



Is Anybody Out There? How to Sharpen Your Marketing Message

Marketing is not easy to grasp and certainly not an exact science. It is very difficult to predict the market response to an advertisement. This article presents some basic guidelines to help get you started in the right direction or show you how you can improve your marketing campaign.

It is particularly hard for manufacturers to truly understand their customer's needs. In many cases the manufacturer is disconnected from their end user, simply because the products go through several layers of distribution before they finally reach the customer. This disconnection often leads to random marketing, which clearly is a very ineffective way to reach existing customers and certainly a less efficient way to connect with new prospects.

The purpose of marketing is to ***create demand among qualified prospects in the target market and drive them to the appropriate sales channel.***

So far so good, but how are **you** really doing? Could **your** marketing approach be centered on the famous "hope"-based advertising model?

- We hope the right people will see it.
- We hope the right people noticed what we sell.
- We hope the right people understand what we want to tell.
- We hope the right people care enough to contact us.

I think we can agree that this hope-based advertising method is not desirable. So what should you do? Good question. Here are four ways you could lose your audience and four ways you can reach your audience

Four Ways You Can Lose Your Audience

1. Have you failed to differentiate?

If you cannot tell the customer why they should choose you, then how will they know?

The easy way to know if you have failed to differentiate your business is to substitute your name with the name of a competitor. If your ad is still true, you need to change the ad. Try to ask yourself what your unique selling proposition is and then mention it.

2. Does your message reflect your customer's reality?

Do you reflect the customer you want to reach in your ad, or do you attract people who are not potential buyers?



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Reflect on the reason **your** customers want to buy **your** product in **your** ad.

3. How many platitudes do you use?

Do you use specific key words that relate to your product, or do you use platitudes such as:

Premier

World leading

Best of breed

Innovative

solutions

Next generation

Leading edge

State of the art

Out of the box

Customer

centric

Ground

breaking

Enterprise class

Enterprise wide

Highly scalable

Highly flexible

Highly

advanced

Fully integrated

The Best

service in the

industry

Be specific when you describe your response time, repair/replacement time, and other services. Avoid the platitudes.

4. Are you specific or do you alienate the customer by having 'cute' approach?

Bigger investments need specific information.

Four Ways to Reach Your Audience

What should **your** message do? It should:

- Interrupt
- Engage
- Educate
- Offer a solution

1. **Interrupt** by drawing potential customers' attention to your ad using an image or a phrase that is unusual, unfamiliar, or troubling.
2. **Engage** the customer with relevant information. Quickly clarify and explain how you can help them with their business needs.
3. **Educate** the customers about how your solution helps them solve their business needs. Also note that some customers are at the beginning of this continuous education process while others are in an advanced state of their education.



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- 4. Offer.** Make the next step easy and low risk for the prospect. After the education phase, demonstrate proof of concept and/or initiate a low-cost and risk-free pilot program

The next time you look at other ads or your own, try to evaluate them on the following assessment questions.

Reaching/Losing Your Audience	Yes	Neutral	No
Does the ad interrupt?			
Does the ad engage?			
Does the ad educate?			
Does the ad encourage the next step?			
Does the ad differentiate (stand the test of logo substitution)?			
Does the ad address the reality of the customer?			
Does the ad have few or no platitudes?			
Does the ad alienate the customers?			
Does the ad reach the target group?			

If you mostly answered yes, you should be on the right track. To continue on this path, you must keep refining your message to reach the cutting edge of marketing your business.

If you mostly had neutral answers, you most likely will not reach your target customer. Your ad must change to direct the target customer your way.

If you mostly answered no, you will not reach your target customer. You have to figure out why.

In all cases the Stanley Adams Group can help you to sharpen your marketing message by providing survey results on customer needs, competitors, and more.

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Henrik Vestermark is an independent consultant and professional who has worked in the wide-format scanner industry since 1988. His expertise includes experience in all aspects of the wide-format and large-format digital capture market, including the development, sales, and marketing for a large-format scanner manufacturer. In 2008, Henrik Vestermark founded the Stanley Adams Group, a consulting group focusing on the wide-format industry.