



Get Marketing Running

Three pillars you should consider to get started

by: Scott Flaherty, Altek Business Systems

When it comes to marketing, you can ask 100 business owners what marketing is and receive 100 unique answers — and each of them would be correct in its own way. Marketing is not something that is easy to define, which means it is even harder to be successful at doing. For dealers who may not be able to have dedicated full-time marketing employees, it becomes difficult to justify spending the money or time on it. If marketing has been a struggle for you and your business, then I encourage you to take a look at the three main pillars of marketing.

The three pillars of marketing mentioned in this article are possible for a business of any size, but the first decision any company should make is in regard to the marketing budget. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, small businesses should allocate between 7% to 8% of total revenue to marketing. This can be a scary amount, which is why the first pillar may be the most important.

The first pillar of marketing is to find a marketing advocate for your company. Look for someone who has a background in design — someone who can work on the “look” of your brand more than acquiring leads or sales. Do not worry if you think you cannot afford to hire someone full time, but treat it as though you are hiring someone. There are numerous amazing freelance marketing entrepreneurs who would be willing to do monthly plans with as few as 10 hours per month. The important factor to look for is that the person you hire understands and agrees to your vision of how you want to market your business — the look, the feel and the message that you want to get through to your audience.

Once you have found your marketing advocate, the next pillar is to create a brand guideline. Many businesses skip this step and, while you may find success early on without one, a brand guideline will allow you to scale your marketing down the road. A brand guideline, which your marketing advocate will help you create, will define how to create the look, feel and messaging consistently, no matter who is creating your ad. Consistency in marketing is a key to long-term success. Consistent branding and marketing allow you to be more recognizable, which means each campaign will subsequently be more and more successful.

Your third pillar is a trackable campaign with an easily calculated ROI. This is where you start seeing your marketing



make you money, but you want to make sure you do this in a way that you can accurately track what you are spending. Think about how you can know exactly how much you are spending, but also how to track the leads that are generated. Something like website leads, Google Ad Words, direct mailings and other easily trackable campaigns are a great way to start. There are many dealers who invest in six-month marketing campaigns, but have no idea if they should renew or not at the end of the six months. Renewing your first marketing campaign should be a black-and-white decision. Are you making money or not?

Are these the keys to success in marketing? Absolutely not. Many dealers have successfully accomplished complex marketing campaigns without any of this, but they are exceptions. As a small dealership, we have followed these pillars and have gone from a nonexistent marketing campaign to a marketing investment that clearly shows an ROI and allows us to grow, add new business and prospect around the campaign. Once you establish these pillars, you can start expanding, growing and taking more chances with marketing. That is when marketing becomes fun. ■

Scott Flaherty is the COO of Altek Business Systems, an MSP and document management company based in Telford, Pennsylvania. Prior to working for Altek, he spent seven years in the automotive industry managing luxury dealership groups, with a focus on marketing, customer acquisition and business development. Flaherty holds certifications in digital marketing, SEO, Google Ads, Google Analytics and email marketing. He can be reached at (215) 721-9355 or sflaherty@altekimaging.com. Visit www.altekimaging.com.

