



Marketing Weapons

Low Cost Tools to Boost Profits

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You've noticed that tradespeople always carry a **TOOLKIT** to help get the job done. And, of course, a good magician always has a **BAG OF TRICKS**. And, a warrior probably wouldn't go into battle without some form of **WEAPON**, correct? Is business any less strategic?



It takes **EDUCATION** and **EXPERIENCE** to arm yourself with your trusted **WEAPONS** for success in marketing. We'd like to help by sharing some we've gathered along the way. Stuff like:

- How to get more customers to your door.
- How to get those customers buying more.
- How to get those same customers buying more frequently.

So here are some **WEAPONS** to carry with you on your journey of Marketing - may it be exceedingly profitable!

Feel free to hone them to your own personal preference.

If you discover an amazing technique, I'd love to hear about it. Send your comments to marketingweapons@mybigape.com

Enjoy!

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Low Cost Tools to Boost Profit

What are the three ways to impact sales?



Increase the number of new customers



Increase the average sale per customer



Increase the frequency of repeat sales

The following Weapons are organized into these groups to help you choose activities appropriate for your marketing goals.

Increase the Number of New Customers

1. Branding

Your brand is far more than just your corporate logo. It encompasses the cultural and personal philosophies of your company including the psychological and experiential aspects held in the mind of your customers... phew! In other words, your brand represents how people think and feel about your company and that's closely related to how much they're willing to pay. Effective branding communicates with your target market in a way that penetrates their awareness and encourages patronage and loyalty.

2. Targeting

Matching your product with the expectations of your target market is extremely important. For example, you may position your brand as

up-market, but if your target market disagrees, good luck. They may visit once, but repeat business and referrals will suffer. Take extra care to ensure your message reaches the market that is most likely to resonate with your product.

3. Research

The difference between a 'guess' and 'knowing' is research. Research comes in a huge variety of methods from polling the Board of Directors (your experts) to launching a guest survey to asking the 'man on the street'. In marketing it's wise to undertake regular research to answer key questions, determine visitor's wants and needs and how they change over time.

4. PPC (Pay Per Click)

An online advertising tool that is somewhat different from traditional paid advertising since advertisers are only charged if a prospect links (or 'clicks') to their promotion from the ad.

5. Articles

Having media write articles about your business is far more effective than traditional advertising. Why? People aren't as aware of advertising as they once were. We're overloaded with marketing messages (30,000 + per day!) and our sophisticated filtering system (awareness) blocks most of them out. We do, however, still tend to take notice of authorities and experts. Articles are excellent tools for building awareness and credibility.

6. Pricing and Promotions

Still a tried and true. I doubt if people will ever tire of getting a good deal. Try to make them creative so they stand out.

7. Consumer Shows

Consider non-traditional shows to showcase your business. Build special campaigns targeted directly at the show-goers. For example, instead of taking a booth in a Travel

& Leisure Show, consider attending a Gay & Lesbian Marketplace (if they're your target market) or a Social Networking Conference if you've got an innovative message that can capture their interest. Don't just show up with your same-old message, though! Work it.

8. Trade Shows / Travel Trade

The Travel Trade are distributors and transportation companies that work within the sales channels of organized tours, cruises and online booking engines. They include Wholesalers, Receptive Tour Operators, Travel Agents, Bus Companies, Airlines, Trains etc. Meet with them at Travel Trade Shows to discuss business opportunities.

9. Fusion Marketing & Partnerships

Fusion Marketing results when two or more companies (sometimes even direct competitors) choose to co-market thereby leveraging their combined brands and market appeal. This works extremely well if each of the brands appeal to the same target market. An example would be a restaurant partnering with a winery: the winery now has access to the restaurant's clientele and vice versa.

10. Testimonials

This is an important tool to build credibility and confidence with prospects. Remember to make reference to the author of the testimonial and ensure that they're OK being contacted since requests to confirm testimonials are common.

11. Targeted list from a list broker

If you don't have a database for the target market you're going after consider purchasing a list. There are several good list brokers who can highly segment and target based on your criteria.

12. Strategic Alliances

“The whole is greater than the sum of its parts”. Strategic alliances are formed when companies agree to collaborate and thereby create synergy and/or competitive advantage that is superior to each own effort. An example is a resort and a ranch agreeing to work together to offer trail rides for guests.

13. Networking (Offline)

If you’re not attending at least one networking event every week you’re missing tremendous opportunities to meet prospects, potential strategic alliances and fusion marketing partners. Not to mention learning a great deal by simply talking to people. Meetup.com is an excellent place to research groups in your industry and neighborhood, or ask around. Keep searching until you find your tribe – not every group is going to match your needs or expectations. Remember networking is about building relationships, not selling yourself!

14. Networking (Online)

Networking online is a fantastic way to learn, share and grow – not to mention connect with key individuals in your industry and promote yourself. Seriously consider joining LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Build profiles, join some groups and get socializing. You’ll be amazed at the positive results.

15. Community Involvement

Giving back to your community has immeasurable rewards both for you, personally, and your company (usually indirectly). Consider your values and goals then choose a community group that you can get passionate about because this needs to come from the heart.

16. Club/Association Memberships

Self-explanatory.

17. Advertising
(Traditional Paid)

Notice that this is only ONE of the Weapons listed here? Any of you putting all your eggs in the traditional paid advertising bucket are missing the boat.

18. Public Speaking

Great way to build credibility, awareness and 'expert' status. Highly recommended.

19. Website and
Online Presence

Essential.

20. Blogging

What the *blog* is it all about? Tell us about it. You, your company and what you're interested in. Blogs are excellent tools for relationship building by taking visitors behind the corporate shine and helping them get to know you.

21. SEO

Organic search rankings by the major search engines are somewhat old-school with the advent of PPC and Social Networking but they should still be honored. Instead of aspiring to 'own' the most popular search terms in your industry consider putting your effort into ranking high for the terms that support your USP (Unique Selling Point) and special features.

22. E-Marketing

This Weapon is somewhat akin to paid traditional advertising since you can certainly purchase your presence on the web (albeit much more cost effectively), but other aspects of E-Marketing make it very powerful. Ideas include coaching your visitors to discuss you online and post reviews on major travel review sites (such as TripAdvisor.com). Make sure your brand is referenced on important sites in your niche.

23. Tracking and
Analytics

There's no excuse for not collecting marketing data. It's super easy online with free analytics tools like Google Analytics and

just about every marketing application comes loaded with some type of analytic feature these days. Offline, the easiest way to track is noting and recording where visitors heard about you. Consider a CRM (Customer Relations Management) solution to keep more detailed stats on your visitors and marketing efforts. Once you've collected all the data, organize it against your Goals and Objectives and create some KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) that tell you if you're on track. As you get more skilled you'll know exactly what information you need to evaluate your progress.

24. Exterior Signage

Another oldie but goodie. Use it strategically to support your brand and assist your visitors.

25. Street Banners

Very eye-catching and superior for communicating a succinct 'hook' to passersby. It also serves to freshen the exterior of your business for a short period. Over time we get 'used' to our surroundings, so much that we ignore their existence. A big, bright new banner 'wakes us up' and brings our awareness of your business back to the surface (where it belongs).

26. WOM (Word of Mouth)

Likely your most lucrative and important method of capturing new business. Strategies can be amplified by supporting activities that encourage positive 'Buzz' with your visitors.

27. Online Sale

Completes your sales process online. Always provide as many opportunities as possible to close.

28. Barter

Old world economy, new world applications. Seriously. According to Harvard Business School "Trade is the Wave of the Future". Check out online barter networks with

sophisticated systems for trading goods and services Cash-Free! These will be unique to the community you live in so do a search or ask around.

29. Special Events

Always a great way to build awareness or break into a new target market.

30. Product Placement

This is not just for the movies. Think of ways to get your brand into non-traditional places where your target audience will be paying attention... mentions on popular blogs... news broadcasts...

31. Viral Marketing

An amped up version of WOM where the 'Buzz' is so powerful it spreads (virally) on its own. There are plenty of examples of stories gone 'viral' especially with the ease of communication and sharing provided by social networking. Do you remember the eagle's nest where we all tuned in to watch the eaglets hatching?

32. Media

Media (newspaper, magazine, TV, radio, online) coverage of an event, activity, or value story is an excellent Weapon for asserting your business in the marketplace. A little less targeted than other Weapons, but the price is certainly right.

33. FAM (Familiarization) Trips

Search out key media personalities who are a good fit for reaching your target audience and invite them on an all-expense paid extravaganza at your business. Don't forget to include online media and bloggers... these can be gold.

34. Reputation

"You can't build a reputation on what you're going to do" ~ Henry Ford. Reputation is closely tied to WOM and branding and needs to be strategic. Weave your vision for it into your company culture.

- 35.** Photo and Video Sharing (online) Post your own photos and encourage visitors to do the same. Online sites like Flickr, TwitPic and YouTube are great places to start.
- 36.** Podcasts Easy to do and oh, so effective. Go high-tech or low-tech, both have their appeal to the online audience (personally I prefer low-tech!). Podcasts are wonderful ways to reach out to prospects with audio or video.
- 37.** Telephone Demeanor You can do everything right... launch a perfectly timed, gorgeous campaign that has prospects falling over themselves to get to your door, and then they call and get your grumpy receptionist. Game over. Remember to carefully consider ALL the steps in your sales process.
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Increase the Average Sale per Customer

Congratulations! Your effort to attract prospects and convert them to customers has worked. Now your challenge is to make them **loyal advocates** for you. Read on for Weapons that not only have the potential to immediately impact your bottom line, but will pay off for years to come!

- 38.** Outrageously Superior Service Challenge your team to surpass YOUR expectations in great customer service. If you're impressed, your visitors will be as well.
- 39.** Positive Attitude & Enthusiasm Ever walked into a place of business and had the sense that you could cut the tension with a knife? Don't let that place be your place. Foster an environment of positive thoughts, words and deeds.
- 40.** Phone On-Hold It's not recommended to place a caller on hold but if you have to, make it an enjoyable

Messages

experience. Provide relevant, timely information and ideas that can make their visit more enjoyable. Also a great opportunity to up-sell.

41. Up-sell Techniques

Contrary to the colorful vision of a huckster at a fair, instead view up-selling as a service to your visitor. Often, given the opportunity, guests will choose to enhance their experience. They simply need the information, provided in a professional, non-salesy manner, to make a decision. A key location to offer enhanced experiences to your visitors is at reception.

42. Lobby or Entranceway Resources

Provide opportunities for visitors to learn and become involved with their new surroundings by having plenty of information to browse through. Entranceway displays hosted by your Strategic Alliances are a win-win.

43. Inserts at Reception

Provide information along with the room key card or entranceway ticket. Ideas include important information, up-sell messages, coupons, special promotions, fusion marketing opportunities.

44. Customer Service Training

Professional customer service training for front line staff will return far more than the cost of implementing the training. Returns such as repeat visitors, longer stays, WOM, higher average bills.

45. Front-line Sales Training

Similar to Customer Service Training, Sales Training provides front-line with valuable tools and techniques specifically geared for Sales.

46. Interior Decorating

Never underestimate the power of décor to heighten and enhance visitor experience. Color, smell, auditory and tactile sensations are powerful communicators. Carefully build your décor to compliment and support your brand.

47. Interior Signage

The style, shape, color and message of your signage is an important vehicle for sending

messages to your visitors. We're accustomed to signage as a wayfinding tool, but its significance for providing information and contributing to the overall experience should not be overlooked.

48. Smiles and Greetings

Absolutely imperative.

49. Easy to do Business With

Are you? Make sure EVERY step in your sales process is EASY, smooth and professional.

50. Flexibility

Only two things in life are guaranteed – everything else is subject to flux. Your flexibility, how easily you adapt to change, is a mark of your professionalism and when the unexpected happens, visitors will appreciate knowing they're in good hands.

51. Generosity

Giving without intent of reward or recognition. Random acts of kindness. What a wonderful culture to foster in your business! And yes, there are tremendous rewards. Try it.

52. Attention to Detail

Go through your entire sales process with 'fresh' eyes, as if you were experiencing your business for the first time (or hire someone if you're too close for objectivity). Does each step and every little detail support your vision and brand?

53. On-site Specials and Promotions

Always popular and always effective.

54. Packaging or Bundling

A way to encourage the visitor to stay longer and/or spend more. Consider specialized bundles for each of your target markets (ie: Business Traveler's Bundle includes in-room internet, access to the business center, fitness room and a massage).

55. Attire

It's important that all staff and management are attired in a fashion that supports your brand.

Uniforms are recommended.

Increase the Frequency of Repeat Sales

- 56.** Location
Consider your location in the context of your target market and look for ways to leverage it for increased repeat sales.
- 57.** Cards and Postcards
Several online businesses publish and send out cards and postcards on your behalf making it a cost-effective and highly personalized Weapon for communicating with existing customers. Who doesn't like to get a card?
- 58.** Gift Certificates and Coupons
A great way to encourage repeat business and referrals (encourage past customers to share their GC or coupon if they cannot use it).
- 59.** Customer Mailing List
Make the effort to keep your customer mailing list current and accurate.
- 60.** Newsletters
Establish regular communications with past visitors, even if it's only annually. They will appreciate the reminder of their experience with you (and if they don't, remove them from your list!).
- 61.** Building Relationships with your Customers
People do business with people they like.
- 62.** Personalized Communications
Did you share a unique experience with a visitor that's worth following up in a phone call, email or letter? Any opportunity to communicate personally will enhance your relationships, build loyalty and advocacy.

- 63.** Value Story
- Have you experienced a story at your business that touches your heart or moves you in some way? This is a value story – why not share it? Blog about it, use it in marketing material or communications with customers. It will allow others to bond with you and your business, and hey, it may even go viral!
- 64.** Loyalty Rewards Program
- Good customers and loyalty should never go unrewarded. Build a system that encourages frequent visits and rewards those who take advantage of them.
- 65.** Sense of Urgency
- This Weapon emerges to battle the human trait of PROCRASTINATION. “Why do it now, if I can do it later?” Always include a method of creating urgency – not for the purpose of providing pressure, but encouraging action. Studies prove that using urgency (properly) will almost always improve sales.
- 66.** Call to Action
- “What do you want me to do?” Make sure you clearly answer this question in all promotions otherwise you’ve missed a huge opportunity to engage your prospect.

General

- 67.** Marketing Plan
- The backbone and structure of your marketing – without it you’re steering the ship... where?
- 68.** Marketing Calendar
- Organize all your activities in a manner that allows you to see potential bottlenecks and barriers to success. This Weapon adds a good healthy dose of reality to your marketing planning.
- 69.** Constant Learning
- Never stop learning.