



DISCOVER THE 7 BIGGEST MARKETING MISTAKES MANY BUSINESS ARE MAKING RIGHT NOW

Easy to digest, bite-sized nuggets of marketing wisdom and practicality... dip in, delve about and discover how you can reach out to your potential customers, capture their attention and entice them to buy from you!

ALMOST EVERY BUSINESS IS GUILTY OF MAKING SOME OR ALL OF WHAT WE HAVE IDENTIFIED AS 7 MAJOR MARKETING MISTAKES.

IT WOULD BE FAIR TO SAY THAT MANY BUSINESSES YOU KNOW ARE CURRENTLY MAKING SOME OF THESE, AND YOU COULD BE TOO.

This report will show you what these mistakes are, and at the same time, what to do to avoid them. We find that awareness is key – once you know what they are, you can then take steps to end the effects; whether it's lost profits, leads and time or frustration.

Simply by eliminating one or two of these errors, you could improve your profit and business performance in just a few short weeks. If you eliminate them all (no matter what the business climate) then your business may never be the same again.

SO, WHAT ARE THE 7 BIGGEST MISTAKES?

MISTAKE NUMBER 1

IT'S YOUR BRAND, BUT ARE YOU REALLY SHOWING YOU CARE ABOUT IT?



There is a great quotation which most definitely applies to branding, marketing and sales:

“Who you are speaks so loudly I can't hear what you're saying”

Never has this been more appropriate than when applied to you and your branding: is how you appear to your customers and prospects getting in the way of what you do?

Poor branding, sub-standard or shoddy marketing materials and out-of-alignment staff are some of the greatest causes of lost clients, profits and reputation (which once lost are virtually impossible to regain!)

SO WHERE CAN BRANDING GO WRONG?

Everything your clients and prospects see, hear, feel and experience is part of your brand. You are also part of your brand. One of the hard facts of business life is that our potential new clients and prospects form first impressions and rarely, if ever, alter them.

If your business relies on people coming to a retail store, surgery or office and they are greeted by grumpy front-of-house staff, battered furniture, dirty and chipped cups and dog-eared brochures, then what kind of impression do you think they will take away with them?

If this has happened to you, how did you feel? Did you want to do business when faced with this first impression? Or did you race to get out of the place?

It's no good having the best product on the market if it is backed up by poor marketing materials, clumsy websites, rude telephone staff, grubby premises and scruffy sales people. What do you really want the market to feel about you, your company and what you do?

Clients and prospects almost unconsciously equate cheap marketing materials with sub-standard products or services. Experience has demonstrated that some of the greatest businesses and business people have been unable to generate the sales and income they deserve due to how they are perceived as a brand.

Branding is one area you should never compromise on; going for what is 'cheapest' is often the most costly in the long run... presenting a poor image can cost you in terms of lost sales, customers and the extra expense of replacing all your branding sooner than would have been necessary.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE 1

It's tough, but is it time to make a non-judgemental appraisal of how you have been presenting your company to your prospects, clients, suppliers and even your competitors? Does it match how you really want to be seen in your industry and market?

- » **Look at what you are already sending out** or presenting to prospects and ask if this is as good as it gets.
- » **Be honest...** if you had the opportunity to pitch to your dream client would you have any hesitation in showing them absolutely everything, including all your staff?
- » Model companies you admire for their branding and professionalism.
- » **Evaluate your staff** – are they portraying the branding message you want? If not, you can do something about it. Most people try to fit square pegs in round holes, but you'll get better results if your staff are doing what they're personally good at and being who they are. If you have a more 'downbeat' member of staff, don't put them front of house or on the phones; think about training or moving them.
- » **Find branding professionals you enjoy working with.** They'll guide and assist you in coming up with an integrated model for your branding, marketing and sales success... and create you a nice, shiny new logo if you want one too! Then convey this to all your staff, clients and prospects. For branding to work to its maximum, there has to be a common thread running through everything you do.
- » **Organise, plan and get focussed on a 're-launch'**. This can have an incredibly positive effect on your business and position in the market; when done correctly, it allows you to make a big impact and freshen things up.

MISTAKE NUMBER 2

NOT KNOWING, DEVELOPING AND INTEGRATING YOUR USP INTO ALL OF YOUR MARKETING



Your unique selling proposition (USP) is incredibly important when it comes to helping a client or prospect differentiate you from the competition... it shows them clearly why they should buy from you rather than anyone else.

Your USP is the distinguishing advantage you hold and as such, it should pervade everything you do through all your marketing, advertising and sales.

Most businesses fail to fully grasp what their USPs are, or indeed if they have a USP at all; and this can mean lost opportunities for growth, profits and focus.

For instance, your USP could be one or – if you're lucky – more of the following...

- » You are the first or the only company to offer a particular product or service.
- » You sell the best products in your industry: unique, patented, new design, new technology, new use of technology, unique packages, innovations and so on.
- » You have the most competitive price.
- » You provide the most comprehensive follow-up service.
- » You educate your customers more than anyone else.
- » You are open 24-hours a day, 7-days a week.
- » You are the most friendly, approachable, fun to deal with supplier in your market.
- » You are the most expensive.
- » You deliver the most rapid results.

As one famous brand puts it, "you won't find us on price comparison sites"... that's what they use as their USP, so what could you use as yours?

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE 2

Firstly; have you already got a USP or USPs? If you have, just how accurately and effectively do they reflect what you do? And are you using them in your marketing?

Secondly; if you haven't currently got a USP then one way we recommend you begin to formulate one is to ask your best customers (especially if they are repeat customers) just why they use you.

This can easily be done face-to-face, by survey or over the telephone.

You may be surprised at the answers received. The key thing with formulating a USP is make sure it is in alignment with who you are and then infusing it throughout the business, including marketing, sales scripts, staff and admin systems. For example, it's no good having a USP for being the greatest product in the business if it all falls down later in the day because your admin systems and people don't buy into it.

Whatever your USP, it must be genuinely unique to you in your marketplace (other companies in other industries may say the same, just as long as your competitors don't); and you must be able to back-up your USP statements with solid proof, or they'll simple be dismissed as "they would say that, wouldn't they".

And whilst we're thinking USPs, just a little word about benefits too... sadly, your customers and prospects aren't really interested in what you do; they're interested in "what's in it for them". So maybe you have things you do which aren't unique, but if you present them better than your competitors – bringing out the benefits to your customers – they'll make compelling sales tools too.

MISTAKE NUMBER 3

FAILING TO ESTABLISH AND MEET YOUR CUSTOMERS AND PROSPECTS NEEDS



Do you really know what your customers or prospects want or need most in the products or services you offer? Are you guilty of assuming you know what they need; or perhaps that you're giving them exactly what they want because after all, they're still buying from you?

But have you asked them lately just what it is they would really like from you?

Because if you were to, in our experience, you could be surprised by how little you know about their real preferences. For example, do they want...?

- » Convenience
- » Size, packs or combinations
- » Variety or speciality
- » Top quality, or perhaps cheap and cheerful would be good enough (we do have a habit of over-engineering things in the UK!)
- » Personalised service and technical support
- » The lowest price
- » Good guarantees
- » Next day delivery
- » Online ordering
- » Authority
- » Pink, blue or green rather than black

When you really get to know exactly what your prospects and customers would prefer... and start delivering it for them... your results can increase very quickly. Knowing what people want will help you to craft a better USP so you can be sure your marketing is "speaking to their need".

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE 3

It's easy to get bogged down in all this – perhaps it feels like your customers have too many, too varied or even conflicting needs – and meeting them is easier said than done, especially if it involves change or possibly even investment; so just where do you start?

- » **Think about what you want to know** – maybe formalise it in a questionnaire; perhaps implement it as part of your sales force activity.
- » **Talk to your customers** – use open questions, explain why you're asking and let them tell you what their needs are.
- » **Equally as important...** talk to prospects who did not buy and ask them why.
- » **Don't try to fulfil every single need** – decide which you can fill; start with things you already do or simple changes you can make to get the ball rolling.
- » **Determine which needs you can't take on-board right now and acknowledge them** – don't ignore them and hope they'll go away, explain you "can't do that at the moment, but have done this"... you'll seem far more proactive!
- » **Keep talking to your clients:** their needs may change, as may your offering, so make sure you continuously inform and educate them.
- » **Promote need filling benefits in your marketing.**
- » **Then do it** – if you offer the lowest price, keep that promise.
- » **If service is most important** – offer the best service.
- » **If quality is most important** – don't offer mediocre goods.
- » **Remember, if you don't fill the needs you promise,** your customers will probably look elsewhere.

MISTAKE NUMBER 4

TALKING TO A 'HERD'



You're an individual, I'm an individual, your customer or prospect is an individual... would you like to be lumped together with a whole load of other people and treated as a faceless herd? Probably not!

But "talking" to the 'herd' is one of the most frequently made marketing mistakes and can lead to loss of message, isolation from your ideal prospects and clients and failure to get the most out of every situation... because if people feel part of a herd they're less likely to take action themselves, as "someone else in the herd will do that anyway, won't they?"

This scattergun approach – sending out messages which hopefully some of the right people might just respond to – is much less effective than a more accurately targeted and focused approach; but to target the right individuals in the 'herd', first you need to know who's best to aim at.

So, who is your ideal client? How would you search them out in a herd? And what would you say to them which would make them buy from you? If you're not sure, then how can you be certain you're saying the right things to get you the best results?

Here at Juicy we like to encourage you to create your ideal client 'personas'; thinking about the specific and ideal prospect you are looking to market your services and products to really helps clarify and focus your message... getting away from herd mentality!

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE 4

Build your own client persona, so you can picture "who" you're talking to: are they male or female? How old are they, how long have they been in the business, what do they know, what do they need to know and what are their issues and problems? Even consider what sort of house they live in, the car they drive and hobbies they enjoy.

Identify your most valuable current and past clients and look for common threads; ask yourself: what are they really buying?

Find out what your customers read or watch and where they go online too, because that's where they'll be getting their buying information, doing their research and finding their experts.

Then write everything as if you were writing to/talking with that person! One to one. Make it a personal dialogue between the two of you, because they're alone with you when they read your brochure, website, letter or email.

If your persona isn't working for you, reset it to something which fits better with your business. And remember, there is power in laser-like attention!

MISTAKE NUMBER 5

NOT HAVING A 'PORTFOLIO' STRATEGY



No, we're not talking investments here – although this is very much about investing in your future – we're talking about your portfolio of products and/or services.

You may wonder what marketing has to do with your product or service development, but actually, that's exactly what marketing at its most

fundamental is all about... many people make the mistake of thinking it's just brochures, websites, advertising, PR and the like, but your marketing should be providing the feedback you need to inform, guide and ensure the success of your future developments.

In business, having a strategy for keeping your offering relevant, appealing and fresh is essential. The theory of product portfolio management can be complex, complicated and even confusing, but we like to keep it simple, straight-forward and practical:

Your back end supply (pipeline) of products or services is all important; these are the new offerings, range add-ons and extras which widen your appeal and keep customers coming back for more. If you rely on building a business selling just one product or service then you could be storing up problems for yourself in the long run and missing out on greater success right now.

And a lot of that success could be built on repeat business. until you identify how much back-end business you can expect you won't know how profitable an ad, sale, customer or promotion really is. For example; if a salesperson costs £2k per month in salary and sells £2k in new business, it doesn't look too good; but if those customers are converted into repeat business, your potential income is much, much higher. Repeat business is far more cost effective for your business than seeking out new customers all the time.

The great thing about creating a profitable portfolio of products and services is it gives you a dynamic, positive, expert image in the marketplace; provides opportunities to keep in contact with your hard-won customers and up-sell them with new launches, promotions and packages; and creates a tie-in (even loyalty) which can prevent them going to a competitor who may have other offerings.

HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE 5

- » Look for logical product or service extensions to offer.

Ask yourself 7 key questions:

1. What do our customers need and want? What would help them?
 2. Is there something we already do which we can 'package up' and promote differently?
 3. Where could we push our capabilities too? Because people don't always know they want the next development... did anyone know they wanted the iPhone or iPad before they were invented?
 4. What are our competitors doing?
 5. Could any of our developments open up new markets for us?
 6. Could we sell in other areas or to other types of customer?
 7. And remember, rationalisation is good too, so what don't your customers want / buy anymore? And why do you still have it on your range?
- » Lock clients into an ongoing purchasing commitment; offer special pricing for upfront commitment, phase your promotions, operate a loyalty scheme... whatever keeps them coming back for more!
 - » Capture customer details; communicate with them regularly; mail, email or phone them with offers; provide useful hints and tips – building relationships delivers repeat business.
 - » Look at other products, services, companies which might fit with yours; be creative and set up arrangements such as joint ventures, licensing or distribution and benefit through offering these to your customers.

MISTAKE NUMBER 6

RUNNING INSTITUTIONAL (CORPORATE) ADVERTISING INSTEAD OF DIRECT RESPONSE ADVERTISING



This mistake can often have a profound effect on the results business get; simply because the difference between institutional and direct response advertising is rarely understood.

Institutional Advertising is marketing your company rather than your products: creating an image, advocating an idea or spreading the philosophy of your organisation, instead of sales promotion. Whilst it can have a place in your mix, it is ineffective as a sales tool and expensive to undertake; it does not create a compelling reason for a potential new customer to favour your business over another and does not direct the reader or viewer to take action.

Direct Response Advertising on the other hand, specifically urges your prospective customer to respond immediately and directly to you. It tells a complete story, gives facts and reasons to buy, answers questions, promises results, solves problems, directs people to action and allows the business to accurately track, manage and analyse results.

In essence, direct response ads and marketing are based on salesmanship, whether in print, video, TV radio, internet or any other medium of communication.

Most Institutional Advertising is completely devoid of a method to accurately measure the effect on generating new clients and profits. These are the flashy ads we often see on the TV... they win awards but nobody can tell you exactly how many new leads they generated or the percentage increase in new revenue directly attributed to the ad.

Direct Response Advertising is the opposite of this. As a savvy business professional wouldn't you like to know the following?

- » How many new leads were generated by a certain ad?
- » The conversion rates to new customers
- » Your sales team's conversion per appointment
- » Which headlines work best?
- » Which call to action pulls most profits?
- » And many, many more...

WHAT TO DO AND HOW TO AVOID MISTAKE 6

If you haven't already done so, convert any marketing which isn't based on the direct response approach to this method; which means including these four defining elements:

- » **A strong offer** – improving the appeal and uniqueness of your offer is the first step for improving response. So take your USPs from #2, match them with the wants or needs of your persona from #4 and reinforce your offer using techniques such as urgency, clear and compelling copy, eye-catching graphics and design.
- » **A powerful call to action** – if you want customers to call you, then tell them how and when to do it. If you want them to go to a specific website or page, be really clear about it. Make it simple and obvious, so it's easy for them to do; most people make it far too complicated.
- » **Sufficient information for them to interpret the value of the offer** – the "what's in it for me" aspect. Make sure you highlight strong benefits which solve your audience's problems and clearly demonstrate why they should buy from your company.
- » **A means of response** – these are called direct response mechanisms; your options range from a coupon to cut and mail or a business reply card to a telephone number, a Freephone number or, for online promotions, a link to click, etc.

Other direct response tactics you can implement for greater results are including a powerful headline, using humour, making your offer time or volume limited, giving a valuable free bonus for taking action such as requesting an information pack or calling to reserve a limited edition or timed product.

Whatever you do, it must be directly related to generating a direct response; after all, what's the point of marketing if it doesn't generate leads?

MISTAKE NUMBER 7

NOT TESTING



Testing allows you to see what works and what doesn't; it allows you to assess how one approach works against another; it allows you to analyse the results and discover which approach out-pulls the others.

Done properly, testing drives maximum performance from every marketing effort in your business.

Without it, you're just guessing and in the process exposing yourself to potential lost profits, missing out on new clients and customers and selling yourself short.

One of my favourite quotes in marketing is; "We don't have the right to tell people what they want, they have the right to tell us"... testing shows you what they're trying to tell you!

WHAT TO TEST TO AVOID MISTAKE 7

- » One sales approach vs another
- » Email split testing
- » Price
- » Headlines
- » Calls to action
- » Website home pages
- » Pay Per click campaigns (Google etc)
- » Telesales scripts
- » Direct Sales scripts
- » Follow up procedures
- » Bonuses and offers
- » Advertising concepts
- » TV, Internet and radio commercials
- » Videos

There are many more as well. The important thing to remember is testing allows you to find an approach which works best; and then allows you to keep on experimenting for even better results, whilst keeping the current highest returning model as what is known as 'the control'.

Never replace the control until you have a proven superior method! Of course there are many other marketing mistakes – and many other ways of avoiding them – but by making sure you eliminate these key errors, you'll be building a solid basis for sustainable business growth and success, now and into the future.



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A Juicy® Marketing Book by Diane Dykes