

## **Marketing Failed Us Again!**

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*“Oh no! The new marketing campaign had a lower-than-expected return. I guess Marketing did not do its job! No more monies for that campaign, or perhaps others for that matter...”*

Marketers hear this comment all too often. “Blame the agency (or the internal Marketing department); it’s their fault!” Unfortunately, it is everyone’s fault, from the sales rep to the customer service executive to the top-level managers to the marketing director to the receptionist. Unless your agency or internal Marketing team understands and values the implementation and tracking stages as much as the fun strategy and creation phase, this scenario will occur more often than not.

For a new marketing campaign to be successful, key individuals throughout the company need to be informed of the campaign as well as their role in it. If they’re not, marketing will become a want, not a need, resulting in a lack of budgets, resources, and focus. When marketing campaigns get pushed to the back burner, the Sales team can no longer rely on lead generation activities, have sales support, or complete their market research. In this situation, everyone will be wondering why revenue isn’t increasing. They’ll think Marketing and Sales are not doing their jobs.

To avoid such a scenario, businesses need to look internally at their current marketing strategy, creation, implementation, and tracking process. They need to ensure that their objectives are taken seriously from start to finish. This means incorporating not only the best creative and copy writing ideas and concepts, but also assigning the right people throughout the organization to dedicate team focus and support to the new campaign’s success. A detailed process needs to be built around the campaign so that the assigned team is properly implementing, managing and tracking the campaign throughout its lifecycle.

Typically, the excitement of a new campaign sparks team motivation, enthusiasm and healthy competition. However, if a campaign is to be deemed worthwhile and valuable, that enthusiasm has to remain and grow throughout the entire execution process. This needs to start with the top-level management and executive tier “talking the walk” and setting the example for the entire company. Without this momentum and commitment, STOP! You will only waste time and money if you continue. A campaign can prove successful in two cases only: if the entire team (Sales, Customer Service, Marketing, etc.) is committed start to finish and if the team frequently evaluates the original strategy to determine the short- and long-term needs and the campaign’s ultimate fate.

Marketing campaigns fail for various reasons. Here are some challenges that marketers face and some advice that will help your marketing campaigns succeed:

**Situation #1:** Internal commitment decreases due to too few resources for the number of so-called “priority” projects on the roster.

**Advice:** Not every project can be a priority, so Marketing needs to manage their time according to a strategic game plan. It is critical to set milestones and deliverables by priority. And, whatever you do, don’t throw a dart at your marketing-ideas list to see where it lands. Have a strategy (also known as a marketing and communications plan) to track priority projects by objectives and goals. And, then when the campaign is launched, frequently revisit those objectives and goals to ensure the game plan is on track.

**Situation #2:** The campaign had frequency momentum at the beginning; however, due to lack of monies, time, energies and focus, the campaign was stopped short of its expected run.

**Advice:** When you are undertaking any kind of new campaign, budget the monies (based on a strategy) necessary to ensure that the campaign has a chance to meet expectations and show a return. Without frequency, your campaign doesn't stand a chance in most cases.

When a campaign's frequency is poor (which typically results in a lack of adequate return), a business will deem marketing, in general, a failure. In reality, it wasn't the marketing that failed. Rather, the human execution of the campaign did you in. Remember: marketing when done correctly sets the strategy to run the campaign a certain number of times to ensure the audience is *aware* of and *recognizes* the message as well as *reacts* to it. It is just as important to commit to frequency, as it is to devote resources to developing the campaign itself! This is, of course, not to suggest that a poor strategy and underdeveloped campaign will do well if run continuously. A campaign needs a well-balanced strategy that involves hard-hitting messages of customer-specific benefits and value and a strong call-to-action close. This needs to be executed both visually and textually using the most appropriate communications vehicles (the marketing mix).

**Situation #3:** The Sales and Marketing departments, as well as Customer Service, were not in sync and informed about the new campaign. Clients and prospects were calling in and requesting information about XYZ campaign and the people on the other end of the phone (or e-mail) had no idea what the clients were talking about. The potential customers seemed to know more about the marketing programs and offers than the company employees themselves, resulting in highly frustrated, confused customers. Therefore, opportunities were lost and your prospects went to your competition!

**Advice:** This means one thing – you just wasted your money and time developing the campaign. Remember: you have only one chance to make a positive impression. When you totally commit to a campaign's success, all facets of the company need to know about it, understand it, buy into it, commit to it and support its needs day in and day out. A campaign on its own only has so much value. A campaign supported by the entire company will bear much fruit!

**Situation #4:** You came up with a really great idea to sell your service offering to a new market niche. Everyone bought into it and the ball (it seemed) started to roll toward strategizing and execution. Then, a month went by and nothing came of it. Then, the next thing you knew, your competitor was offering a similar program and now has championship in that market.

**Advice:** Remember those great ideas you had in the past and all that work that went into making them alive? Why bother if your internal team and process are not in alignment with those great ideas? Don't bother coming up with great ideas if you don't bother evaluating your internal processes to be sure your ideas can be properly implemented.

**Situation #5:** You laid off your Marketing staff and assigned your head of Engineering to become the vice president of Marketing and Communications.

**Advice:** Caution! Individuals such as the head of Engineering are very talented...in their respective areas of expertise. A surefire way of setting your marketing campaign—and the individual—up for failure is to put an inexperienced person in charge of Marketing. It's fine to go to such a person for campaign input, but not for campaign management, creation and execution. Leave that up to the Marketing and Communications experts—people who have solid backgrounds with a list of experiences and proven results.

**Situation #6:** No one is doing what he or she said they would to help develop the new campaign. Everyone is too busy and said they would get to their piece after finishing their other projects. They seemed so excited when I proposed the idea! Now the project schedule has slipped and our budget has to double to account for rush charges by our printer and mail house!

**Advice:** Never start a campaign without a project schedule that details milestones, deliverables and the people responsible for them. Each member of your campaign team needs to have ownership in the process and project outcome. A project schedule ensures everyone is aware that his or her role and deliverables are critical to making sure the next person on the team can do his or her job.

Remember: it is not how much money you have but how you spend the money you do have. Therefore, don't waste money and your time on campaigns that you and the entire company are not dedicated to from start to finish. When everyone is informed and committed to the marketing process, Marketing will be able to do its job efficiently and effectively, resulting in short- *and* long-term marketing success.

For information regarding how you can create and/or improve your marketing process, contact Karin K. Schaff Glazier at Pinpoint Positioning by calling 585.787.3164 or e-mailing [karin@pinptpositioning.com](mailto:karin@pinptpositioning.com).

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