

Hit Your Target



Finding the **Right Message**
for the **Right Market**

Year after year goes by. While business patterns may evolve slightly in an attempt to meet market demands, the trajectory remains the same. So describes the typical pattern for many business owners seeking to market their wares in 2018. At this juncture, everyone is very much attuned to the fact that societal expectations have changed. Long past are the days of walking down Main Street to select the perfect product. Now shopping is done 24/7 with the click of a fingertip after review of satisfactory approvals from a host of trusted strangers.

Business owners, especially small businesses, are trying to meet these new expectations. Mobile-friendly websites have been built, Facebook pages are semi-regularly maintained, and email marketing is at an all-time high. While data may be readily accessible for these marketing components, the persistent question remains. Be honest...is anything actually being done with this data? Or is it in a file folder waiting for someone to have the time to organize it? Is it being entered into an excel spreadsheet never to be seen again? Is it sitting on the back-end of a website that no one can even remember the log in anymore? The truest and most effective way to develop the right message for the right market audience is to understand what the market is trying to tell you.

Define Your Audience

“Marketing in general, was all about mass audience. Now, it’s much more about communication to niche targeted audiences.”

—Chris Gee, Head of Digital Strategy and Content, Burson-Marsteller

An interesting story was shared on www.marketing360.com/internet-marketing/how-to-target-the-right-audience-at-the-best-moment. Rory Sutherland, Executive Creative Director of OgilvyOne and TED talk speaker, described how Sheba Cat Food used a single survey to create their target audience. They asked only one question:

“Which do you spend more on, the gift for your cat’s birthday or Christmas?”

If people respond that they spent more on one or the other, they’re in the audience. If they state the question is crazy, they don’t buy gifts for a cat, they’re not in the audience.

Human behavior and resulting purchasing patterns can be unpredictable; but with the ease of social media and digital interaction it’s easier than ever before to define the margin lines of the ideal customer. Get out a piece of paper and jot some notes on who is most likely to be interested in your product and why. Don’t get bogged down yet on how to reach this audience. Let it be a free-thinking exercise. Encourage managers and employees to participate. They are the ones who spend 40 hours a week working to advance company goals and can typically be more objective on evaluating what the product and the business has to offer. Is it an affordable price point? Esthetic beauty? Outstanding customer service? Determining the most appealing sell point will help determine the audience that is most likely to buy what’s being sold.

Analyze Your Audience

“Content marketing is more than a buzzword. It is the hottest trend in marketing because it is the biggest gap between what buyers want and brands produce.” — Michael Brenner

Once the audience has been better defined there are many different avenues for analyzing exactly what their motivations are. The easiest way to begin the analyzation process is to look at the current customer base. Create a buyer profile. What type of restoration do they buy from your lab? Where do they live? How much do they spend? Why do they come to you? Typically patterns will start to introduce themselves.

Looking at your competition is also an easy way to get some solid direction on what it is customers want and how to better market what you have to offer. What does your competitor’s website look like? Do they frequently post on social media? In what areas



*Understand
what the
market is trying
to tell you.*



*Don't let
the age of
technology
fool you into
thinking
an email is
enough.*

is your company different and how can you better maximize upon that?

Surveys, polls and digital advertising on social media also offer options to better understand the target audience and what best gets their attention. Many business owners might email a survey or post online and after little to no response give up. Just as a sales person has to reach out several times, the same applies to marketing efforts. Perhaps that message wasn't crafted correctly or posted on the right site; so now you know that doesn't work. Change the message, change the venue and try try again.

This is where that data needs to play the biggest role. While it may be overwhelming to comb through and make sense of page hits and click rates, the investment of time in understanding your audience is well worth it. Numbers sitting in an excel spreadsheet only take up space on the server. But numbers that hone in on who is going to buy product equals dollars in your pocket.

Build Your Audience

"You can never go wrong by investing in communities and the human beings within them." — Pam Moore

Now that the audience has been defined and analyzed, it's time to get building. This is going to take some time and patience. Word-of-mouth is

one of the most effective ways of building the target audience. How can you get your best customer to talk to other potential customers? You can ask them for referrals and provide incentives. You can follow and like their posts on social media. You can host lunch and learns at the lab or join study clubs. All of these methods still rely on one common denominator that is inherent to the foundation of every client relationship. Trust. Technology has dictated a society where people have eschewed the personal touch. Families at restaurants all stare at their phones. People never take a call if they don't recognize the number. Online chat enables a person to complain about a service provided without the hassle of ever actually hearing a human voice. Ironically on the flip side, technology has also created a society of the utter reliance upon a relationship. There are so many buyer options available, good bad and ugly, and the only way a consumer knows what's legit is to trust the seller or trust the referral. People have gotten burned from companies that lay claim to their value and don't deliver. Be the real person and offer real knowledge, real experience, and real connection. Don't let the age of technology fool you into thinking an email is enough. Digital communication is a great way to maintain that touchpoint with current and potential customers but the trust has to be there first to launch a successful relationship.

Wow Your Audience

"Marketing is telling the world you're a rock star. Content Marketing is showing the world you are one." — Robert Rose

Just as the old saying goes, actions speak louder than words. You have your audience, you know their motivations, you invested your time into building a relationship, and now it's time to show what you got. Once the customer has attained that level of interaction and trust with you and your business it needs to be maintained with actions and showing the audience what you are capable of. Are you delivering what you promised? Consistently? Are you asking for feedback on how you can improve? Are you studying your customer and evolving the business to better meet needs? Are you visibly demonstrating to potential customers how you have satisfied current customers? It has taken a lot of marketing effort to gain and retain your customers, don't slack off now.



Effective Marketing with Social Media

The JDT spoke with Terry Fine, president of AMG Creative, Fort Collins, Colo., to get his expertise on marketing within the social media realm.

In your marketing experience what have you seen that's worked?

The marketing strategy I have found that will provide you with the best return on investment and a higher response rate is a blend of print, web and social. These three aspects work together to create a well-rounded marketing strategy. Print is still vitally important, despite the growing emphasis on digital. In fact, around half of all consumers trust print marketing more than any other advertising method. For that other half of consumers, having a well-designed and accessible website with strong search engine optimization (SEO) is necessary. It will put you in front of prospective clients actively looking for your services. Along with a website, I highly encourage email campaigns with follow-ups, whether that be a print postcard or another email. Then there's social, which allows you to easily build your brand and interact with both clients and other companies in your industry. Another large piece of advice I have is to build a strong relationship based on communication and trust between you and your client. A person is far less likely to switch to a competitor if they have a cultivated relationship with you and your team. Make someone care about your business and you can turn them into a career-long client.

Not worked?

One major issue I notice is campaigns that do not have a personal touch. People want to be invested, and the only way to get them to care is to show them that there is someone on the other end of the line. Going off this, general marketing also does not work. You need to be specific and have a narrow target audience.



How do you determine the best method, frequency and medium for your target market?

Testing is key. You need to test every aspect of campaigns, such as email subject lines and delivery times, and log the results. That will show you what works for your audience and what does not. Every step of your marketing process should include testing. This is one aspect of your marketing process that will never stop.

Are there any specific challenges that need to be taken into consideration when marketing within the dental lab industry?

Clinicians tend to be unavailable. This is a common aspect of anyone in healthcare. They're busy people. They don't have the time to open every promotional email from a company. The open rate for clinician-targeted emails is exceptionally low, only about 14-15 percent on a good day. That is, again, why marketing strategies need to include a lot of testing. You don't want to waste emails or send emails that never get opened. One thing to be aware of is that when an email service provider notices that a recipient is not opening emails — they often will stop delivering the emails completely. The key to overcoming this obstacle is to put out exceptional content. Your emails need to be creative. Your subject lines need to be compelling. You essentially need to throw everything you've got at clinicians in the hope that they choose to use their limited time to



*Marketing campaigns take creativity, time and **money**.*

read your email. It's difficult; but with a lot of testing and specifically cultivated content, it is possible to get those open rate percentages up.

Any recommendations for developing and implementing a marketing campaign when working with small staff/limited time/small budget?

Content marketing is not a sprint. It's an endurance race. It requires a clear strategy, quality content, optimization and multi-channel publishing mixed with continuous experimentation. The truth of the matter is marketing campaigns take creativity, time and money. There is no getting around that. It's a balancing act, so if you are deficient in one area, you'll have to make up for it somewhere else. My recommendation is to make sure you are implementing an appropriately sized marketing campaign that fits the scale of both your team and your budget. With a small team and limited time or money to allocate to it, you will need to focus on quality over quantity. There's this idea now, which stems from the near complete integration of social media into our everyday lives, that to have a successful marketing campaign you must be putting out content constantly. With a small team, this is not practical nor recommended. As I've said, clinicians are busy people; they are not interested in getting bombarded with content,

whether on social media or in emails, which holds no true value or importance. Focus on winning new business by showing how you place value on both your clients and their time. Essentially, incorporate print, web, and social on a scale that you can manage. Utilize print effectively through informational or promotional postcards. Invest in an easy-to-use and professional website. Build your online presence by having an active and responsive Facebook page for your business.

JDT

About the Author

Terry Fine has been influential in expanding AMG Creative's online marketing initiatives for clients utilizing CMS-enabled Website development, automated marketing platforms including, pay-per-click, retargeting campaigns, search engine optimization and social media platforms since 2004. As President, his vision led AMG Creative to become one of the industry's most visible and leading marketing firms. In addition to his position at the helm of AMG, Terry frequently speaks at industry conferences such as Cal-Lab, Vision 21, and the Western States Conference as well as laboratory associations such as FDLA, and the Texas Dental Association. He is also a regular contributor to many of the major industry publications.



MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

NADL will be holding a business management workshop in conjunction with the LMT Lab Day West meeting to take place at the Hyatt Regency Orange County in Garden Grove, Calif. The workshop will be held from 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

Learn more at www.nadl.org/events/spring-daze.