

# Time for your Marketing Tune-up

**A**ll machines need regular maintenance. That keeps them reliable, predictable and cost effective. A machine is simply a set of tools and systems working together. Your marketing should run like a dependable machine.

I suggest that you tune up your marketing at least once a year. If you do that you will save money and improve the performance of the machine. If your marketing machine is running ineffectively or inefficiently your business will cough, stall, or worse, break down.

If you are overdue for your marketing tune-up don't be embarrassed, just hurry up and get tested. You'll feel much better afterwards. And your business will thank you. Read on to get started with your marketing tune-up.

## **What does a marketing tune-up look like?**

A marketing tune-up consists of performing a number of tests and measurements on your marketing machine. The testing is performed by asking pointed questions. Of course it is important to ask the right questions at the right time. Often this process of questioning identifies the hidden inefficiencies lurking within the machine.

### **Initial questions:**

What has changed in the market?  
What assumptions have changed?  
How have the results surprised you?

### **Return on Investment**

The most important measure of your marketing is return on investment – ROI. It's curious how most business owners understand the concept of ROI when it comes to making a capital purchase. Yet how few measure the ROI on marketing?

One of the most common questions I get from my clients is, "How much should I spend on marketing?" That is the wrong question. The answer they are looking for is a percentage of sales. Why – because that would be easy to measure. But the number would be meaningless.

My response to that question is, "What is your ROI on your marketing?" Most don't know. There is no point in asking how much should you spend (invest) on marketing until you know your ROI. Then you can ask the right question, "What sales (return) do you want?" Once you know your ROI and desired sales then you know how much to spend on marketing.

The main reason most business owners don't measure the ROI for marketing is because they don't have the right measurement tools in place. The second reason is because of some flaws in measurement. However it is still important to measure your ROI.

Be careful of only measuring ROI on total marketing investment. It is more useful to measure the ROI for each marketing channel. For example, measure the separate ROI for each of yellow page ads, tradeshow exhibit, referral program, customer loyalty program... List every marketing channel and apportion the sales revenue directly attributable to each.

Most likely you won't be able to directly link every sales dollar back to a specific marketing channel. Aim to identify the catalyst for at least 80% of your income.

### **Your best customers**

Review and refine the description of your best customer. Why? Because that's the market you should be attracting. Review all of your marketing to ensure that it is talking to and attracting more customers like your best customers. If any one of your marketing activities is not aimed at your best market then either change it or discontinue it. What's the point of spending money just to attract undesirables?

You want to clearly understand your best customers and what makes them tick. That way you know how to keep them happy and how to find others like them.

Some of the descriptors include demographics, sociographics, econographics and geographics. In particular be sure to describe their mind set. Why is this last one so important? Because understanding their mindset will help market and sell to them more effectively. You will know the right language to use and buttons to push.

### **Marketing Effectiveness**

Overall, how well are you sending your message and achieving your goals? What is the single most important message that you want to convey? How clearly can you articulate that message to your customers, staff and suppliers? How clearly are your staff conveying that message in what they do and say? How clearly is that message conveyed by your marketing activities and materials?

A marketing tune-up will reveal flaws in your marketing machine. Here are some typical fouled spark plugs.

### **Branding Worship**

How much of your marketing investment is wasted on branding? Have you found yourself saying, "Well we didn't get any orders but it was good branding"? Or perhaps it's your local ad rep telling you that. If you find yourself measuring and excited about impressions, listeners or hits, you are fooling yourself. Make it clear to your ad reps that you want one thing from your marketing – sales. Then watch them dance and sing like an ad for Bepto Bismol.

**Me too marketing**

Are you advertising at that trade show because your best customers will be there or because your competition will be there? Did you buy that yellow pages ad because your competition did? Do your ads resemble those of your competition? Are you making the same promises as your competition? Does your marketing look like an imitation “Me too!”?

Instead, what are you doing that your competition is not doing? How clearly are you conveying that to your target market?

**Barketing**

Do you clearly understand how your prospects perceive your marketing messages and their mindset at the time of contact? What do they want when they look at your website? What are they feeling when they read your ad in the magazine?

It’s a sure sign that you are confused about your customers if your marketing messages are confusing. Each marketing activity should have one clear purpose and be sending one clear message. If you do that you will stand out from the competition that attempt to say everything and thus say nothing significant. They sound like a dog barking – not marketing; just making noise – just barketing. (Marketing + Barking)

**Purring like a fine tuned engine**

Your business runs best when your marketing machine runs both effectively and efficiently. Jump ahead of the competition with a marketing tune-up.

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IP ©George Torok is the creator of the Power Marketing Tune-up – the quickest way to turbo-charge your marketing. To arrange your in-depth Marketing Tune-up call 905-335-1997

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