

# Chapter 9      Marketing & Sales

If you do the marketing well, then ‘sales’ becomes irrelevant because people will simply ‘buy’ from you without having to be ‘convinced’ further.

It would be impossible to cover the whole of this topic in one Chapter. There is a whole book devoted to this as well as the PBCS.

But from the point of view of getting your business started you need to do two things. The first is to set up your marketing system and the second is to set it in motion to promote the launch of your business.

The first thing you have to decide is the outcome of your marketing effort - what you want to achieve. This will be on a scale from ‘awareness’ through ‘engagement and then to ‘purchase’.

These can mean many things but whatever any specific marketing exercise is about the end result you are looking for in the long or short term is a purchase - or as the ‘sales’ fraternity would have it, to ‘close the sale’.

I don’t subscribe to the sales jargon of prospecting and closing and so on as it implies that the decision to purchase is a result of some sort of ‘sales effort’. It isn’t, it might have been in the past but in the information age, in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, the decision to buy is entirely down to the purchaser.

The purpose of marketing in your business is to make potential buyers aware of you, and to influence them to make the decision to engage with and purchase what **they** want from **you**.

Keep that in mind - focus on the marketing and forget about ‘selling’. Engage properly with the purchasers and they will buy from you, especially when they don’t feel they are being ‘sold’ to.

To be successful in marketing you need to deploy a means of ‘inbound’ marketing also known as **Attraction Marketing**. This

does what it says on the tin - attracts people to you and attracts them to purchase from you.

The 'old school' way is 'outbound' or **Persuasion Marketing** often involving cold calling and 'hard' selling. It used to work, back in the day, but now people know when they are being 'sold to' and they don't like it.

## **The Process**

Let's look first at how a potential purchaser sees things.

There are five stages

1. They recognise a need or want for a specific or general benefit
2. They research sources of that benefit which may be different products or services
3. They narrow this down to providers they 'like the look of' for some reason, maybe price, maybe location, maybe something else. It's usually subjective.
4. They make the purchase decision and buy
5. They review their decision, usually after delivery, but sometimes before, and either confirm or reverse their decision depending on their level of satisfaction with what they have received (including the purchase 'experience')

So how does marketing match this 'buying process'?

### **Marketing effort is required at all five stages**

1. You will need to *promote* (not sell) the benefits of your offering to your target market as they may not yet have realised that it is available or that they might need or want it.
2. You have to make it *easy* for them to find you and provide the right information in the right way so that you will make it into the next stage.

3. You have to be convincing about the value and availability of your offering and how it will be delivered and perhaps add an incentive for buying from you - you have to 'make friends'.
4. You have to make it very easy for them to buy, as simple a process as possible.
5. It's essential as part of your marketing effort to remain engaged with the purchasers and follow up with them to continue the relationship. The last thing you want to do is (in old-fashioned terms) 'close' or end that relationship!

## **Lead Generation**

Let's look at this in a different way by looking from your point of view as the business owner, at the 'marketing funnel'.

This starts with what is called 'lead generation' to create a list of specific people within your target market who are even remotely interested in the benefit you have to offer.

It may seem odd but one of the key functions of lead generation is actually to *eliminate* or *disqualify* people who may be on your 'list' or in your extended network; because you don't want to waste time and money trying to convince people who have no interest in or need for the benefit you offer, to engage with you.

Lead generation provides you with what you might call a 'warm' list of potential purchasers and the next step is not to take them straight to a purchase decision, but to actually give them something - usually information of some sort to show what benefits they can achieve by engaging with you.

It's a process of getting them to 'warm' to you and, again, disqualifying those who aren't really interested. This part of the process will also gently describe what you do have on offer before you get to the next step of making specific offers.

This is where it all starts to come together - your 'list' is now at stage 3 of the process - they are making up their mind that they want or don't want what you offer before their stage 4 decision.

Then you make it really easy for them to buy.

You may have noticed that in this process there are some ‘gates’ where people on your list pass through to the next stage or stop there. Some of your original list stay in square one, others move on to square 2, some on to square 3 and so on.

Now you’ve not ‘lost’ all those in the earlier ‘squares’ - you can always go back to them with the offer of a different benefit. It’s an iterative process and whether you do it on line or offline, there’s no ‘selling’ in it!

To make this work though there are two things that you need to do that are vital. The first is to keep records and the second is to **test**.

These are closely related and too complex to go into detail here - complex, but not ‘difficult’ by the way.

You need to have a system such as a CRM (Customer Relationship Management) in which you can record all the marketing ‘events’ and their result for each person on your list and also a system for testing different marketing approaches to the same ‘group’ of people

## **Promotion**

I’ve described what you need to do, now it’s time to go on to the ‘how’ - the method and the media.

I’m always surprised at how many businesses think that marketing is just about advertising, continually placing ‘ads’ seemingly at random. Marketing is not advertising, but advertising is part of marketing, where appropriate. In fact, advertising is only a subset of the larger area of ‘promotion’. As a business you want to ‘promote’ the benefit you offer to consumers or other businesses so that they become aware of it and really this is what we are concerned with here - promotion of what you offer.

‘Marketing’ of course is much more than that, including market analysis, strategy, research and so on. All this is covered elsewhere. This Chapter is about promotion and how and where you do it.

There are three elements to promotion: informing, advertising and promotion itself. There are clear but perhaps subtle differences between the three.

**Informing** is primarily about giving out information without charge, maybe in return for contact details, maybe not. This can be done by using ‘free reports’, tips booklets, videos, webinars, books and live presentations. It’s all about telling people who you are, what your business does, and what benefits you offer.

**Promotion** moves it up a level and can be done in several ways, but usually by other people talking about you or getting you into a position where you can engage with *their* network or sphere of influence. Recommendations, referrals and testimonials come into this category as do things like press releases, interviews and ‘guest speaker’ opportunities. The key to promotion is that it is initiated (albeit at your request) by someone else.

If *you* initiate it for example by organizing your own event or taking a stand at a trade show then unless it’s purely about giving free information with no ‘pitch’ at the end, it’s **advertising**.

As soon as you place the benefits you offer in a context where you are offering something in exchange for money it becomes advertising. Once that element of persuasion is added, however subtle you think it might be, it becomes an ‘advert’ and people see it as such.

Don’t think that people can’t see the subtleties of persuasion, they do, after all its going on around everyone all day and every day. It’s a complex subject, too detailed to be dealt with in full here but be careful what you say and what you write. And importantly, avoid letting your informational or promotional activity turn too obviously into advertising.

People like to be given information by you and by third parties on your behalf, but they don’t like being told what to do or what to think. They don’t like to be told that they need something they know they don’t. They don’t like to be told they are ‘missing out’

on something they don't want. And they really don't like to be told they are in some way inadequate because they don't have something that other people have.

## **Media**

Which brings us to the topic of 'media'- where and how do you **do** all your promotional activity?

There are many platforms where you can promote yourself. The one people now usually think of first is 'social media, more on that later but there are other media and the one most people forget is doing stuff '**live**'.

Business networking, organizing and participating in live events and attending business shows, are all examples of the 'live' stage. This is discounted by many either through lack of results if they have 'tried' it, or lack of confidence to do it. The thing is that if you do this properly (and you may have to learn how) this is very effective. I know of many businesses that have been built in entirety through business networking and different forms of live events. It gets you in front of real people a lot quicker than any other method.

The second and some people would say old-fashioned media for promotion is **paper**. Don't underestimate it. Advertising on paper does work but only if you do it right. It must be targeted and well placed in the 'right' publications or locations. The way that works best on paper, if again it is done properly, is good old fashioned direct mail. Relatively expensive but very effective depending of course on the benefit you are offering and to whom.

There are two forms of **on-line** media. One is through promoting your own website which was discussed in the last chapter and the other is through the hated by some and loved by others, 'social media'.

The most effective of these are LinkedIn and Facebook but the thing to remember about these, other than what was covered previously, is that businesses comprise of people and people work

for or own businesses - so you *can* promote to individuals on LinkedIn (although they'll probably have their 'business hat' on) and you *can* promote to businesses on Facebook (where the reverse may be true).

The thing is though, do not EVER post anything on either of those platforms that could be construed as or interpreted as an advert. Yes, advertising is available on both at a cost, but it is doubtful whether anyone looks at them unless they are really closely targeted. It's not what people are there for.

What they *are* there for is information and recommendation, so that is the content you should be posting.

It should be done regularly but not too often and should vary in content although you can repeat content on an appropriate timescale. There is a lot to this which is beyond the scope of this book. More detail is available in the PBCS.

Finally, we come to **e-mail marketing** which is a descendent of the 'old' direct mail. It is of course much cheaper which usually results in it being 'overdone'. The emails you send out follow the pattern of the marketing funnel and can be informative, promotional or advertorial.

You need a system to manage them, and what is called an auto responder, to send follow up mailings. It can all be written in advance and plugged into a system such as Mailchimp, Constant Contact, Aweber or Campaign Monitor. All have their pros and cons, but I'd recommend as a start up, unless you have a very large list, that you start with Campaign Monitor.

One of the things you need to be aware of with email marketing is the data protection regulations - GDPR in the UK and EU. It's different in the US and other countries and there seems to be a mutual non-recognition of the rules. So what you do in the US may be either illegal or 'over the top' in Europe and vice versa.

The key thing with data protection is that when you ask someone to opt in to a mailing list or anything else for that matter, **you must**

**be specific about what they are agreeing to** -you can't just have a general opt-in to receive any old emails! You must also specify the length of time for which they will receive mails, or this can of course be 'indefinitely' or 'until further notice'.