. How current is your site? - has your product or service changed, has your message changed, did you add new products or services? Your website should be as current as your marketing collateral. The two should mirror each other.
3. How easy is it for customers/prospects to communicate with you?

Do you have a form to request information, is your contact information easily accessible, can they call, fax, email or chat with you online? Make it easy for all forms of communication to occur.

4. How easy is it to do business with you? Can they purchase online via: credit card, PayPal, etc. is your shopping cart user friendly? Can they easily find what they are looking for—more web pages are not always the answer.

Once you have put all of your efforts into driving traffic to your website, it would be a shame to have prospects get to your site and then are disappointed or even worse can not find the "More" information they were looking for. Take care to make your site easy to maneuver, easy on the eyes,

easy to understand and easy to purchase or to request additional information.

Market Awareness

Knowing what has changed in your specific industry will equip you with the knowledge to properly market your product/service. **Example 1:** Women 21-34 are the group that most frequently visit social media sites. A cosmetic company marketing plan should consist of an extremely aggressive social media plan as part of their overall marketing plan. Not having a social media presence is not an option - this is different from just having a website. Your social media plan/strategy should drive customer/prospects to your website. That's why its important to have a well designed, functional, and interactive website. *"continued inside"*

The Marketing Landscape

Consult Advice: Knowing when and how to advertise appropriately can save you thousands of dollars. A great marketing plan includes activities in all areas listed below!

Areas	FREE	Minimal Investment (up to \$500)	Minor – Major (\$500 - \$10,000+)	Note
Databases Physical & Email	Build Your Self			Build from your personal contacts and networking activities (mailing list can be purchased - \$100+) Mailings and email blasts are very inexpensive
Social Media* (Most common listed)	Requires time and creativity			* Been around for some time now but many have avoided this avenue – Get onboard! Social Networks: Facebook, MySpace Business Networks: LinkedIn, Plaxo Micro blogging: Twitter User Generated: YouTube
Networking/Events Chamber of Commerce (up to \$500) Conferences (up to \$500) Networking Meetings (up to \$45) Trade Associations (up to \$500) Trade Shows/Exhibits (up to \$2K)				Its extremely important to continue your networking and face-to-face interaction activities. Social media activities is not a replace for in-person networking it is in addition to. Human interaction will never be replaced its how we build partnerships and loyalty.
Internet/eCommerce Blog/podcast site (up to \$100) Online Ads (up to \$300) Website (up to \$1000 usually priced per page) Webinars (up to \$200)				If you do not have a web site for your business – get one immediately! It's the first place of brand, image, research, and face of your business. If you do not have a website what does that say about your business? You Must Have A Web Presence!
Advertising Bill Board (\$700 - \$2K+) Direct Mail (2,000 piece - \$500 - \$2K+) Magazine (\$800 ¼ page – varies greatly) Newspaper (\$500+ - bus card size – varies greatly) Radio (up to \$2K) TV Ad (Commercial \$5K - \$10K – varies greatly)				This is an area to proceed with great caution – Although more expensive but great results can be achieved. You must know your target market, your timing must be precise and your budget must support repetition.

Mobile Marketing

“Continued from front cover”

Example 2 - Business Payments, credit cards/debit cards are the primary preferred methods of making payments. Cash is still King and checks are fading. Checks are extremely risky for many reasons including fraud and uncertain of funds availability. You must have the ability to accept electronic forms of payment on your website and mobile device. “Cash or Credit Please”

Suggestions:

1. Subscribe to your specific industry magazines, eNewsletters, or visit the websites regularly
2. Incorporate a social media strategy in your marketing plan for the upcoming year. Key sites to have a presence: Face Book, Twitter, Merchant Circle, LinkedIn, UTube and blogging from your own site.
3. Take advantage of all new technology to market your product/service and be open-minded to new techniques.
4. Make sure you can accept all forms of payment. Download the PayPal and Square apps to your smart phone and accept payments on the go

Mobile Marketing - An Added Layer

Your marketing plan should encompass all avenues of advertising listed above. An effective marketing plan can be created on a wide scale of budgets. Mix it up and ensure your business is highlighted on every platform available. **Now on the scene:** Mobile Marketing (changing the marketing landscape)



Have you heard or seen **QR or 2D codes**? It's simple - a bar code like image that when scanned using a Smartphone will direct you to a strategic webpage. The code can be placed on business cards, brochures, postcards, all marketing collateral designed to increase website traffic.. This can also be used for many purposes such as to highlight promotions and/or events. The retail industry is using the codes for special offers and discounts. The Snap of a camera = Instant Engagement (A Mobile Transaction)

It's not all that new but is gaining momentum in the marketplace. To stay on the curve, be sure to experience the code and add it to your marketing plan as it spans across - networking, social media, and internet strategies. If you don't consider this tool, you're already left behind.

Advantages

1. Increased traffic to your site without customers logging onto a computer
2. QR codes can instantly connect customers to you via a phone number or website
3. Instant communication and directives - top activity on mobile devices
4. QR Codes can be created FREE of charge on many sites. Simply create the code and place it on your marketing collateral. Provide a code to be scanned and instantly customers are connected to your website. Smart phone users simply download a QR code reader (Free App) and scan codes as they are in the market place. Try it yourself to gain experience.

Multi-Channels of Marketing

Knowing what to say is easy, it's when and where to say it that takes some thought. You're a customer for many businesses, so take your experience and replicate it in your own business. You know what annoys you and the things you do not like, so don't include it in your marketing strategies. Understand the different channels of marketing and use them appropriately for your target market - you must do your research to understand the buying pattern. **Don't start the upcoming year without a clear plan of action.**

The Channels: web, mobile (QR codes), social media, print, phone, networking, direct mail, email, and texting. **The top 3:** Texting, mobile web browsing, and email

Direct Mail - Keep mailing as the space is shrinking due to budgets. Here is your opportunity to shine and stand out even if its on a small scale or a post card, but keep doing it!

Email - use your own list or start building one. Avoid wasting your time by being stuck in a spam folder because recipients do not like junk mail. Happy birthday and special offer emails are effective and well received.

Mobile (QR Code) - "FREE" and highly effective. Grasp this concept and implement immediately

Networking (word of mouth) - get out and meet people, talk about your business and how you can add value or solutions. Don't think it is ok to hide behind the computer. You must get out and become known. Its still important to be able to look people in the eye.

Print (newspaper & magazines) - can be costly but yet highly effective when placed strategically as part of an overall marketing campaign. If ads do not fit in your budget try inserts. Get some advice in this area if you're not as familiar with pricing.

Phone - A welcome and engaging hello should be your priority. "Please have a professional voice mail message without the background music. Check your hold music as well. Keep it professional.

Social Media - Don't try to sell out right but establish yourself as a subject matter expert (SME). Drive traffic to your website, offer specials and ultimately make the sales. Consider it a courtship process.

Texting - Be careful here. Get permission first. Ask customers to opt in and have an opt-out option. Only text benefits/offers using this method and only monthly or bi-monthly cycles. Make sure its worth saying or you could quickly lose credibility. Be mindful that everyone does not have an unlimited text plan.

Website - Make good use of your space, message, and brand. Your website is your front line. It's the first impression a customer receive when considering your product/service. Make it a good one!

Others: TV, Radio, Billboards, etc. - Seek professional advice.

Program Highlights:

Marketing Assessment/Review—This is a time to explore new strategies and review current marketing activities for improvement.

Customer Profiling - survey your clients to gain a deeper understanding of their needs to increase cross sell opportunities.

Narrow Your Target Market - an opportunity to increase sales and a greater opportunity to understand buying behaviors and patterns.



Marketing is essential to any and every business

it is not an expense, but an investment with expected return.

If you're in need of a resource please feel free to contact us and we will share dependable resources in the areas of: website design, accounting, printing, graphic design and more.

Check It Out!

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increase sales and improve customer service.

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