

Special Report

**“ 7 Marketing
Mistakes That
Almost Every
Builder & Developer
Makes - & How To
Avoid Them”**

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Marketing Mistake 1

Marketing To Everyone

“You can’t be all things to all men.”

I know this may come as a shock to you, but it's true. You cannot hope to market your properties to everyone, even if you think everyone needs them.

I'm not saying you can't be successful doing this. What I'm saying is you really do limit your potential by not focusing on select groups of people or prospects. These specific groups are called "niches."

By focusing on one or more niches you're able to connect with these people at a much higher level, and consequently you automatically gain more business.

I'm sure you've heard people say things like, "This person really connects with me, they really understand my business." This is what you do when you choose to market to these different groups.

Think about it...

What’s also important to understand is that certain groups of people or businesses are more likely to want and need your properties more than others. More importantly your niche must focus on the groups who can AFFORD your products or services. There’s no point in targeting groups who want and need your products or services if many of them can’t afford to buy or pay for them!

A common question I’m often asked is this – “If I limit my market won’t I be reducing the chances of doing business with more people?”

Of course you will, but to succeed in today's competitive market place you need to concentrate your marketing on a smaller number of well chosen segments or niches into which you pour all your resources.

Because you are targeting smaller numbers, the same amount of money you were previously using to acquire clients or customers, is spread across a smaller number, and therefore you have **more to spend on each prospect** than you would if your market was bigger. This alone makes you more successful.

In a nutshell your niche market is the segment(s) that represents your best chance of getting a good return for your marketing efforts.

These niches are critical to you.

Of course, if you focus on a smaller group you may not get the business of other people or customers outside the target group. However, what actually happens is you increase the chances of selling to this group to a great extent.

This is because you are specifically meeting needs and requirements of your chosen niche. You're saying to them that, 'you are THE company that knows about their situation.' No other company specifically meets their needs in this way, and therefore you are seen as the logical company to turn to.

If you can create this bond between you and your niche market(s) I guarantee you'll promote your projects & properties much faster. That's the power of niche marketing. By concentrating on specific groups, you can achieve very high market shares in that particular category because people automatically come to you.

You'll 'own' the market.

You are viewed as the only choice because your project is 'designed' to solve the specific problems of those people.

Not focusing on one or more niches is perhaps the biggest mistake people make!

Marketing Mistake 2

Failure To Let Your Prospects And Customers Know The Unique Benefits They Get From Doing Business With You And Not Your Competitors

“Why should I do business with you, instead of any and all other options I have?”

This is a question that goes through each of your prospect's minds before they choose to invest in your properties.

And, it's a question you must take the time to formulate an answer to. Without such an answer, you become like every other builder.

It doesn't matter what amenities are being offered, your customers can go nearly anywhere and find the exact same (or very similar) amenities for the same price, or perhaps for even less money than what you charge.

Think about yourself, for a minute. Why do you do shop at the same stores or eat at the same restaurants over and over again?

Most likely, it's because they offer you something you can't get from their competitors. Maybe they're closer to where you live or work.

Or maybe you like the way a particular restaurant prepares a certain meal. Perhaps it's the environment or the people who work there.

Or maybe you just feel comfortable... almost like you're at home while you're in their place of business. It may not be one single thing that influences you, but rather a combination of several factors.

Nevertheless, the businesses you continue to frequent give you something special. Something unique. Something you just can't get anywhere else. It's that uniqueness that keeps you coming back over and over again.

If you expect people to do business with you rather than your competition, it's imperative that you have something to offer that your competition doesn't have.

Preferably something your competition can't offer. Something that sets you and the products or services you offer apart from everyone else in your type of business.

That's what's known as your Unique Selling Proposition.

Without a clearly defined factor that differentiates you or sets you apart from everyone else who offers the same (or similar) properties as you, your business will be no different than any other business your clients or prospects will encounter, and there will be no reason for others to do business with you rather than your competitors.

On the other hand, a well thought-out, carefully identified USP can differentiate you and your business and make you stand out from your competition as unique, different, and special, and the business enterprise that's most desirable to do business with.

Marketing Mistake 3

Failure To Monitor Your Results

Results. That's all that counts in business. Results.

Any promotion worth putting your time, money and effort behind, is worth measuring how well it performs. Only by knowing what kinds of results a certain marketing effort produces, can you determine whether or not to run it again, or what you may need to do to change or tweak it in order to make it more effective.

It's absolutely amazing how many business owners don't understand this simple concept. They'll let the Yellow Pages advertising salesperson sell them an ad in their local phone book, let the phone company ad department layout the ad, then let the ad run with no way of knowing whether or not a prospect called or a customer was obtained as a result of that ad.

The ad has no "accountability" or "measurability." So, next year, the same ad gets run, the same results are had, and the business owner continues to complain about how poor business is.

And the same thing happens with his or her newspaper ads, magazine ads, direct mail campaigns, and every other type of marketing they do.

As an astute business person, you should never even consider running an ad or executing a mailing campaign or promotion without having some type of response mechanism to measure the results.

You wouldn't think of ordering and paying for a product... any kind of product, and then not checking to see if you received it.

Yet, many business owners will run ads in their newspaper, magazines, or send out a mailing and never even bother to see what kind of results the ad produced.

I know it's crazy. But it happens every day. And millions of dollars are wasted because of it.

Some people even go so far as to say, "Well, my advertising isn't to bring in customers right away. Its purpose is to keep our name in front of our prospects and create 'top-of-mind-awareness' so when they're ready, they'll remember me."

Well, top of mind awareness is important. There's no question about that. But you can't afford to operate your business on "deferred results."

Each of your ads and mailings must have a definite, targeted purpose. And each ad must be measured to see that it, in fact, does accomplish that purpose.

You'll not only save time, but if you can take a proven winner and make it a little better... pull a three-percent response rather than say, a two-percent response, the difference will all be profits to you.

Running the ad or promotion costs the same, whether it pulls two-percent or three-percent. But, that extra one-percent is a 50 percent increase in response rate. And that one-percent may mean the difference between a profit or a loss on that promotion.

Marketing Mistake 4

Not Testing Your Marketing Strategies

One of the worst things a builder or developer can do is to fall in love with their properties, projects or marketing strategy. Oftentimes, a person spends so much time developing the “ideal” program or strategy, and they get so close to it, that their objectivity goes right out the window.

It’s important not to get blinded by how well you think your marketing efforts will pay off. Even with all the necessary research in place, nothing is certain. The real key is how the market responds to your efforts and offers.

Before you invest any significant amounts of time, money or effort in any marketing or promotional effort, it would be wise to test the effectiveness of your campaign. That way, if it doesn’t work the way you thought it would or should, you haven’t wasted unnecessary resources.

Here are a couple of examples to illustrate this point:

Let’s say that you want to do a direct mail campaign to 20,000 homes in a certain radius around your site location. So, you get the list of homeowners, print up the pieces, have someone stuff the envelopes, affix the postage and haul them down to the post office. Then you sit back and wait for the calls or orders to come in.

But after a couple of weeks, you look at your results and find that you have only received 19 responses. You quickly take out your calculator and figure up that you just pulled a whopping .00095 percent!

Doesn’t sound like a very good return on your investment, does it? Well, it’s not. But, sadly, that’s the way most businesses operate.

But now, let's suppose that instead of all 20,000 pieces being identical, and mailed at the same time, you decided to only mail to 5,000 the first time. And, let's say you came up with five different approaches or ideas.

Now you go to the printer, have 1,000 of each idea printed, and get them in the mail. After a couple of weeks, by monitoring the results, you notice that idea number three had the best response... 12 responses, or, .012 percent.

Not a great response, but far better than all the other letters combined. And, you've not only not spent a ton of money on your marketing campaign, but you haven't tipped your hand to all your prospects with an ad that doesn't work.

Now, let's go back to the drawing board and fine-tune the letter that pulled the best response. Make the headline more attention-getting, the benefits the reader will gain more appealing, and the offer more attractive. Then, send it out to another 1,000 names.

This time, your letter pulls 47 responses. That's a 4.7 percent response! Not bad in anyone's book. And, you've only used 6,000 of your original 20,000 names. You still have 14,000 left.

You now have a "control" letter. By tweaking the letter again, you may find that it pulls even better. If it does, then this letter becomes the "control."

Just because you have 20,000 names, doesn't mean you have to mail the same piece to all of them at the same time. That's what most businesses do, and it's why so many of them have given up on direct mail.

Once you have a letter that is pulling well, keep mailing in short runs, always trying to beat your control letter.

Do you see what has just happened? By monitoring the results and by testing your mailing you were able to turn a complete flop of a promotion into a huge success.

Your testing is never complete. Just because you've run a couple of different tests, doesn't mean you stop testing. You should always be testing something different to see if you can beat your control.

For instance, suppose you're doing a direct mailing to residences and want to know whether you should use an envelope with teaser copy, or a plain white envelope. The answer can be found by testing. Here's one way you might do it:

Split your addresses into two groups; Group A and Group B. These can be arranged by pin codes.

Group A will consist of addresses in certain pincodes and Group B will have addresses in different pincodes.

Group A will have teaser copy on the envelope, and Group B will be in plain white envelopes.

It's important that the contents of all envelopes be exactly the same. If the test is going to be accurately measured, you can only have one variable, and that variable in this case, is the different envelopes.

Now, when your responses or orders come in, simply keep track of the pin codes they came from and you'll know very quickly which envelope pulls the best. (This is assuming, of course, that the various pin codes consist of similar demographics.)

Once you've determined which delivery system is best, you can go on and test other components of your mailer.

Some things that are worthy of testing are...

- Headlines
- Subheads
- Super-heads (or pre-heads)
- Body copy
- Bullet points or statements

- The offer
- Price
- Guarantee
- Whether or not to use graphics
- Which graphics pull best
- Drawings
- Objects
- Pictures of properties
- Pictures of people
- Charts and tables, etc.

If your marketing can't be segregated by pin codes, you can use specially coded coupons or response cards. Use different codes for different variables that you're testing.

Or, you might use different telephone numbers. Some businesses have the respondent ask for a specific person or department.

For instance, if they ask for "Rajesh," you know they're responding to one particular offer, and if they ask for "Manisha," they're inquiring about the same offer but with a different variable being tested.

Such persons don't really have to exist; you just use the names as codes to measure the responses.

When the phone is answered and the caller asks for "Rajesh," you simply say, "I'm sorry, Rajesh is not available right now. May I help you?"

You told the truth. Rajesh isn't available. And, you're able to help them. What's more, you've identified which offer the caller is responding to.

Testing is such an important part of any successful marketing effort that nothing should be rolled out in large amounts without first testing.

Just using this simple strategy can help you maximize your returns, minimize your costs in time, money and effort, and add significantly to your bottom line.

Whatever you do, don't fall in love with your project so much that you can't be objective. And don't spend too much time trying to analyze and figure out *why* a particular thing works and why another doesn't.

It really doesn't matter *why*. What matters is *what*. Put small test runs out into the marketplace and let your customers tell you what works and what doesn't.

Marketing Mistake 5

Not Taking Massive Action

Many businesses have great ideas and plans, but they fail to take action. They're waiting for "things to be right," before they do anything. To some extent, that's understandable.

Considering that most businesses... especially businesses that require huge cash flow, are tight for money, they want to make sure their advertising pieces are laid out just right, that the message is clear, that they're getting the very best deal on advertising rates, and that the market conditions are favorable.

Make no mistake, all those things are important... *very* important. But it's critical that we don't get paralyzed into not taking action because of them.

Back when one of the biggest software company - that we all know about - was first getting off the ground, articles were written about how they used the "Ready, Fire, Aim" approach.

That is, they got a product "Ready" (it wasn't perfect), they "Fired" (got it out in the marketplace), then "Aimed" (listened to customer feed-back, then made modifications) and got it back out there again.

That is so different from the way many builders run their marketing campaigns today. They get an ad, a promotional letter, or campaign ready, then sit back and analyze it for months. Then they may or may not actually run it.

What holds them up? Why don't they take a chance? Why not get the ad "out there" and see what happens?

Who knows? Maybe the ad or promotion will be successful, and maybe it won't. But they'll never know unless they test it to see.

Now, I'm not advocating wildly spending money and blindly running ads and promotions just to see if they'll work or not. You certainly must put some thought into the market you want to target, the message you will send them, and the offer you make to them. This takes careful and calculated consideration.

But any business, even your business, can learn : That the market will tell you if your project properties are right or wrong for them and whether or not your prices are too high.

And, they'll tell you exactly what you need to do to make it saleable to them.

When you run an ad or promotion, if a lot of people respond or take you up on your offer, it obviously worked. If the response was too great, it may mean that your offer was too good, or your prices too low.

On the other hand, if you get no or very few responses, then something is wrong.

1. Either you're marketing to the wrong target.
2. The message you're sending them is not clear.
3. The offer you have made them isn't attractive enough for them to justify parting with their money. (Your prices are too high.)

But, if you just conceptualize the ad, design it, lay it out, and spend months on end analyzing it, you won't learn a thing, except that your procrastination cost you a lot of unnecessary time and missed income.

Better to get the ad out in the marketplace and find out if it works or if it needs improvement. No need to second-guess. Let your market evaluate it for you and tell you what corrections you need to make.

But do it carefully... by testing as we discussed earlier. Once you find that it works, take massive action. Roll your ad or mailing campaign out and let it bring you the profits you've worked so hard to earn.

Marketing Mistake 6

Using Institutional Or Image Advertising

Advertising is simply the process of letting others know about your product or service. Institutional or Image advertising is the type of advertising most builders, large and small use most often.

While this type of advertising can alert the market to the fact that a project exists, it does very little to create a desire in the minds of the buying public to own the property, or at least inquire for more information concerning the flat or the plot.

A better, more effective and more cost-efficient form of advertising, is called “Direct-response” advertising.

The idea behind this type of promotion is to get the reader or viewer to take some specific action. Either make a call, pay a visit to where the product or service can be seen or purchased, or perhaps, to send in a reply mechanism.

Institutional or image advertising is fine if all you want to do is promote the image of your company, your products, or the services you offer.

But when you consider the fact that your client or prospect couldn't care less about your company or the fact that you want to sell them something, it adds up to a big waste of your money... money that could be better utilized elsewhere.

It's true that institutional or image advertising can help build “brand-awareness.” And that's okay for large corporations that have 100s of crores of rupees as advertising budgets. But most businesses simply cannot afford to spend their advertising money that way.

Most institutional advertising is not customer-focused. Instead, it promotes how great the company paying for the ad is. And since there is no

call to action, at best, the results this kind of advertising produces are deferred results.

For the most part, people don't care about how great your company is. They really care more about what a particular property or project or amenity can do for them.

They have their own wants and needs that they want to satisfy, and they will only buy what you are offering if you can show them how your projects will satisfy those wants and needs.

That's where direct-response advertising comes in.

This type of advertising shows the viewer or reader the advantages your business can provide her and let her know exactly what steps she must take to either get the desired property, or to get more information about it.

It's designed to present enough information to give a compelling and immediate reason for the viewer to take some specific action. To send in a coupon, pick up the phone and call for an order or more information, or to stop by your place of business.

Direct-response marketing will bring in more response, more inquiries and more money than any other type of advertising or marketing.

And the results will be accountable, trackable and measurable. That is, you will be able to quantify exactly how many dollars you pay out for your marketing efforts, where your results come from and how many dollars you bring in as a result.

Direct-response advertising is simply the most effective type of marketing for most builders & developers, and effectively used, can bring immediate profits to your bottom line.

Marketing Mistake 7

Failing To Establish And Obtain Referrals

Getting referrals from the old customers who has purchased flats or properties from you in the past, is one of the quickest, most effective and painless ways to build your client base. Yet, most builders fail to take advantage of this important marketing and business-building tool.

In fact, not only do they not have a referral getting system in place, it's surprising how many don't even realize how powerful such a system can be.

Referrals are simply happy or satisfied customers telling others about their positive experience with you, or them giving you permission to contact another person in their name.

Every construction company should have a "system" in place for getting referrals. For some business owners or salespeople, asking another person for the name of a friend, relative or other business associate to contact so they can offer their services is very uncomfortable.

But it doesn't have to be that way. Especially, if you have a system in place to do it. A very simple 4-step system for getting referrals from your customers is:

1. **Earn** the right to referrals by providing exceptional service.
2. **Ask** for referrals from your satisfied customers.
3. **Reward** (or thank in some way) those who give you referrals.
4. **Next.**

Earn

One of the best ways to get referrals is to offer great service... to make your customer or client feel as though he or she is the only customer you have. But offering “good” service... even “exceptional” service may not be enough. People are used to getting a certain level of service from the businesses they deal with on a daily basis. Some of that service is good, and other service they receive is lacking.

If you want to stand out, you must go beyond... way beyond the normal service they expect from, not only similar businesses to yours, but from any other builder they’ve ever dealt with.

The time is past when people compare service from a business in one type of industry or profession to another business in the same industry or profession.

Anymore, they compare the service they get across the board from all industries or professions. They’ll compare the service they got at the car dealership when they took their car in for servicing, with how the bank treated them when they made a deposit. They’ll compare how they were treated by the receptionist who greeted them when they went to their health club, to the way their insurance agent’s staff member handled their last request for insurance information.

The bottom line is, you’re competing in a completely different world than you were just a few years ago. And to be competitive, you’ve got to move your customer service levels up to the highest standards possible.

You’ve got to go way beyond anything you, or anyone else in your industry has ever done before. When your customer is so completely blown away with your service and attention, they’ll want to do business with you again, and they’ll feel almost obligated to tell others about their experience with you.

Once you can see that you've not only met their expectations, but you've exceeded them and they are happy with the service or performance you've given them, you are in a position to go to the next step. There are a number of ways to do this.

There are three reasons people don't buy from you. Remember, item number three, is that you haven't developed the level of trust and believability your prospects need in you in order for them to do business with you.

Here's where referrals come to the rescue. When a prospect is referred to you by a satisfied customer, the trust and believability your customer has, is transferred (at least in part) to the prospect, and your job of developing that trust is made much easier.

Ask

One way is to simply ask them who might be candidates for your services. Now, I know you might feel this step can cause tension in a newly created, positive experience, and undermine the relationship, but if you have a systematic method of asking, and your customer is excited with what you've done for them, it can be as natural as getting up in the morning.

Reward

Once you receive a referral, make sure to express your thanks by giving some type of reward to the referrer. A simple thank-you is often enough. But many businesses or salespeople take advantage of small gift items such as movie tickets or gift certificates for dinner or a department store.

Discounts or free merchandise or services from other businesses sometimes can be a good choice.

Whatever the reward, it doesn't have to be grand or costly, it just must be sincere and timely, and show that you really appreciate the confidence your customer or client has shown in you, and their gift of a name of a person you can contact.

Next

Once you've earned the right to ask for referrals from your customers or clients, then have asked them and followed up with a reward for their help, you're in a perfect position to ask for more help from them.

Whatever you do, don't think that just because you asked and received one or two names, that it's over. If you treat your customers right, knock them out with great service, then reward them for their help, they'll be more than anxious to refer more of their friends, neighbors or acquaintances.

After all, if were in your client's shoes, and you've gotten great service from someone you've done business with, you'd like people you know to receive the same service, wouldn't you? Especially, if you've been thanked or in some way shown that your help was appreciated.

Competition is fierce in the marketplace today, and there is often little difference between competing products, services and prices.

Getting referrals from your clients can no longer be considered a luxury or a "nice thing to do."

If you're going to enjoy maximum success from your business with a minimum amount of time and effort, getting referrals is simply a "must-do" activity.

And the best way to do that is by having a well-defined pro-active, referral-generating system in place. This can make this important marketing tool not only effective, productive and painless... but fun!

So there you have it. All 7 mistakes that you must avoid. I hope you have enjoyed reading this report. But I don't want you to stop at mere reading.

Apply the things you learned here.

Avoid these marketing mistakes & see how your projects sell faster & faster.

Wish you all the best . . .

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