

# What Makes Marketing Work

PROSPERITY PLUS MANAGEMENT CONSULTING, INC.

By Tim Votapka

*"Simple can be harder than complex: You have to work hard to get your thinking clean to make it simple. But it's worth it in the end because once you get there, you can move mountains."*

**Steve Jobs**

## Take Away Points:

- THE TRUE DEFINITION OF MARKETING
- THE IMPACT FREQUENCY HAS ON MIND SHARE
- WHAT HAPPENS WHEN MARKETING GETS DROPPED OUT

When you look at this quote, you can't help but admire the truth of it, and when the late Steve Jobs originated it during a *Business Week* interview (1998), he was referring to the overall structure and strategy that drove Apple Inc.'s resurgence in the computer business.

Now I'm not here to present a retrospect on Apple's ascension. Rather, I point to it as a model for anyone in charge of marketing, because what Jobs said is true. In marketing you have to get your thinking clean to make it simple, and that's a barrier many businesses struggle to overcome. They make marketing far too complex in thought, planning or execution and as a result accomplish very little in terms of gaining mind share or market share from their potential customer base.

So let's take a look then at the fundamentals of marketing and use the

following points in this article as sort of a "check sheet" against which you may compare your own programs and projects in the last year. We'll preface that with two basic definitions drawn from the highly successful Hubbard® Management System.

**Marketing** – The conceiving and packaging and moving of a specific product into public hands. It means to prepare and take to and place on the market in such a way as to obtain maximum potential and recompense.

**Promotion** – To make something well known and well thought of. It means to send something out that will cause people to respond. By promotion we mean reach the public and create want.

These two terms are worth revisiting because they are the two most important aspects to a standard marketing program at any level of investment or

magnitude. Notice that neither one says you have to spend vast sums of cash on ads or broadcast media placements. They simply say what they say and it's up to your marketing manager to ensure his or her program aligns with these definitions. Promotion, for example, is a form of communication that allows your target audience to know you exist, truly understand what you have to offer, and then rely on you as a resource for the products and services you provide

It's a natural law in business that unless you are constantly communicating (outflowing) you cannot expect to be considered when a prospect realizes the need or desire for the services and products you provide.

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*“Promotion gets the reach and exposure you need to even be considered a player in the game.”*

First off, you're not the only game in town, and it's an easy bet no other competitor is willing or ready to relinquish an order or contract to you. Secondly, your best sales reps can only reach out and contact so many prospects. Promotion gets the reach and the exposure you need to even be considered a player in the game.

A client of ours in the New York area discovered this a few years ago when – for one reason or another – they let promotion slip through the cracks. The group had been doing reasonably well with a rather inconsistent outflow of fliers, direct mail pieces and so forth. However when business slowed down, it paid the price in terms of revenue.

After evaluating many options, including spot buys in local and regional business media, the company started distributing two direct mail promo pieces to its prospect base four times a year. The total circulation, or as we say the “number of touches” per flight was 6,000 based on the number of identities collected over time. Obviously that circulation far exceeded the maximum number of contacts the company's field sales force could ever reach. Yet that was key, the circulation and visibility were high and there was frequency of message via direct mail which was a far more cost-effective channel of communication than print advertising was.

Statistically, the firm's sales doubled when compared to the same stats generated prior to the program's inception. The concepts and graphics used in the

promotion were drawn from survey data. The graphics were impinging and the concepts were very easy to get from just a quick glance. And perhaps most important of all, the promo was done with *regularity and frequency*.

This example covers some of the basics of marketing I try to get across to managers throughout the B2B world. You need to understand marketing isn't simply advertising, or that PR is simply getting an ad placed in an annual directory. These are just tactics and pieces to a much larger engine called *strategic* marketing.

As Mr. Hubbard wrote in an article on this very topic “The whole story of marketing is told in just a few words: one finds or strengthens or creates demand.” Well, that's what promotion does so long as it follows some basics:

0. Be a professional in anything you do.
1. Survey for the public and then survey that public with regard to any product.
2. Do your homework. (Study the market, competitors, field, publics, etc.)
3. Be fully familiar with the propaganda line of public relations or public image your company is currently following.
4. Know your product.
5. Establish and use a positioning for every product.
6. Impinge! (Applies to graphic design, campaign ideas, anything else.)
7. Be alive! (Don't compose dead downgrades) A downgrade is something low in importance, value, etc.
8. Direct people's attention.

(This applies to graphic design, wording of ads, placement of ads, color choices, ideas, capers and stunts.)

9. Make material aesthetic. (Know how to use geometric design, color wheels, color depth perception, layout etc.)
10. Be clean, clear-cut, comprehensible. (Don't be complex and muddy)
11. Use come-on. (In advertising you never tell all you know, just tell people how they can get it or find it.)
12. Create want!

These points assume your marketing program has been driven by a goal-oriented strategy and not just by tactics. Many highly talented, very creative people can conceive or design attractive brochures or advertisements with award-winning quality. However if the piece doesn't push the “buttons” that will cause people to respond, it's off the mark. That's why surveying is so crucial in marketing.

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*“Businesses tend to get into a cope mode in an effort to keep the business moving and marketing often takes a back seat.”*

I wish I could say this is the standard way marketing programs and campaigns get underway in business.

Businesses tend to get into a cope mode in an effort to keep the business moving and marketing often takes a back seat, letting it come forward only when a major deadline looms such as an open house or a trade show. Another big reason is even more deadly, the lack of someone covering the job! If that's the case, you have camouflaged hole to fill whether you assign it to someone in house or work hand-in-hand with an outside professional who knows strategic marketing and how to keep it simple, clean, comprehensible and on purpose.

Apple does marketing very well, and yes, the company has the financial wherewithal to run some very attractive campaigns. Yet that's only because the organization followed the basics and did what Jobs said in terms of simplification. Consumers know what they can get from Apple products. They see promotion that seems to repeat exactly what they've said they wanted in new technology. So the company has moved mountains, big time. You can too. Just follow the basics and get help when you need it before your competition takes a few more customers into its camp.

## About the Author, About the Company

Tim Votapka is the Vice President and Director of Marketing at Prosperity Plus Management Consulting, Inc., founded in 2001. He has worked with a wide variety of businesses in healthcare and life science as a marketing communications consultant for more than 20 years.

Prosperity Plus helps organizations build revenue and profitability while improving organization structure using the Hubbard® Management System. We provide consulting and seminars designed to improve everything from cash flow and profits to organization and personnel issues to sales and marketing communications. Our comprehensive approach to business consulting focuses on teaching management how to get a better handle on the business.

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