



Strategy Before Tactics

By Eric Keiles

I can honestly say, after working with hundreds, maybe thousands of entrepreneurs over the last ten years, that one of the critical mistakes that they make is by executing marketing tactics without taking the time to develop the correct strategy. In fact, most entrepreneurs I work with are fantastic at executing their product or service, but choose to randomly throw money into marketing tactics, without truly taking the time to understand and develop their company's position in the marketplace.

Have you ever had this conversation with your team? "We've placed ads in this trade magazine before and we don't get any response." Or, "our online strategy is driving some people to our website, but nobody's clicking through or placing any orders." These are common occurrences that we experience when beginning an engagement. Our clients all have great products and services, but they don't know how to deliver the message on why their product is different or, better yet, remarkable. This recurring pattern of executing tactics without the proper strategy leads to overall frustration and disappointment in marketing exercises.

A good example is a client of ours who is spending over \$10,000 a month on a marketing mix of eight different programs. After reviewing it, we realized that they were in the right places to communicate with their target market, but delivering a message that was way off-base from what their clients needed to hear. After answering the following four key questions, we were able to help with a strategy to deliver the marketing messages more on target:

1. Who is your target market?
2. What problems do they have in purchasing the service?
3. What are your company's solutions
4. What makes you remarkable enough to do business with?

We began to deliver different messages than they had previously offered within the same eight programs. In just 30 days, response to all of the programs that they had been spending money on, switched from a source of disappointment to a source of multiple new inquiries and prospects.

In addition, we helped the entrepreneurs change their thinking on the goals of the marketing efforts. Instead of thinking, "we are going to get sales directly from our advertisements", we helped them understand their main goal is to "build a prospect database". Our client promoted white papers, free reports and other "no-risk offers" to attract prospects and exchanged the valuable information for their contact information. Once they had a prospect database, they were able to focus the money spent on these self-selected prospects and work to convert them to sales, instead of marketing to the world like they used to do.

Using this simple change in your thinking of "strategy before tactics", you too can understand how to build a better marketing machine and dramatically increase your ROMI (return on marketing investment). Don't you want to spend one dollar in marketing and get ten back?

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