

Connect!

REAL RELATIONSHIP MARKETING IDEAS



You're Talking, but is Anyone Listening?



by CHAD RUEFFERT

Advertisers invented commercial television to help sell their products. To avoid the ads, someone else invented the remote control, the mute button, the DVR. Advertisers flooded the radio waves with messages, prompting consumers to move to CD's, satellite radio and iPods. The advent of email has led to billions of commercial messages flooding inboxes across the world. To avoid those messages we invented SPAM filters, and even enacted federal laws.

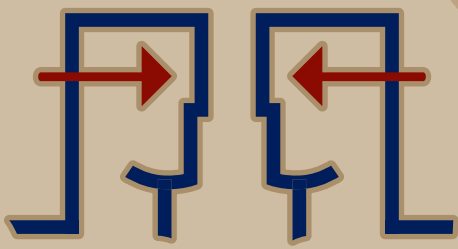
Advertising avoidance is a big issue in the sales and marketing community. No matter what vehicle you use to convey your message, in most cases the target audience is actively trying to avoid exposure to it, and is usually annoyed when they can't. In a survey conducted by Vizu Answers,

56% of respondents said they want to eliminate all advertising. 72 percent said they find advertising "annoying" or "extremely annoying."

Before you stop reading this article because you're currently not spending any money on traditional advertising,

you should understand that social media, relationship marketing, direct sales and networking are not immune from message avoidance either. In fact, just today I have unfriended several people on Facebook for their endless inane posts, ignored a worthless text promotion from my favorite restaurant, screened a sales call with caller ID, and took an imaginary phone call on my cell phone to end an interminable conversation with a stock broker at a luncheon.

No matter how much time and effort you are putting into your marketing communications, if your customers are actively avoiding you, you'll never see positive results. Here are a few tips to avoid message avoidance.



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1 Stay Relevant

You can reach out to your sphere numerous times per month before they feel you are being intrusive. However, each touch needs to have some sort of relevant message. Facebook posters are especially prone to sharing

you if they don't know what you're saying, and they can't know what you're saying if they don't listen to you, and they won't listen to you if you're not interesting, and you won't be interesting unless you say things imaginatively, originally, freshly."

ad campaigns and came to the conclusion that "47 percent of ad campaigns analyzed did not hit a consumer motivation that mattered or deliver an ad message the consumer understood." If you want to generate a response to your communication, you need to provide a motivation to respond and a clearly identifiable benefit for doing so.

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irrelevant information that leads to your connections avoiding everything you have to say, even when it IS important or relevant.

2 Get Creative

The best way to ensure attention to your message is by being funny, creative, engaging, witty, or original. Advertising icon Bill Bernbach said, "The truth isn't the truth until people believe you, and they can't believe

3 Use Multiple Channels

Don't limit your communication to one vehicle. What someone ignores via email they may very well read via the regular mail. Everyone has preferences in how they like to be communicated with—try to learn them and use the preferred vehicle.

4 Offer Motivation & Benefits

Greg Stuart, author of the book "What Sticks", analyzed consumer

5 Provide Value

The best types of relevance, motivation and benefits are the communications that provide true value to the person on the receiving end. That value can be in the form of information or knowledge, something tangible like a small gift, or even just the offer to buy them lunch. The more value, the less likely they will avoid your message.

From the big budget ad campaigns to the offhand tweet or post, every communication you have with your sphere can influence how much attention they pay to the next one. Make sure you put the extra effort into ensuring every time you communicate you're making a memorable impact.

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