

Top 10 MOST IGNORED Rules of Marketing

#9 - Prospects and Customers Have Tuned Out

*"Everybody's talkin' at me.
I don't hear a word they're sayin'."*

Fred Neil – *Everybody's Talkin' (Echoes of My Mind)*

As a small or medium sized business owner, you already understand that you can't get business by "building a better mousetrap." You know that "if you build it, they **WON'T** come." No matter how good your product or service is, the only way to get people to buy it is to sell it – or nobody will give a hoot.

Unfortunately, when it comes to selling, most businesses put together marketing campaigns that are nothing but advertisements. They advertise in the newspaper, on TV and radio, through the mail, in coupon packs, and even on the internet. But there's a HUGE problem with advertising...

Your audience is fed up with it.

Americans are exposed to over 6000 advertising pitches every day. They've had it up to here and they're not taking anymore. They'll do almost anything to turn off the advertising or to block it out entirely. They TIVO their favorite programs so they can skip over the commercials. Their phone numbers are on the "Do not call" list. They keep shredders next to the doorway – ready for the day's junk mail. Nope... they definitely don't want advertising. And, to drive that point home, let me list a few facts from the Yankelovich Partners' research on advertising:

- About **60% of consumers have a much more negative opinion of marketing** and advertising now than they did a few years ago.
- 61 percent feel the amount of marketing and advertising is **out of control**.
- Around 65% feel constantly bombarded with **too much marketing and advertising**.
- 61% feel that marketers and advertisers **don't treat consumers with respect**

Your audience can spot an ad from a long way off and when they do they mentally turn tail and run. No matter how great your message is – they'll never hear it. Believe me, your prospects and customers don't want no stinkin' advertising!

What they want is **information** – information they can use to help them make the right choices. What they want is to be **entertained** – with stories that make them laugh, make them cry, or make them cheer. They want to find out how others got to where they want to be. Advertisements don't give that to them... but your marketing can.

Each one of your marketing pieces is like a salesman making a call on your prospects and customers. According to author Harry Beckwith (What Clients Love), the best salespeople sell themselves first. That's because customers like to associate with what I'll call an "attractive" character. "Attractive" - not like in great bone structure, perfect smile, and flawless complexion attractive. It's more like this-is-someone-that-makes-

me-comfortable attractive.

Subway found their "attractive" character in the formerly 425 pound Jared Fogel who lost 240 pounds on a "Subway" diet.

Some of the most memorable Wendy's ads featured the late Wendy's owner and classic "regular guy" Dave Thomas.

Blendtec was a nameless, faceless manufacturer of blenders until company founder and CEO Tom Dickson donned a lab coat and started blending popular items (iPhones, TV remotes, digital cameras, etc.) in his company's blenders. Now Blendtec owns the "top spot" in the minds of millions of consumers who've watched the company's "Will It Blend" YouTube videos.

GEICO Insurance spends millions on campaigns featuring a little green lizard as their attractive character. "As computer animation got better and as we got to know the character better, we did a few things," says Steve Bassett, creative director at The Martin Agency. "**We wanted to make him a little more guy-next-door.** And he looks a lot more real than he's looked before." [USA Today – emphasis mine]

Find your attractive character. It can be you, a customer, an employee, or even a character made up entirely from your imagination. But finding one will help you get the attention of your tuned out audience.

Once you've found your business's attractive character then you'll need to have that character deliver information to your audience.

- Jared let us know how **healthy** Subway sandwiches were
- Dave told us about the **tasty ingredients** that made up Wendy's latest offering
- GEICO's gecko nearly always gives us a **little factoid** about the company
- Years ago Shell taught us about **Platformate** and jumped to #1 in sales

Your prospects and customers want information and your attractive character will give it to them, but it must be done in a unique and entertaining way.

Dave Thomas was so uniquely bad as a pitchman he was good. Shell told it's Platformate story with entertaining and captivating "tests" comparing cars running on gas with and without the Platformate additive. It's surprisingly entertaining to watch a Blendtec blender grind a digital SLR into dust. And, GEICO... well, I don't think you can do "unique" any better than with a 5" tall, lime-green, Cockney-accented, talking gecko.

Your audience is looking for information they can use to make their lives better – to make them feel more comfortable. When you deliver that information, and do it in a uniquely creative and entertaining way, your campaigns stop looking like advertisements and begin to resemble something your audience wants, something they can use, something they enjoy, and something they're willing to come to your business to get more of.

Keep the flow of information going between your attractive character and your prospects and customers. If you can do that, your "tuned out" audience will "turn into" an army of loyal, happy, paying customers.