

Get Your Marketing Message Out

You can have the greatest product or service, but if no one knows you're there, your business will fail.

That's a harsh statement to make, but it is true. The business world is littered with great ideas that did not succeed because the businesses had no buyers. A common reason for the lack of buying was that people did not know the product or service even existed.

"Marketing is key to business success," says Glenn Muske, the North Dakota State University Extension Service's rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist. "I don't mean selling, but the broader aspect of marketing."

He continued, "Marketing must be integrated into every facet of building and growing your business."

Today much is said about the rise of online marketing. However, online marketing should be just one element of a marketing plan.

Other marketing tools include: newspapers, radio, fliers, word of mouth, networking and testimonials. The tools must include local media at some level, as well as the media that specifically reaches the business owner's target market.

"It is important for small-business owners to make and develop a marketing plan," says (Insert name and title) of (Insert county). "There are so many avenues of marketing and within each one, so many ways to approach marketing. A business owner must consider what is best for his or her business, and that can vary by each product or service sold."

Three elements are crucial in whatever marketing plan and strategy the small-business owner develops. The message must be focused, remain consistent, and, most importantly, it must be repeated constantly.

Today's consumer is touched by 5,000 advertising messages each day, or about 200 an hour. Of those, the average person can recall just one advertising message from the last hour. Why do we see major companies advertising over and over? Because the consumer may not have heard the message among the competition's ads. Plus, as humans, we forget very quickly.

Thus, with that number of messages bombarding consumers day in and day out, being repetitive in getting your business in front of people as a reminder is crucial.

"Be cautious, though, in how you approach this," reminded Muske. "You can't have the same message on the same media over and over. Think about how you can reframe it. Change the media you use. Do things to keep it fresh."

Marketing is a challenge. But like most business problems, it is a challenge that the savvy business owner can overcome. Know your strengths, form your message, and keep it and your business in front of your target audience.

For more information on marketing for your small business, contact your local Extension Service office at [insert phone number and email address]. Also visit NDSU's small-business support website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness and sign up for the monthly newsletter. Or check out Facebook at www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz or Twitter at @gmuske. Another online resource is www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship.

You also can get help from your local chamber of commerce, as well as the Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives.

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For more information, contact glenn.muske@ndsu.edu or call (701) 328-9718. You also can visit our website, www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness.