

Small-business Savvy: Marketing is Not a Numbers Game

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How many hits did you get?

If you have read many articles on marketing, especially those talking about social media marketing, you may come away with the idea that marketing is a numbers game. The more people who “like” your page, the better your marketing effort.

The idea of counting is not new. Traditional marketing often looked at how many “eyes” saw your advertisement or how many people subscribed to a newspaper or magazine. For radio and television, the numbers were about how many listeners a station had or how many people were listening to a certain station.

Knowing your numbers is useful. The more people who see your message, the better your chances of them doing something. We hope that means buying.

While you can spend a lot of money getting your marketing message in front of a large number of people, is that money well spent?

So before launching your marketing campaign, first define your goal. Is it awareness, building your brand, making a sale or something else? Remember that this goal needs to be consistent in all your marketing.

Then you need to understand, in as much detail as possible, exactly who is your target market.

In just a few weeks, many of us will be watching the Super Bowl, where a 30-second advertisement might sell for nearly \$5 million, but it should get you in front of more than 110 million viewers.

What an opportunity, right? The problem is, does your target audience watch the Super Bowl? (This might be a poor example because many people watch it just to see the ads, but you get the idea.)

You also need to determine if your message does what you want. Run some test messages on a variety of platforms to see how people respond before spending your entire marketing budget all at one time. Understand that each marketing method may require a somewhat different way of presentation. A colleague ran a Facebook ad test and found people respond differently whether they were viewing the message on a desktop computer or on a mobile device.

Your message must connect with your intended audience. It must encourage people to read more, embed your company and products/services into their mind, or elicit action. Again, what is your goal?

The fourth issue for many small-business owners is this: What does your marketing do for your bottom line now or in the foreseeable future? In part, this means determining the most cost-effective way to reach your goal or goals.

Numbers are great, but aware, engaged customers taking action are what you want.

For more help, visit our website, <https://www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness>, and sign up for the monthly newsletter.

More information is available at your local Extension office, as well as at <http://powerofbusiness.net> and www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship.

The Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives, along with many other state agencies, also can be valuable resources.

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