

Distinguishing Your Product



by Francis and David Martin

There is a line in the Kevin Costner film “Field of Dreams”, which goes something like this, “If you build it, they will come”. Unfortunately, many people think that is applicable to the marketing of products. Marketers have added a second part to that phrase, “If you build it, they will come, only if you stand on the roof top and shout, ‘It’s over here, it’s over here!!!’” In the average grocery store, there may be more than 40,000 items. Also, the footprint for many major grocery stores may exceed 100,000 square feet. How do you distinguish your product in this environment?

GETTING ATTENTION

Heard of the “3 second rule”? This is the amount of time it takes to look at items as you walk down the aisle of a grocery store, especially if you are turning your head side-to-side to survey the many products attempting to catch your interest. Your goal is to make the customer stop, take a serious look at your product, read your label, and then put your item in their basket.

Sound tough? Well it is! You have to realize that getting your product into the store is the easy part. Keeping it in the store is where the real work begins. As we have stated before, how good your product tastes becomes a small variable in the selling process. Store buyers and representatives only want to know how you plan to get your product off the shelf and into the customer’s basket.

THE IMPORTANCE OF THE “MARKETING PLAN”

We are sure that you have purchased an item because you saw an ad or promotion for the item on television, a billboard, or in a print ad only to discover that the product was a total disappointment. At that point, you decided to not become a repeat customer and you may have asked yourself, “Why did the store put that horrible tasting product onto the shelf?” It may be very simple- the producer of the product had an outstanding Marketing Plan.

To remain on the shelf, stores are looking for product sales. An outstanding

Marketing Plan can help even a terrible product perform just as well as an outstanding one simply because the plan can generate enough 1 time purchasers that would reflect consistent sales.

FACTORS TO CONSIDER & INCLUDE IN YOUR MARKETING PLAN

• Creating Your Identity

One of the first steps in the creation of the marketing plan is to create an identity, or more commonly known as “Branding”. Your branding may be an image, a jingle, a phrase, or picture. It may deliver a message or it may just be a “cute look”. Whatever it is, this visual representation would be your “logo”. This logo would be the identifier of your brand. When people see this logo, they think about your company, product or service. Your “company logo”, and your “product logo”, don’t have to be the same, but it becomes important for the public and your potential customers to be able to associate them and be able to transfer the goodwill from one to the other.

• Due Diligence

Prior to spending money to have your “logo” professionally designed or to start using it for your brand, you need to conduct some “due diligence” to determine if the logo, “trademark” or “service mark” is being used by another company. It is possible that you may not be the only person that thinks your logo is outstanding. You can do the research on your own or hire a lawyer. Start your research on the state level by contacting the Secretary of State Office. The next step would be to contact the US Government Patent and Trademark office.

Once you have exhausted your search and found that the logo is available, you can proceed with the creation of the image as your logo or brand. It is suggested that you consult the assistance of a graphic artist to help in the creation of the logo. The development of the logo is too important to rely on the nephew of the 3rd cousin of the neighbor down the street! And along the same lines, you need to get a

wide variety of opinions about the logo design to make sure it is appealing. Don’t rely on opinions of just family and friends.

If you have determined that your logo or image is unique, you might want to consider filing for trademark and copyright protection. You can start the filing on the state level which is easier and cheaper than on the federal levels. The key to determining the ownership of a trademark or copyright is the date of “first use”. Who used the image first? Filing on the state level provides evidence of the date of “first use”.

• Branding

Once you have developed your logo, then you start the “branding process”. Use your brand on everything from business cards, letterhead, T-shirts, hats, and marketing materials. When you are wearing your logo on your attire, people will ask what it represents and that will give you the opportunity to discuss your company and product.

• Set a Budget

Next, develop a budget you can afford to spend to market and advertise your product. Then, determine the most effective media route to spend the money. Today, the use of social media has made marketing and advertising more affordable. Social media includes Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram, and YouTube. You can consider commercials for the use in cable television commercials. Cable television commercials have become more affordable. Another effective tool is the use of email blasts, or email marketing.

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