

Title:

Is It Time To Kill Your Marketing Program?

Word Count:

909

Summary:

Ouch . . . sounds pretty drastic I know, but . . .
If you've been in business for any length of time, you've no doubt been faced with the question, "Should I dump this marketing program or should I wait a little longer for it to start producing results?"

Keywords:

marketing plan, tracking, small business marketing

Article Body:

Ouch . . . sounds pretty drastic I know, but . . .

If you've been in business for any length of time, you've no doubt been faced with the question, "Should I dump this marketing program or should I wait a little longer for it to start producing results?"

Even if you're new in business, you may have tried a new way to market your business and with lukewarm results found yourself wondering how long you should stick with it before giving up and trying something else.

It's the age-old question of "When is the right time to put a marketing program out to pasture?"

This reminds me of my advertising agency days. We'd create a new ad campaign and run it for awhile, and because we (and the client) were exposed to that campaign day-in and day-out, we'd all tire of it quickly.

Knowing when to hold and when to fold

Often, the client would want a new campaign and we'd have to remind them their prospects hadn't seen the campaign nearly as much as we all had, and that it was best to let the campaign keep running.

How do you know what to do?

Just how do you know when it's time to let an ad campaign or marketing program keep on running and when it's time to try something new?

The answer is very simple.

Look at your results

It's time to make a change when the marketing is no longer producing results. And by results I mean, it's no longer moving you toward your objective.

Are you achieving your objective?

Every marketing activity should have a specific objective — that is what you hope to achieve. Your objective may be to generate a certain number of phone calls, or web site hits, or even sales.

Tracking your results will tell you

You'll want to track the results of your marketing activities from day one, so you'll know how well they are producing and you can monitor their trends.

For example, you may get consistent results for weeks, months or even years. In this case, my motto is "If it ain't broke, don't fix it!" Don't be tempted to make a change just because you're tired of it. If it's working, leave it be.

Are your results on the decline?

However, if your tracking shows you are steadily getting fewer and fewer responses (e.g. phone calls, web site visits, sales) it's probably time to freshen up that marketing or start anew.

Or, maybe your results never really materialized

And, if your marketing program has never really generated the response you are looking for, even if it's relatively young, it's also time to take a good hard look at reworking it to make it more effective.

Just be careful not to give up too soon

You do need to give your marketing time to work – most people will not act after seeing your message just once, but rather need to be exposed to it repeatedly before taking action (industry standard is between three and seven times).

Having said that, if you've given your marketing ample time to produce results and nothing's happening, odds are you missed the mark and either the message or the medium is off.

Is your message missing the boat?

If your message is off, it means you are not effectively speaking to your prospects or hitting their "hot buttons." Do you really understand their problem or challenge? And does your marketing speak clearly to that issue and position your product or service as the best solution?

Or are you missing your audience?

If the medium is off, it means you have put your marketing message in a place where your prospects aren't likely to see it. It's important to understand your prospects and where and how you can best reach them so you can put your messages in those places.

After all, if they don't see your message, they can't respond.

What type of response rates can you expect?

For direct marketing efforts a response rate between 1% and 3% is considered good. On the web a 1% conversion rate is the norm, so if you're doing better than that consider yourself lucky.

You can expect a higher response rate from your current subscribers or clients because they already know and trust you. As far as new mailing list subscribers, expect between 5% and 15% of your web site visitors to join your mailing list.

The key is to make sure your marketing is reaching enough people so these response rates yield results you can be happy with.

If you've given it time and it's still not producing . . .

If you've given your marketing program time to work and nothing much is happening, or if your results are on the decline, it's time to kill that program. Or, at least, to give it a makeover.

Starting fresh can breathe new life into your business

Consider starting over with a fresh new approach, a new message, and some new mediums. Make sure your new marketing program is grounded in solid marketing

strategy. The 10stepmarketing System is a simple way to be sure of this – and you don't need a marketing degree to figure it out! Learn more about this simple system at <http://www.10stepmarketing.com>

(C) Copyright 2005 Debbie LaChusa