

## **(1) Strategic Partnerships within the Marketing World**

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As ambitious PR firms and advertising agencies attempt to advance their organizations' clout in the marketing world, many have found that the combined energy, resources, and efforts that result from a strategic partnership with another firm can leverage greater development and growth opportunities for both individual parties. These partnerships are established with the goal of achieving mutually-beneficial results, and allow both parties to harness the wealth of the other. Such partnerships often expand the market scope for the groups involved, and can lead to greater efficiency and productivity within the organizations that make up the partnership.

The continually changing modern world has presented marketing firms with a unique challenge, as new technology and media changes the face of the marketing landscape. These trends are in part responsible for leading firms to discover that by sharing their responsibilities and professional endeavors with another organization, existing business relationships can be stabilized, while the focus on new development is strengthened by the support of the other party. Much of this capability is born out of the combined scale of two organizations that have joined together in a strategic partnership.

Such partnerships have made their way to the national stage in recent years, as corporate behemoths like Yahoo! and AOL have partnered existing branches of their companies with competing organizations that hold tight grips over particular industries. The partnerships between Yahoo! Jobs and Monster.com, and AOL and Google's advertising branches are prominent examples of such activities. In both instances, organizations with strong, individual focuses have combined their efforts, in order to create stellar partnerships that exploit the strong points of both parties.

In fact, several high-profile advertising partnerships have occurred within the last several years. One of the largest advertising companies in the world, the Interpublic Group, recently formed a partnership with Microsoft to promote the company's Atlas ad-server. The partnership serves the IPG client base, as it offers volume discounting those who choose to work with Microsoft, and drives business to the software giant. Another notable advertising partnership between media-driven The Nielsen Co. and Moblix, a mobile advertising company, was recently formed to bring analytics to the existing mobile channels belong to The Nielsen Co. Additional examples include partnerships between Hawkeye and Txt4CRM, and consolidations from groups such as Omnicom and MDC Partners.

In both large-scale, corporate partnerships and in the small business world, there are several key factors that make a strategic partnership a successful endeavor for the groups represented. Overlapping goals and focuses make for a seamless transition in shared business endeavors, thanks to the benefits reaped from sharing skill-sets and capabilities with one another. Furthermore, an existing client base makes for a simple expansion of the other organization's reach within the market. In all instances, both companies should understand that the relationship is based on a fundamental give and take approach, which allows both to profit from the professional partnering. By assuring that these necessary aspects are in place in a strategic partnership, both organizations can ascertain that the relationship will lead to profitable and beneficial expansions on both sides.

## **(2) Mastering the Art of Asking for the Sale with Confidence**

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When pitching a product or service to a potential customer, many salespeople feel uncomfortable asking the customer if they would like to purchase the aforementioned item. While some are fearful of coming across as too pushy, others are uncomfortable with the prospect of hearing a “no” from the client. In fact, refusing to ask for the sale is one of the biggest mistakes a salesperson can make when attempting to draw in a new customer!

One of the primary concerns a new customer has when reviewing the product or service you offer is whether or not this particular purchase would be a good fit for their personal situation. As a salesperson, it is your responsibility to lead the conversation you are sharing with your customer. While some salespeople choose to rely on scripted pitches, many customers are turned off by the same tired line that’s been given to every potential client you’ve met with. Instead, your goal is to have a conversation with your customer, where you can demonstrate your confidence in the product you sell.

One of your first steps is to begin ask questions that determine what a client is looking for specifically, so that you might tailor your particular product to their unique needs. It is important to understand the individual with whom you are working, for every customer has a different expectation for the products and services you provide. By getting to know your client, you’ll gain useful insight that will show you how the product you are selling would work well for them.

Once you have begun to develop an idea of what a potential customer is looking for, you want to make certain that they can see how your product could be useful to them. A great way to go about doing so is to ask open-ended questions, which in turn cause the customer to see how your product would be a great fit. For example, rather than asking your client if they feel that what you are selling would be an interesting option, ask what feature is the most attractive to them. In doing so, you will be given the opportunity to highlight an element of the product or service that appeals to your customer.

While pitching the product effectively is certainly an important part of the process, it is also imperative to be prepared for any objections that may arise from the other party. Sometimes a potential sale will be placed in jeopardy by a customer who is not convinced the product or service is right for him. It is important to have the right answers ready for these objections, or you will likely lose the sale and the customer.

Potential objections include excuses as to why the client does not want to consider a product. For example, some business clients may tell you that they are already working with one of your competitors, and thus they have no reason to choose to work with you. A great response to that statement is to use a previous customer as an example of someone who began working with you and is thankful to have done so. A confident salesperson will make the potential client feel at ease, and will also demonstrate your genuine belief that the product you are attempting to sell is right for them.

Often times a would-be customer may ask you to contact them again in several months. Unfortunately, coming back to the individual down the road will likely prove unfruitful, so it is important to show the customer how your product or service can be valuable to their situation today. In combatting their objection with your response, however, you need to make certain that you respect the customer’s opinion and perspective. If your zeal for the product you sell causes you to offend the customer or

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make them feel uncomfortable, they are highly unlikely to choose to purchase your product.

Learning to recognize key responses that demonstrate a client's interest in the product is one of the most important steps in mastering the art of the sale. You do not want to ask the customer if they will purchase something from you before they have become convinced it is the right option for them. This is why it is essential to know your product inside and out. Presenting something to a client should be simple for you, as you should already know how the product or service can work for different individuals in their particular circumstances. When you encounter resistance or uncertainty on the part of the customer, choosing to react confidently with an answer that mitigates the negative statement will work wonders towards convincing your client to choose your product.

Once your discussion had finished, you absolutely must ask the client for the sale. There are several different ways to go about doing so. One popular option is known as the simple close. The simple close means you ask the client a direct question that relates to their decision to purchase. For example, "Shall I draw up this contract now?" or "Would you like me to charge this to your account?" are both simple closes that work well. If your client is content with the product, a simple close often works best.

Another great option is the assumptive close, in which your language shows that you know the customer has already chosen your product or service. Speaking about their future usage or incorporation of your product is one great way to do so. Asking for feedback on the product is another method. For example, "Once you've been using this product for a while, would you mind giving me your feedback on how well it has worked for you?" is a statement that works to close a sale, without sounding like an outright sales pitch.

Ultimately, you have the responsibility to ask for the sale. Refusing to do so is disrespectful to the customer, because it does not give them the opportunity to purchase the service or product you have pitched to them. Do not be hesitant about asking if they would like to make the purchase, but rather broach the subject fearlessly with confidence. In doing so, you're likely to not only make the sale, but also encourage the customer to continue using your products or services in the future.

### (3) Marketing FAQs (Short Question & Answer)

Adam Zetterlund

#### **What content should I incorporate into our social media marketing campaign in order to reach a wider audience and increase awareness of our brand?**

Harnessing the power of social media is about finding content that both projects your company's image forward and is enjoyable to read and share with other users. Creating dynamic content that is both interesting and informative essentially revolves around pinpointing the strongest areas of your business, and crafting out-of-the-box ideas to highlight those areas to social network users. This method ensures the content will be shared with a maximum number of individuals, in turn increasing your online marketing influence.

One essential area some businesses choose to highlight in their social media content is testimonials and reviews of the products and services they offer. Rather than relying on the same, tired sales copy, schtick, and rhetoric of yesterday's marketing campaigns, it is important to find a trigger that makes your content click with the customer base you are targeting. Finding an emotional hook and creating a connection between the reader and the subject matter are two great ways to develop intriguing content that is both effective and apt to be shared with others.

#### **Why should I hire a content article writer, rather than creating my content on my own?**

Creating content for the web is not simply a question of writing well, but rather is a complicated equation composed of many different factors. Crafting articles that are not only informative and effective, but that will also reach a large audience, requires an understanding of how web pages are ranked and cached. Furthermore, content needs to be targeted towards a specific consumer base, and professionally written content is easily directed at those potential customers.

One great example of the expertise a content article writer can provide is SEO technique. SEO, or search engine optimization, harnesses the power of keywords and phrases. Search engines categorize web pages based on how well they relate to a specific topic, and incorporating those keywords and phrases effectively is an important expertise that content article writers can provide. By coupling superior writing abilities and online marketing techniques together, our freelancers are able to provide a polished final product that will reach your customers more efficiently.

#### **I'm all out of blog post ideas. What can I do to make my blog more interesting to existing readers, while pulling in a greater audience?**

Keeping a blog's content fresh and relevant can be a challenge, but consider using some of these effective techniques to continually keep your blog updated with well-targeted content.

- \* Explore the comment section of your blog - Faithful readers are likely already leaving helpful feedback and ideas on what they'd like to read about. Why not capitalize on this information by catering to what your readers are after?

- \* Have active discussions with your readers - Online forums and discussion boards are a great way to keep in touch with your readers, and learn more about their specific interests and subject matter that is

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interesting to them. This works to both generate new ideas and forge stronger bonds with existing readers.

\*Read similar blogs to your own - While it is never a good idea to copy another's content, reading blogs that cover similar subject matters often broach subjects without explaining them in detail. Use these opportunities to see what information is not yet available, and write on these topics.