Considerations When Marketing A Niche Product

While no product or service can be a good fit for everyone, niche products have an even narrower market than most. Almost every week our SCORE mentors get asked to help a client that wants to serve a very specialized market. Planning for the launch of such a business can be challenging and requires some special considerations.

If your business is focused on meeting a specialized need in a specialized market (for example, wholesale vegan spa products), the strategies and tactics others use to market their products and services may or may not be as effective for you. Marketing a niche product starts with creating a marketing plan that’s in step with your business plan.

According to SCORE mentor Tom Burgum, “Begin with rigorous market research. Resources like Reference USA and RMA financial profiles can provide valuable information.”

Burgum suggests finding answers to these questions:

- Is the product new to the world, or are others like it already available for sale?
- How can you differentiate your product from those that are similar?
- How large is the niche, is it growing, and at what pace?
- What’s the buying process?

When you’re targeting a niche market, having a detailed profile of the customers to whom you’re selling is also essential.

For starters, ask yourself these questions about the customers in your niche market:

- What are their needs?
- What are their expectations in terms of quality, price, speed of delivery, etc.?
- Where can you find them (virtually and physically)?
- How do they shop for products and services like yours?
Answering these and other questions will help you determine the ways to most effectively attract the attention of potential customers.

Some possibilities might include:

- Networking at events and industry conferences that draw your target market
- Targeted social media advertising (online social networking sites like Twitter, Facebook, etc. offer ways to present ads to customers who are in specific geographic areas, who fit certain demographic criteria, who have specific interests, etc.)
- Editorials in industry and trade magazines
- Radio spots during a program that draws listeners from your target market
- Guest posts on well-respected blogs that customers in your target market follow

Niche product marketing can be very cost-effective because you don’t waste time and money on people who have no interest in or need for your product in the process of reaching those that do.

“Test market your product...your unique selling proposition...your customer value to confirm your assumptions and validate your marketing assessment,” advises Burgum. “Although you can never be 100 percent certain about your conclusions, don’t be a victim of paralysis by analysis. Learn what you need to in order to minimize risks...and then go!”

If you need guidance in marketing a niche product, consider reaching out to your local SCORE chapter to speak with a mentor who can provide ideas and feedback.

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