

Early Stage Marketing

Marketing becomes important the moment a decision is made to start a company. Using the power of marketing right from the beginning provides a fledgling company with the edge they need to establish themselves in their market as a dominant player. Marketing provides a structure for supporting what is often fragile, early-growth as well as clearly communicating the vision, mission, and direction of a new company.

Marketing is not rocket science, but it does demand planning, focus, and the development of a set of fine-tuned, disciplined skills.

What Marketing Can Do

Marketing is a powerful tool that creates industry, market, and financial community awareness for a new company. It plays a key role in branding, positioning, and competing for market share. Most importantly marketing creates and implements the programs that generate revenue from a company's products and services.

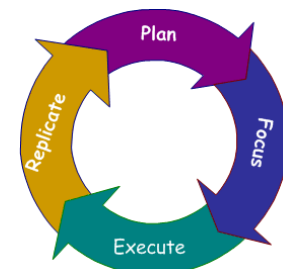
Marketing allows an early stage or emerging company to:

- Clearly know and understand target industry, market segments, industry analysts, media, and potential customers.
- Develop and implement strategic and tactical plans that are geared toward maximizing the company's core knowledge and expertise.
- Create clear and concise messages and communicate those messages to the industry, market segments, media, financial community, and customers with style and authority for market impact.
- Look and act bigger than they are.

The Four Steps of Marketing

In developing marketing plans for our clients, we employ the same four steps regardless of the client. Plan. Focus. Execute. Replicate. Companies that follow those steps, no matter the product or market, will be successful.

While the steps are simple, the decision making process behind those steps is not. The hard work comes in figuring out what to do, how



to do it, and making it work. It is very difficult to break what we call marketing inertia - the tendency to do nothing while contemplating what to do. Even harder is the decision or realization that something is not working and needs to be changed. The ability to recognize and evaluate what does work and what is not working is all part of the marketing process.

Step One: Plan

Companies that do not have a structured plan will not be successful. It's that simple. Planning is often a word CEOs don't like to hear. While the perfect plan is being developed, competitors are also perfecting their own efforts. Even Willy Loman knocked off a few gas stations while planning the perfect bank robbery. Yet at the same time, knocking off a few gas stations was a pretty good plan on its own.

A classic technology story tells of a world famous computer engineer and the vice president of marketing who really believed that when they built it, sales would come. They did not want to invest



in any marketing planning, even though their customer base, the US government, was *changing* the way in which they applied his company's technology. "We have always sold this way, it will continue to work," they said, avoiding the use of marketing in every way possible. Inevitably, after literally going through hundreds of millions of investor money, the company went bankrupt, and closed its doors on what could have been a bright future.

Step Two: Focus

Quality Not Quantity. It is not the number of marketing programs, but rather the quality of each program that determines success. This is where focus really needs to be applied. With limited resources, all companies, whether large or small, need to make choices. We have worked with many large and small companies, whose marketing direction focused on doing as many things as possible. The key to marketing success is identifying a few things that will make a difference and impact the marketplace and doing those few things really, really well.

Focus requires a company to take their plans and strategies and create programs that contribute to generating revenue, media attention, customer interest, and notice within the financial community. Doing "science projects" is not the goal of marketing. Obtaining results from planned action must always be the goal.

Many companies seem to believe they can apply limited resources to five, seven and ten or more full-time activities. You can generate a lot of activity by doing this and send dust flying everywhere. We advise CEOs and marketing executives to ask if all of their marketing activities are really generating a marketing flow in which leads and interest levels can be qualified, targeted in terms of an ROI. If not, then it is time to get rid of the ones that do not work and stick to the ones that do. If nothing is working, try something else. The key here is to *focus*. By applying

focus, resources are expended more wisely, management attention is better divided and programs can be evaluated for success or failure. Doing too much results in not doing much effectively. The real discipline comes in choosing the three or four strategies that have the best chance for success and return on investment.

Step Three: Execute

Execution needs to be sharp, integrated, skillful, and in tune with how the market wants to be marketed to. Once the strategic choices are made, then it becomes a matter of execution. We have seen many excellent strategies fail because of the execution.

Once a marketing plan is created, break it down into manageable pieces and assign members of the team the responsibility of making sure that the execution is performed quickly and effectively. Along with delegating the responsibility, delegate the authority to ensure that the job will get done.

It is important to set deadlines or the execution may take much longer than necessary. Be sure the deadlines are reasonable and that your team understands the importance of meeting those deadlines.

Remember that having an impressive set of marketing plans and strategies filed away in desk drawers is not execution.

Step Four: Replicate

Do it once successfully, but be sure you can do it again. The key to any good marketing program is being able to replicate over time and to a large audience. Even though customers demand specific content and information, the platform must be capable of providing customized information over and over again. It means being able to deliver



information, create interest, and then qualify within a system.

Replication of successful marketing programs saves time, money, and company resources. Design marketing programs so that they are easily replicated, if they are successful. For example, if a direct mail campaign produces a good return on investment ...keep the mailing program and replicate it for other products or services. Experiment with color, design, or tailored messages to hone the direct mail piece for the maximum results, but don't switch over to email or telemarketing if mailing is working for you. If it works, replicate. If it does not work, change it. If it does not work after you have changed it, get rid of it.

The Sooner the Better

Early stage and emerging companies who integrate marketing programs very early on are ahead of the competition. Early implementation provides the structure for strong market positioning, industry recognition, smoother overall growth, and early posting of revenues. A company that is empowered at an early stage, is able to think through their marketing programs and then take decisive action based on their analysis. They know that planning is vital to the overall success of their company. They are able to develop solid plans that generate focused actions, which in turn produce results that can be replicated.

About focusONE Marketing Integration, Inc.

focusONE is a marketing consulting company specializing in strategic marketing and integrated marketing solutions for high technology companies. Founded in 1998, the company focuses on the strategic development and implementation of the messages, methods, and materials for the purpose of influencing the value proposition of our clients and their brands.

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