



Successful Marketing in Six Easy Steps

Follow these steps to drive successful "closed-loop" marketing and PR program planning and execution – and achieve revenue-generating results.

By Patricia Block

Marketing and sales go hand in hand. In other words, the impetus is there to market something because, bottom line, you want to sell something, be it a product or service.

Some marketers are huge advocates of building sophisticated business intelligence platforms and CRM (customer relationship management) systems and databases, but many do not emphasize enough, in my humble opinion, the basic blocking and tackling that's required to successfully market something. Spending a lot of time thinking about ideal strategies to market your business is great, but all the glorious visioning and whiteboard planning won't mean a thing unless you follow an easy set of steps that help drive successful program planning and execution.

I've created many different sales presentations that describe the "closed-loop" approach to marketing that I recommend, but the basic steps are always the same:

- 1. Identify your audience.** Who do you want to market and sell to?
- 2. Build – or buy or rent – a database of these names.** You want to be able to reach out and touch and communicate with and track each and every contact you make with each and every one of your clients and prospects. At a minimum your database should include name, address, phone, email, URL, and a way to track the history of your contact and all interactions.
- 3. Identify the best ways to reach your audience.** What do they read, what industry and community events do they attend, what web sites do they visit, what blogs do they read or post to, where do they hang out in their leisure time, and so on and on.
- 4. Define the activities and ways and things you can do** to be present, make contact and engage your audience. Reach out through each of these venues so that the opportunity is there for them to notice you and your product/service. The more you can actively engage your audience – i.e., they feel compelled to respond – the better.
- 5. Create a list of programs and a calendar of activities to engage your target audience.** This means writing a half-page summary for each program that explains the What, Who, Why, When and How (steps/action items). Next create a one-page 12 month calendar of these concurrent and consecutive marketing and PR programs, special events and activities. And then?
- 6. Execute!** Marketing is all about establishing, nurturing and growing relationships. The more your targets experience "personal" interaction on an iterative basis – e.g., phone call, direct mail letter or email, meeting you at a special event, seeing you speak or participate on a panel, and so on – the more likely it is that they will keep you and your offering in mind...and ultimately buy what you are selling. Also key: Share content and ideas that are valuable (not just marketing propaganda). This will gain the confidence of both clients and prospects and help close the deal. ***Brand building through "closed-loop" marketing:*** keep reaching out and connecting with your target audience, time and time again. Don't consider the loop closed until you have brought on a new client or sold additional services to an existing one.

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