



Say Marketing, Advertising and Sales

And all people hear is... blah, blah, blah.

Marketing... Advertising... Sales... many business people today, small businesses, corporations and agencies alike, have no idea what's the difference.

The confusion is not surprising, the terms are so over used and misused that they have nearly lost all meaning. Marketing is most often lumped in with sales; as the Director of Sales & Marketing, or saying a salesperson is in "Marketing."

This misnomer has further been strengthened by the misuse of the term and principle behind "Network Marketing" (which has now come to mean selling Amway, candles, or lingerie to your friends and neighbors.)

Sales, Marketing and Advertising however, are distinctly different and have different core competencies. While the three areas should and do interrelate in a true, integrated marketing approach; it is strategic marketing that is most misunderstood and often skipped or abbreviated in the "marketing" process.

What does marketing really mean?

Marketing is the collection of strategic decisions and activities associated with the production, distribution, sale and consumption of goods & services, between producers, sellers and consumers.

"True" Marketing includes many or all the following:

- **Understanding consumers so that better products and services can be offered.**
- **Developing products and services that will meet legitimate consumer needs.**
- **Establishing prices for these goods and services that take into account production costs, market factors, and consumer ability and willingness to pay.**
- **Determining where, how, and through whom to distribute these goods and services.**
- **Developing propositions and messages to communicate these products and services effectively to potential consumers.**

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What does Advertising really do?

Advertising is the creation and placement of messages that call attention to one's company, product, service or other entity (charity, non-profit, etc.), within a group of potential end-users, inspiring them to act in a desired fashion.

Typically this is done through paid announcements or advertisements (also called ads and commercials) on television, radio, in magazines, newspaper or on billboards and now, of course, on the web (online advertising.) This may also be achieved through public relations efforts.

But what does advertising “do,” you’re still wondering; that is at the heart of the problem of “advertising” being so improperly defined. This is evident anytime a client asks their advertising agency “how many more will we sell or how much money will we see in return.”

Advertising should do one or all of the following:

- **Use strategy defined in the marketing plan to provide messages, carefully balancing information and creativity effectively, in order to secure objectives.**
- **Use demographics defined in the marketing plan to identify specific media and place messages; balancing reach and frequency needs with budget concerns.**
- **Build Awareness of the company, product or service. (General, Brand, and Top-of-Mind Awareness)**
- **Attract the attention of most-likely consumers; communicating a desired message and influencing them to act.**
- **Help generate traffic. (generating responses, sales leads, foot and web traffic)**

So, the answer to Return-on-Investment questions like, “how many more will we sell or how much money will we see in return.” should be addressed as sales objectives in the marketing plan.

The percentage of leads or responses (generated by advertising) that can ultimately be converted into sales and revenue brings us to the responsibility of sales...

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Sales!

Sales is the act of selling, convincing a person to purchase; the actual exchange of goods or services for an amount of money or its equivalent, revenue as a result of selling.

Sales, is the easiest area of the overall marketing effort to describe, but often the most difficult area to actually achieve success.

Some of the many factors come into play: (just to name a few)

- **Price**
- **Geography**
- **Supply and Demand**
- **Product and/or Service Quality**
- **Method of Selling and personality of the buyer**
- **and Ability of the Sales Team**

So, it was not by happenstance that the definitions for Marketing, Advertising and Sales above were placed in that specific order. In a best practices approach, marketing should always drive business decisions; by researching the product, marketplace and consumer, devising goals, objectives and tactics as well as strategies for success.

In a truly integrated marketing approach, representatives from all areas of the business should have a seat at the table to assist in determining the goals, objectives and tactics (what is desired, why it is desirable and how to best achieve them.) This will aid in buy-in, comprehension and execution of the plan and ultimately a consistency of message and method that helps achieve real brand (yet another misused and overused term to be addressed.)

About the Author

David Hickman is a Partner at The Still and has over 25 years of marketing and advertising agency experience. He has directed several national ad agencies in New York and Atlanta as a Vice-President, Creative Director, Art Director or Marketing Director.

About The Still

An intellectual property creation, marketing, and media consulting firm, The Still handles all aspects of your company's branding and positioning efforts. The Still provides media metrics analysis, marketing audits, and market research, as well as marketing execution and idea creation. See http://www.ideaDistillery.com/About_The_Still.html

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