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How to Avoid Marketing ‘Misfires’

LORI TURNER

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If you're a small-business owner, wearing many hats is the name of the game.

It's easy to push aside marketing efforts when other priorities demand your attention.

And while some of life's most important lessons are mistakes, you might as well learn from other people's first. Here are my top 10 marketing misfires to avoid:

- **No USP:** It's much more costly to get a result from your marketing efforts without identifying a unique selling proposition (USP) – what sets your product or service apart.
- **Failure to test assumptions:** Is your perceived point of differentiation (USP) valid or compelling enough? Ask your customers before investing in it.
- **Shotgun vs. finely targeting:** Segment your targets and prioritize. With a limited budget, focus on a single target until you've saturated it.
- **“New is better” mentality:** New customers are exciting, but finding them takes more time and money than generating additional business from existing customers. Ask your existing customers for more business first.
- **Me too messaging:** You're wasting advertising dollars if your messages are too similar to your competitors'.
- **Poor execution:** To save money, you may be tempted to use friends, relatives or cut-rate resources to execute your marketing strategy. You'll often find you can generate a much stronger return on investment using skilled marketing support.
- **Failure to consistently execute:** Are you a “flavor of the day” marketer? Do you try a little of this and a little of that, not sticking to a strategy long enough to determine its result? Patience, grasshopper; your message has to build through frequency to produce results.
- **Strategy fatigue:** Because you're so close to it, it's easy to get bored with your marketing messaging. All too often, small-business owners abandon a successful strategy simply because they are tired of it. In reality, your customers and prospects could see the same message for years, and if it's strong, never tire of it.
- **Lack of measurement:** Most sales and marketing strategies can be measured in some form or fashion. Add a product code to your offer, or consider using a trackable phone number or unique URL.

That, my friends, leads me to misfire No. 10 – analysis paralysis. Many small-business owners are so worried about making a marketing misstep, they fail to make decisions. Inaction can be more costly than making a misstep.

So, ready, aim, fire!

Lori Turner is managing partner at RedRover Sales & Marketing, www.redrovercompany.com.



Lori Turner



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MORTGAGES	120	331	8,263
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BUILDING PERMITS	0	489	14,827
BANKRUPTCIES	61	283	7,175
BUSINESS LICENSES	14	75	2,231
UTILITY CONNECTIONS	69	717	9,575
MARRIAGE LICENSES	0	80	1,764

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