



# 'Sales & Marketing'

## 5 Myths that might be holding your business back!!

### 1. Let's start at the beginning – the problems in the name!

'Sales & Marketing' - Why do we refer to this subject in this way? ...probably because we always have & we haven't moved on even though the world has.

**Sales/selling** – not something that most of us are very comfortable with. Inevitably we think of telephone sales or door to door callers. The thought of us having to do these really puts us off! And of course when we get a cold call we almost invariably want to end the conversation. Not only that – the image of the company whose products are being sold is not improved by what we may think of as a time wasting experience – even though the company may be very a reputable one.

So...**if we turn the concept on its head**...and deal with marketing first, treating the sales process in its proper position ie at the end – we should become more comfortable.

**Marketing can be fun after all** – the better the marketing the less effort needed to sell.

Contrast the cold call with the approach of the technology giant Apple! Devotees of this iconic brand will know that there is little selling done by them – their brand does the selling – it gives the buyer what is needed so that they can't wait to make to make a purchase. Have you seen the queues outside an Apple store on the morning of a product launch?

It is not that any of us can compare ourselves to Apple directly – but we can all use some of their techniques to improve our businesses!



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#### 2. I can't do all this selling stuff

I can't do all this selling stuff – you need to have the gift of the gab...maybe I know someone who has? And Marketing – you need a degree in it!

Neither of these should hold us back because they are both untrue. If we think about point 1 above and concentrate on the marketing first the sales process becomes easier. Having the "gift of the gab" should become entirely unnecessary.

**All business owners will do lots of marketing now** – perhaps without fully realising it. Advertising & networking are just 2 examples. It's just a question of getting a slightly broader understanding of what we need in this ever changing world.

We can look at all of this in a similar way to the way we think about cars. Most of us regard cars as a necessity – we know enough to drive them but our detailed knowledge of how they work may well be limited. Similarly – we need to get just the right amount of marketing skills to know what we are looking for.

Cars or marketing - you don't need to be an expert – just expert enough!



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#### 3. OK - but Marketing is expensive!

It certainly can be but not if you plan your approach, carefully budget and have a reasonable understanding of what is likely to work!

Of course this is not likely to be "cost-free" – but remember we are not talking about spending as say you would with a roof repair. With Marketing you should only be spending with one aim – to improve your sales/profits. Therefore, it will be more helpful to look at this cost in relation to what it brings in, ie it is much more in the nature of an investment.

We should therefore be looking at this spend as a Return on Investment not as a cost. However the critical issue here is to monitor the results of our actions. This is to be fair not always easy to do, but unless we try we will not know what works and what does not. We need strategies to ensure that we end up with brilliant but also cost-effective marketing.



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#### 4. I'm the most important thing in my business.

This is something that all business owners will feel at times. Indeed you may well have heard it from business coaches. Of course you as owner are crucial in your business, spending lots of effort & money in it. You set the direction & can ultimately "pull the plug" on it. Your importance is beyond question – but ultimately are you the most important ingredient?

And anyway ...what has this to do with marketing?

Most people would agree that without sales there is no business – and of course it is your customers that provide the cashflow for the business.

So, in spite of all you do, it seems clear that it is your customers who really are fundamental. We all would claim to know this perhaps – but what do we really do about it?

Is your business really focussed on attracting new clients and then retaining them? What are you doing to differentiate your business from the competition? Have you done any research recently into what others are doing? Who are your competitors?

And probably most important – do you really know what your business sells? This may not be what you think it is!

For example a Hairdresser may think they sell – washes, cuts, colouring – tints & highlights, hair products etc. But is that what their customers are really buying? When you go to the hairdresser yourself what is it you feel when you come out? Yes you have had your hair cut – but maybe your real reason for going was to look better and therefore feel better whatever was actually done to you?



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#### 5. I don't need this marketing stuff!

I don't need this marketing stuff – I know what works over many years & I sell what the customers need.

This brings together a number of issues raised in the earlier points.

Just because your approach has to date been successful can you be reasonably certain that it will continue to be. Can you be confident that your customers will keep buying?

**"I sell what customers need"?** Firstly if we have good marketing in place we should be able to "get the customers to buy" just as Apple do. But also the value to you in satisfying "needs" is much lower than satisfying what the customer may "want". This will be the subject of a later report – but to come back to our car example – I may only need a cheapish car to get from A to B – but what I really want is a say a BMW 5 Series "M" because Mr Jones has one!

From a car dealer's perspective which would you rather sell - the run-around or the BMW? Which will make you the most money?

Ultimately if your business is only satisfying customer needs then you will find it hard to differentiate it. It will be much harder to make profit and to fend off competition and attract more customers. You will only have one "tool in your bag" – that is price. In other words your only real way of appealing to your target market is to offer to be the cheapest. This is not a strategy that is generally to be recommended!!

#### Postscript

*What all this tells us is that looking at your marketing from a customer's perspective is vital but is that so difficult?*

*Don't forget – you will spend more of your life as a customer than as a business owner! Think about what you expect when you buy from other businesses.*

*Think of having two hats – one with business owner on the front – the other with customer on it. You just need to be aware of which hat to wear at any point in time.*

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