Using Digital Media for Marketing Can Be Tricky

Have you noticed more and more small businesses are using digital media for their marketing? We are seeing a mixture of email blasts, email newsletters, automated email response messages, social media postings, blogs, etc.

Today, I urge you to ask yourself about your experience with this kind of marketing. When you, as a customer, get these messages how do they hit you? Think of which ones you read and which ones you deleted immediately. Did that message affect your thinking about that company or brand? Now, let’s apply that to your small business and its marketing strategies.

My observation is that the more non personal the message is, the higher the chance that I will delete immediately. Or, even if the message has my name in it but the content has nothing that I relate to because it is obvious that the message was just thrown out there for “everyone” and the company just mail merged my name. I quickly delete and I even have some “thoughts” about the sending company. And then some of them give me that impersonal blast almost every day!!!!!!

Using digital media for marketing efforts can really be tricky. Impersonal messages may even hurt your marketing efforts.

Alterian in their “2010 Annual Survey” of marketing professionals, focused their study on email, direct mail, website, and social media. They reported that nearly three-quarters said they or their clients tried to create personalized customer experiences through email, the top channel for doing so. Direct mail, website and social media fell far behind but nearly even with each other in the 53% to 59% range.

It was interesting to note that less than 9% of these professional marketer respondents said they did not use any of the cited channels for a personalized customer experience. While marketers may not use every channel at their disposal to do so, they recognize the importance of personalization.

The Alterian study asked specifically about email. Most respondents said they segment their audience and send different messages based on the segmentation. The second-most-popular response, however, was blast emails with basic personalization—which is often not enough to appeal to recipients. Only about half as many said they delivered truly personalized email marketing messages based on individual preferences.

Based on their usage of digital channels for personalized and interactive marketing, most of these
professional marketers felt their brands could be at risk because of a lack of customer engagement. A majority of that group claimed to be taking action based on problems they had already recognized, but some still did not know where to start. Less than a quarter reported they were fully engaged.

eMarketer, founded in 1996, and known for their trend analysis on digital marketing and media, has concluded that marketers who fail to segment and target their messages may be at risk. They observe that brands are seeking ways to be more interactive and engaged with their customers. Rather than pushing out interruptive messages that a targeted customer will ignore or find annoying, many are working to create marketing experiences that appeal to customers as individuals. And they know if they neglect to do so their brand could be at risk. The answer seems to be in keeping the customer engaged.

I urge you to keep your business ahead of the digital curve. Learn more about how to make your messages more interactive with your customers. Also, for more information about participating in the new Small Business Round Table or expanding or operating a small business here in Southeast Minnesota, contact SCORE on our website: www.score-SEMnnesota.org

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