

**The Truth!**

What if everything you've ever  
learned about marketing  
your business was wrong?

What Every Business Owner Ought to Know...

# *About Marketing Their Business...*

John Mulry, MSc

# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

*What Every Business Owner Ought to Know...*

# *About Marketing Their Business*

**Some plain talk about *the* fundamental of successful businesses that often sounds complicated.**

### **WHY AM I PUBLISHING THIS INFORMATION?**

A little while ago we were talking with the owner of a big national company, a well informed man. He said that he had never done business with a lead generation firm because he was afraid he wouldn't understand the 'lingo they talk.' Since I'm a lead generation specialist, you can imagine that was something of a shock...made us think.

The marketing and sales world does use a lot of specialized words, but there isn't really anything complicated or mysterious about those words *mean*. Because I've used them for so long and so frequently, I've just assumed that everybody understood them. That has been my mistake. And a big mistake. For if people don't understand sales and marketing, they aren't likely to invest in them. "So what?" you ask, Well, *here's* "what".

If business owners do not invest their funds in sales and marketing, Businesses and governments will not have the capital they need for growth – for new products, new businesses, and new jobs. That capital can come from just one place; people. Not just a few people with great fortunes – there aren't many of them anymore – but from millions of people.

Or look at it from the social point of view. Business owners who don't understand sales and marketing are easy prey for a wide variety of 'get-rich quick' artists.

Or look at it from the purely personal point of view. A lot of people might like to invest in sales and marketing and generate, convert and ascend more leads in their business. But if they are unfamiliar with sales and marketing, they aren't likely to invest their money in them.

For all those reasons, it is important that business owners should know as much as they can about this sales and marketing business. But where should you start? Well it would seem that a good place to start would be with the "lingo" that our friend the owner complained about. And we might as well go back to the most common words in the business. You may find a lot of this explanation pretty elementary. But the next fellow may not be wholly, clear about the exact difference between sales and marketing. So we'll start right there, in the belief that you'll be obliging enough to skip what you already know.

John Mulry

### How Can I Sell My Products or Services?

You can sell your products or services through distribution channels. A distribution channel is where the sales transaction takes place. There are seven different distribution channels that businesses can employ.

#### 1. DIRECT SALES

The direct sales distribution channel involves one-on-one interaction between the person facilitating the sale and the individual making the purchase decision. The transaction can occur face-to-face or on the phone, but it always involves direct interaction between two human beings.

Direct sales examples include:

- New car salesperson
- Real estate agent
- B2B salesperson
- Door-to-door salesperson
- Attorney, Accountant or doctor

Most distribution channels involve some sort of human interaction with the client or prospect, and it can be easy to mistake those channels for direct sales. However, a distribution channel is always defined by where the transaction takes place. Therefore, direct sales encompasses only those interactions in which a sales transaction occurs between the person representing the business and the person making the buying decision.

#### 2. RETAIL

In the retail distribution channel, the prospect or customer goes to a physical location to make the transaction and acquire the product. In today's world, retail is often referred to as "bricks and mortar," in reference to the building that contains the products for sale.

Examples of retail include:

- Grocery store
- Clothing store
- Restaurant
- Bank
- Sporting goods store

Retail tends to be product-oriented rather than service-oriented. It describes a transaction where you walk away with a physical product. Services such as attorneys, accountants and health professionals work out of brick and mortar buildings. However, they provide an intangible service rather than a physical product you walk away with. They are classified as direct sales (rather than retail) because of

the one-on-one nature of the transaction.

### 3. ONLINE

The online distribution channel consists of any transaction that is completed using the Internet. Products are purchased over the Internet and then delivered to the customer's home or place of business by mail or delivery service. This channel includes both B2C and B2B transactions. However, it only includes those online transactions where a sale actually takes place.

Many websites offer a “click here to talk to a sales representative” feature, which is not an online distribution channel. Instead, it is an Internet marketing tool designed to lead the site visitor to the phone sales or direct sales channel. Many companies also use their websites to drive people to their brick and mortar locations, in which case the Internet serves as a marketing tool to lead people to the retail sales channel. Just because a sales or marketing activity occurs online does not necessarily make it an online distribution channel. Unless a sales transaction takes place, the activity is considered a marketing strategy.

### 4. MAIL ORDER

Mail order includes all catalog sales, as well as other print media—such as newspapers or magazines—where the customer orders and receives the product through the mail or a delivery service. Like many of these distribution channels, mail order can be a distribution channel or a sales tactic to complete a strategy. If you decide to buy a product in a catalog and then call their phone line or purchase the product online with a credit card, the catalog then becomes a marketing strategy to drive you to the phone sales or online distribution channel.

### 5. EVENTS

The events distribution channel serves a dual purpose. The first is to bring together large numbers of the target market and educate them about your product or service. The second is to provide a physical environment that differs from your normal place of business in which the sales transaction can take place.

Examples of events include:

- Trade shows
- Food exhibitions
- Car, boat or motorcycle shows
- Fashion shows
- Auctions

A unique category of distribution channel, events allows you to conduct marketing and sales distribution in the same physical environment.

### 6. SALES AGENTS

The sales agent distribution channel uses outside sales reps to sell a number of different products. Sales agents are not employees of the companies they represent. Instead, they work for a number of different companies on a contract or commission basis.

Examples of sales agents include:

- Medical, dental and pharmaceutical salespeople
- Insurance brokers
- Franchisers
- Wholesalers
- Licensing affiliates and joint ventures

B2B salespeople can also be sales agents, as long as they represent more than one product or company. Remember, direct sales involve one person representing one product or company in a face-to-face interaction. Sales agents represent multiple suppliers on a contract basis.

### 7. PHONE SALES

The phone sales distribution channel involves the use of telemarketing or call centre's where phone sales representatives complete the transaction over the phone. This channel includes both inbound telemarketing calls, where customers place an order over the phone as the result of an advertisement, direct mail piece, catalog or website, and outbound telemarketing calls, where telemarketers contact prospects and solicit sales using phones lists and benefit-laden scripts.

The only exception is when a direct sales person uses the phone to make a one-on-one call with a customer in which the relationship is already established. In that situation, if the transaction takes place over the phone, it would be considered a direct sales distribution channel.

### WHAT ARE THE DIFFERENT SALES STRATEGIES?

*Strategies are the approaches you take to generate sales within the different distribution channels.*

#### 1. WHAT IS DIRECT SALES?

Direct sales can be both a distribution channel and a sales strategy. In both cases, however, it involves one-on-one human interaction to close the sale. Businesses can use a wide variety of tactics to drive prospects to their direct salespeople, such as the phone, Internet, direct mail, marketing collateral, events and more. But the end result is that the salesperson meets face-to-face with the prospect to complete the sales transaction.

Direct sales are most effective when the prospect or customer requires significant help in making the purchasing decision. This can include educating the prospect about the relevant and important issues

# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

around your product or service, helping them determine an appropriate price/value ratio for your product or service, and helping them see why yours is the best solution for their particular wants and needs.

### Area(s) of Application

- Direct sales add significant cost to the sales process. Therefore, it should probably not be used for low-margin and commodity products. If your prospects and customers can make the buying decision without help from a salesperson, direct sales is not an appropriate strategy for you.
- Consider direct sales when you have high-margin products or services, complex products or services, prospects that require a lot of education about your product, service or solution, or a lengthy sales cycle that involves more than one decision maker.

## 2. PHONE SALES

As with direct sales, phone sales can be a distribution channel as well as a strategy. As a strategy, it can be used to complete sales over the phone and to drive prospects to a face-to-face meeting with your direct sales people.

Outbound phone sales uses trained telemarketers who make cold calls to prospects in your target market. The telemarketers use scripts that are written with persuasion architecture and typically have some sort of limited-time offer regarding the product or service in order to create a sense of urgency in the mind of the prospect. The best outbound telemarketers are aggressive salespeople who love the “thrill of the chase” and enjoy using persuasive techniques to close the sale.

Inbound phone sales uses a call center to take incoming orders from customers. These incoming calls are typically generated from websites, advertisements, brochures, direct mail and other types of marketing collateral. People who work in inbound call centres tend to be more passive than outbound telemarketers. They are comfortable taking orders from customers, but do not like trying to persuade others to make a buying decision.

### Area(s) of Application

- Phone sales only work when certain conditions are in place. First, determine that the phone is an appropriate method for reaching your target audience. Second, determine whether your prospects will buy your product or service over the phone, or at least be willing to take the next step in the sales process. For example, people won't buy a life insurance policy over the phone, but they might agree to meet with you to discuss your different policies. Then choose the right approach (outbound vs. inbound) for your product or service and hire the right kind of people for that approach.
- Outbound phone sales work best with value-added products or services and when prospects need some, but not a lot, of education about the benefits of your product, service or solution. Inbound phone sales work best with commodities, low-margin products and those where

prospects do not need help to make the buying decision.

### 3. BACKEND (UPSELLING)

Traditionally, upselling is the process of expanding your reach to existing customers by offering them other products/services after the initial sale. If you have successfully cultivated the relationship, 35% or more of your existing customers are likely to buy from you again. Once you have earned their trust, it is far easier to sell to them again. Your existing customer base can represent an unlimited revenue stream.

Backend sales are also more profitable. Since you have already acquired the customer, you don't incur additional customer acquisition costs. Sales representatives are often assigned the sole task of maintaining and upselling existing customers.

#### Area(s) of Application

- Backend sales can represent a significant portion of your revenue. It is critical to cultivate relationships with your existing customers and maintain their goodwill.
- You can utilize cross promotions and database marketing to increase backend sales.
- Upsell techniques at the point of sale can increase the transaction total.
- Upselling at the point of sale can reduce excess inventory in a retail environment (offline and online).

### WHAT MARKETING STRATEGIES ARE AVAILABLE?

*Marketing strategies accomplish three important goals: to complete sales where human interaction is not involved, lead generation and branding.*

#### 1. ADVERTISING (TV, RADIO, PRINT)

Advertising is the commercial promotion of products, services, companies and ideas through the placement of announcements and/or marketing messages. TV, radio and print are all advertising vehicles.

**TV:** Television advertising reaches the largest, most diverse market, enabling you to deliver your message to a sizeable audience. Commercials, infomercials or in-show product placements are the three forms of TV advertising. TV ads can be designed as direct response or as longer-term image ads. Direct response ads encourage the viewer to order by phone or website. Infomercials are examples of this type of advertising. Infomercials offer viewers a product or service, and the advertising message is designed to evoke an immediate response. Longer-term image advertising is designed to build or strengthen brand identity.

However, many larger advertisers are now turning to in-show product placements in response to



# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

viewers' use of digital recordings (which allow them to skip through commercials).

Another area to consider is cable television. Most cable providers have “segmented” their viewing areas, allowing you to pick and choose the specific areas you wish to advertise into. This works well for brick and mortar businesses as they can advertise to prospects within their geographic boundaries.

**Radio:** Radio advertising allows you to send a message to a slightly more targeted group of consumers than TV advertising does. You can write and produce your own radio ad or outsource that task. Radio stations sell you access to specific markets in specific time blocks. You can pay to run your ad during a specific radio show for a set period of time. One of the key features of radio advertising is the stations' programming format and the announcers' style. Radio stations can provide you with demographics which enable you to advertise to your ideal client. For example, if you sell golf clubs, you could advertise during a sports talk show.

**Print:** Print advertising is one of the more affordable advertising media. Print ads are written promotional messages which run in newspapers, magazines, golden pages, industry journals, mailings (i.e. postcards, direct response cards), and even fliers. Print advertising can be used to promote a new product/service or to develop recognition of your brand/image.

### Area(s) of Application

- Advertising is an important method of lead generation. Analyze your conversion rate to determine your ROI. With the exception of targeted, short-term campaigns, however, advertising requires a long-term strategy. You cannot place a single ad in a newspaper and expect long-term results.

## 2. AFFILIATE AND JV PROGRAMS

Affiliate and joint venture (JV) marketing programs reward select partners for generating visitors, subscribers and/or clients for your business. They are ‘pay-for-performance’ referral systems that enable other individuals or merchants to profit from introducing their associates, clients or prospects to your business.

Affiliate and JV partners' can be compensated on a pay per click (PPC), pay per lead or pay per sale commission on each sale) basis. Affiliate/JV programs allow you to use other individuals' contacts or other merchants' websites to increase your advertising. Since you only pay for results, these programs are very cost effective.

### Area(s) of Application

- As a component of your referral generation, affiliate and JV programs can represent a fairly cost-effective way of promoting your products or services by



### 3. AFFINITY

Affinity marketing involves bundling one product or service with a second product or service in order to take advantage of the second product's public awareness, brand reputation or distribution channel. It often involves free samples, free trials, or other "give-aways" connected to the purchase of the first product or service.

For example, a manufacturer of shaving cream may include a trial sample of its product with each purchase of brand name razor blades. Or, a toothbrush company may attach a free toothbrush to boxes of a leading brand of toothpaste.

Affinity marketing is also used to market a product, service or image to a group of individuals linked by a common interest. In that situation, it uses the affinity they have to generate additional sales for the organization using affinity marketing and the product or service they are linking to.

For example, many large retail or financial companies will align themselves with a particular charity and donate a percentage of each sale to that cause. The goal is to increase sales for the company as well as the charity.

#### Area(s) of Application

Affinity marketing is basically cross-promotion. The goal is to build mutually beneficial relationships without investing the time and expense in building a joint venture or formal partnership. Affinity marketing is most common for low-value commodity products and products or services that appeal to common-interest groups.

### 4. BARTER

Barter is a trade or exchange of goods or services for other goods or services. There is no money exchanged. Barter transactions typically involve exchanging goods and services of similar value, and, more importantly, of value to both parties.

Barter can be an effective tool for a small or start-up business on a limited budget to obtain goods and services. For example, a web designer might offer design services to a copywriter in exchange for written content for the web designer's site, or a tax attorney might offer tax services to a fitness expert in exchange for personal training. Again, the key component of barter is that both parties receive something that is of value to them.

#### Area(s) of Application

- Barter can help you obtain goods or services on a limited budget. You can enroll in barter networks that allow you to offer goods or services in exchange for the goods and services that you need. Bartering can also create partnerships that can lead to cross-promotional

opportunities.

### 5. CATALOG

Catalog marketing compiles multiple products into a single source to provide prospects and clients with the information they need to make a purchase decision. Catalogs typically include promotional copy as well as pricing and other feature-oriented information about each product. Once a product is ordered, the company then uses the mail or a delivery service to ship it to the client.

In the past, companies would print a catalog and mail it to potential clients. With the advent of the Internet, catalogs can now be printed or digital (online). Most companies that employ catalog marketing use both approaches.

#### Area(s) of Application

The catalog marketing strategy can be effective for companies that have a lot of products, have products that are easily shipped over long distances, and that serve a very large geographical area.

Catalog marketing is also effective for building the brand, promoting awareness of the company and/or product, and driving clients to other distribution channels, such as phone sales or online.

### 6. DIRECT MAIL

Direct mail involves the sending of marketing collateral to potential buyers of your product or service. It can take many forms, including letters, postcards, brochures, flyers, audio and video, and is usually sent out via bulk mail in order to reduce mailing costs.

In addition to enhancing product awareness and building the brand, direct mail can be used to generate sales for existing products, introduce new products or services, announce special deals or offers, entice new customers with first-time buyer discounts, and more.

Direct mail can be employed by both B2B and B2C companies, and can be sent to the home or the office. The key with this strategy is cutting through the mountains of unsolicited mail people receive on a daily basis and making sure that your direct mail piece gets opened, read, and acted upon by prospects and customers.

#### Area(s) of Application

- Direct mail can be a highly effective marketing strategy for generating leads and creating sales, but it can also be an endless sinkhole for your marketing Euros. Direct mail works only when you have all the essential pieces in place. These include knowing your ideal client and their hot buttons, having a carefully targeted mailing list, using persuasion architecture in your direct mail messages, and using the appropriate media to deliver your marketing messages.

### 7. EVENT MARKETING

Event marketing is a carefully planned and executed marketing strategy that allows you to communicate with your target market through an event. Promotional buses, block parties, in-store promotions, give-away events, and 'happenings' at malls or sporting venues are all examples of event marketing. This environment lets you interact with your target market in a different way than that afforded by print, TV or radio advertising. You can be a sponsor (i.e., via a banner at a sporting event or the sponsorship of team) or you can actually produce an event (i.e., a block party or give-away).

#### Area(s) of Application

- Event marketing is not effective as a stand-alone marketing strategy. Instead, consider it one component of your overall marketing strategy.

### 8. CUSTOMER LOYALTY

Customer loyalty is the result of establishing long-term relationships with your customers, resulting in repeat purchases and a high lifetime value for your business. In addition to the benefits of repeat business, loyal customers can become your raving fans, telling others about your product/service. This process is known as viral marketing.

Businesses often develop loyalty programs to 'reward' customers with free products or services, discounts, reward points which can be traded for goods and services, etc. While these tools can be effective, they are not the heart of customer loyalty--some customers are 'loyal' strictly to the rewards themselves.

True customer loyalty is earned by continuing to offer products/services that meet the customer's changing wants and needs. While quality and satisfaction are important in cementing loyalty, relevance is equally important. You must keep pace with customer preferences and market trends.

By constantly exceeding your customers' expectations, and providing products/services with dynamic value (the perception that the value of the product/service exceeds the actual cost), you can enhance or cement customer loyalty.

#### Area(s) of Application

- It is far less expensive to retain customers than to attract new ones. Customer loyalty can be a key component in directing your marketing efforts to realize your desired profit margins. Loyal customers can provide unique insights regarding new or planned products/services, and can also identify any slippages in quality or service.
- It is critical to understand what drives customer loyalty in your business. What are you doing... or what must you do to keep loyal customers? What metrics have you established to measure

customer loyalty? What is the Euro value of customer loyalty in your business? Is it a significant part of your clients' lifetime value?

### 9. INTERNET MARKETING

Internet marketing is an umbrella term that refers to strategies used to market a product or service online. There are many “moving parts” to internet marketing. Examples include search engine optimization, pay-per-click advertising, online promotions, reciprocal linking, copy writing that encourages site visitors to take action, and web site design strategies.

Key internet marketing strategies are:

**Web Development:** This refers to the design and structure of a web site to meet marketing objectives. Design elements include layout, color scheme, graphic elements, and font. Structure includes site sections, lead capture mechanisms (such as opt-in subscription forms), and online delivery mechanisms.

**Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** This is the process of increasing the number of visitors to a web site by achieving a high ranking in the search results of a search engine (e.g., Google, Bing, Yahoo). A high ranking increases the probability that a visitor will visit the site. SEO ensures that a site is accessible to a search engine, and it improves the chances that the search engine will locate the site.

**Paid Search:** This is a marketing strategy in which a web site owner posts a small advertisement that is linked to specific search terms. The advertisement is displayed each time someone searches on the terms, but the marketer is only charged when a searcher clicks on that ad. Paid search often means that the search engine's “spiders” will check their sites more often than non-paying sites.

**Podcasting:** This is a method used to distribute multimedia files (audio or video programs) via online syndication feeds for playback on mobile devices and personal computers. The term “podcast” can mean the content as well as the method of delivery. Though podcasters' web sites may offer a direct download or streaming of their content, a podcast is distinguished from other formats by its ability to be downloaded automatically using software capable of reading syndication feeds.

**Blogging:** A blog is a frequent, chronological publication of materials that may or may not include reference web links. Businesses use company blogs as networking, public relations, and customer relationship management tools. Blogs are participatory, and can build connections and links among key audiences. Blogs can help businesses move people to action and leverage market conversations.

**Opt-in Email:** Marketers use email to promote their products/services to a database of individuals who have given permission (opted-in) to the marketer to communicate in this fashion. These email messages are used to develop a relationship between the marketer and the prospect, and can be a very effective way to convert a prospect into a customer.

### Area(s) of Application:

- Traditional 'brick and mortar' and online businesses can both use internet marketing effectively.

## **10. OUTDOOR MEDIA**

Outdoor media advertising uses public locations and conveyances to advertise. Unlike TV, radio or print advertising, outdoor media cannot be turned off or thrown away. While billboards are probably the best known outdoor medium, other locations that can be effective are movie theaters, shopping centre displays, buses, taxis, airports and rail stations. Outdoor media can be in printed or digital form.

### Area(s) of Application

- Perhaps the latest and most innovative form of outdoor media is building illumination. Large format projection creates an illuminated 'ad' on a building. Such projections can be over 300 feet tall and command attention at great distances.
- Outdoor media is a specialty within the advertising industry, and you'll get your best results by using an agency that focuses strictly on this type of media.

## **11. POINT OF PURCHASE**

The term refers to the place where a product/service can be purchased. On a large scale, point of purchase could be a mall, market or city. In a specific place of business, particularly retail stores, the point of purchase is the area surrounding the station(s) where customers pay for their merchandise.

Since customers tend to make impulse decisions to buy products or services at these strategic locations, place high-margin items that lend themselves to impulse purchasing in this area to entice the customer into an upsell. While points of purchase may be physical 'brick and mortar' stores, virtual e-commerce web sites that use a shopping cart system for sales transactions are also points of purchase.

## **12. POINT OF SALE**

In-store point of sale systems use computers or specialized terminals that are combined with cash registers, bar code readers, optical scanners and magnetic stripe readers for accurately and instantly capturing the transaction. An online POS system collects sales and payment information electronically, including the amount of the sale, the date of the transaction, and the consumer's credit card number or online account identifier. Payment information is passed on to the financial institution or payment processor, and the sales data is forwarded to the seller.

## **13. PLACE-BASED MEDIA**

A relatively recent marketing strategy, placed-based media delivers marketing and advertising messages to prospects and customers outside your normal marketing channels. Place-based media can include:

- Television screens in grocery store checkout lines or the produce section
- Interactive kiosks in shopping malls and retail stores

# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

- In-store radio commercials
- Handing out free samples in a store or shopping mall (i.e. free food samples in Tesco etc.)

Place-based media also includes things like coupon dispensers in retail stores (where you walk by and your motion triggers an audio message about the product), airplanes towing advertising signs, and sign wavers on the street who try to direct you toward the latest housing or condo development. In today's world, there are few limits on where you can place an advertising or marketing message.

### Area(s) of Application

- When used properly, place-based media can help to build brand awareness and influence your customers' purchasing decisions. The key is choosing the appropriate media and location to fit your particular product or service.

## 14. PROMOTIONS / CROSS PROMOTIONS

A promotion is a focused, short-term effort to promote, publicize, or improve your product/service position. While promotions are a part of your ongoing marketing efforts, they are directed towards a definitive goal. They are highly targeted and specific in timeframe, message and product/service offered. Promotions can be used to introduce a new or improved product/service, stimulate sales of existing products/services, encourage customers to try other products/services, or even counteract competitors' sales efforts.

Promotions may have an incentive component, such as coupons, rebates, or 'buy one, get one free,' but incentives aren't a necessary feature of a promotion. You may design a promotion to launch a redesigned website or highlight a product/service that may be unfamiliar to buyers. Promotions can be offered to particular buyers in an effort to drive loyalty, to a select group of prospective customers (i.e. a specific geographic region or distribution channel), or to your market at large.

### Area(s) of Application

- Promotions are an important component of your overall marketing strategy. You can use promotions to target a specific group or product/service.

A cross promotion is a marketing strategy in which you leverage one product/service to promote another. You can cross promote your own products/services, or collaborate with another provider (or providers) in order to reap the benefits of serving your joint target markets. There are several ways to cross promote:

- Offer your buyers an add-on product/service at the point of sale. In internet marketing, this often appears as a "Buyers who bought X, also bought Y" offer. It is simply the process of expanding the customer purchase.
- Establish affiliate programs. This allows you to link with providers that offer a product/service



# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

that is complimentary to yours.

Cross promotions are an effective way to increase penetration in your target market if the product/service you are cross promoting also offers value. Once buyers have made the purchase decision, a cross promotion can introduce them to a not-yet-tried product/service. For example, if a customer is purchasing hand lotion, a hand exfoliant would make a good cross-promotion product. The products are complimentary, and the new product provides the buyer with an additional reason to purchase from you again.

Cross promotions can maximize customer impulse buys. Online booksellers Amazon and Barnes and Noble use cross promotions with every product purchase, often making the offer more appealing by providing a discount on the entire purchase.

### Area(s) of Application

- Cross promotions can be used to drive customer loyalty, increase market share, introduce new/improved products/services, or invigorate sluggish sales.

## **15. PUBLIC RELATIONS**

According to the Public Relations Society of America, "Public relations helps an organization and its public adapt mutually to each other." Think of public relations ('PR') as an organized marketing effort to establish presence, credibility, support and consent with your public.

Small businesses often overlook public relations as an effective marketing channel. They see PR as either cost-prohibitive or inapplicable. However, PR allows any business, regardless of size, to establish visibility and credibility. Your 'public' may be national or local. Although you may have a one-time or occasional campaign, general PR should be an ongoing effort, since publicity builds momentum over time. Your publicity message should be a simple one which leverages your USP.

### Area(s) of Application

- Your public relations message can be a major component of your marketing efforts. It should focus on solutions to your customers' needs and wants, rather than simply seeking to position your product/service. This approach establishes you as an expert in solving their problems, which captures your public's attention. They are then ready to hear your marketing message.

## **16. REFERRALS**

Referrals occur when someone (usually a happy customer) tells another person about the benefits of using your product or service. Referrals used to be called "word of mouth advertising," and were often treated by businesses as something beyond their control. But with traditional advertising becoming more expensive and less effective by the day, many companies are shifting more time and resources to generating referrals.

# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

Recently, the science of generating referrals has become an industry unto itself. Advances in technology have made it much easier to track referrals, convert them into customers, and reward the people who give referrals. Plus, there are increasing numbers of consultants who teach companies how to implement cost-effective referral strategies.

Referrals are powerful marketing tools because they help to overcome one of the biggest issues in the buying decision—lack of trust in the product, service or company. As consumers become inundated with over-hyped marketing messages, they are increasingly turning to a source of information they can trust: friends and associates that have personal experience with the product or service under consideration.

### Area(s) of Application

Every business can benefit from referrals. However, this marketing strategy is especially effective with professional services where the benefits are not realized until after the service has been delivered, and with complex products where the solution provided is not easily understood.

Referrals are a long-term marketing strategy, especially for startups and young companies. It takes time to develop the relationships with the right referral sources. But once those relationships are in place, they can yield an ongoing stream of high-quality leads in a very efficient and cost-effective manner.

## 17. SIGNAGE

Generally, signage is any displayed words, symbols and/or pictures designed to advertise your business (e.g., your storefront sign, counter-top placards, banners used at events or tradeshow, etc.). A wide range of materials (neon, plastic, metal, and wood) can be used to create signage, and designers may also use animation and lights.

Signage can be part of an overall branding program, with all published information reinforcing the company's identity through consistency in design and typography. In fact, for a company that relies on drive-by or walk-by traffic, its signage may be its most important business identifier. However, be sure to comply with any local ordinances that restrict signage size, location, and type, as well as any restrictions imposed by landlords.

### Area(s) of Application

- Digital signage, also called dynamic signage, is a specialized form of signage displaying video or multimedia advertising content in public places (e.g., department stores, office buildings, airports, etc.). While paper signs require physical travel to sign sites for replacement, digital signs can be updated by remote control.
- Most business owners hire professional assistance to handle signage. A good designer can create an effective sign, capably manage sign fabricators, and be present at installation to make sure the sign is properly installed.

# The Truth!

## What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?

### “What’s This?...What’s That?”

This isn't the complete story how to use sales and marketing, of course. That would take volumes. All I have tried to do here is set down key definitions on some of the most common questions that I'm asked. And I have excluded a lot of things that many business owners are curious about but that without the above background knowledge they are difficult to grasp. The big one for me is what we call the 'marketing equation'. This is the standard we use in everything I do but there also other areas which we haven't mentioned.

For instance, there are five pillars for business growth in which I focus on, and I have a suite of products and services to help you accomplish those. For instance pillar #1 is “more leads” which simply is all about generating more leads for your business. Or maybe you'd like to know about pillar #2 “more conversions”, where the focus goes to the next stage of the lifecycle process of converting those leads which you generated.

Generally speaking, these pillars are often the most important, elusive and confusing aspects of marketing for business owners. But I'll be glad to tell you anything more you want to know. The other pillars are “more transactions”, “higher prices”, and “more profits”. Within these pillars there are dozens of other terms, strategies and tactics which we've had to omit for lack of space, but an understanding of them is crucial for the long term development and growth of your business.

Again for lack of space, I have not defined a whole host of marketing and sales terms that you are likely to encounter when you begin marketing and advertising the correct way.

These terms are defined in my latest book: “The Truth – What if everything you've ever learned about marketing your business was wrong?” A basic guidebook for all business owners, this new book develops in greater detail the story of how this marketing and advertising game works. It reviews the basic principles of sound marketing, such as the difference between tactical marketing and strategic marketing, and outlines why everything you may have learned up until now about marketing your business is probably wrong.

Visit [www.Wrong.ie](http://www.Wrong.ie) for more.

Thanks,



John Mulry