

SIX KEYS TO COMMON SENSE MARKETING

Marketing Key #6: 7/49 Connections

The last key to common sense marketing involves the theory of 7/49 connections. In a nutshell, that theory states that it can take up to 49 contacts with potential customers before they will actually make a purchase from you.

Think about this in relation to the process of getting to know someone new. Let's say, for example, that you're out taking a leisurely stroll with your good friend Susan. As you walk along, talking about everything from your kids to the new client you just landed, Susan stops. She has recognized the woman walking towards you. "Hi," she says and proceeds to introduce you to this woman, who you have never met before.

The introduction is rather uneventful. You have no background information about the woman and no idea how well - or even how - Susan knows her. You continue on your walk and the new woman passes by you, headed in the opposite direction. You find that by the next day, you can't recall the woman's name. If someone were to ask, you would probably not even remember the introduction by the time the week was out.

In fact, you may run into the same woman in a number of different contexts, each time getting a brief introduction and no particular reason to remember her name, except from repeated exposure to it. Of course, it all depends on the circumstances, including the degree to which you're interested and, as a result, how much attention you give to the introduction.

Say, for example, that Susan prefaces your first introduction to the woman with an explanation that the two of them have been friends for many years. She also says that the woman is active in professional group that you have been seriously considering joining. Now, how likely do you think you are to remember the woman's name?

The same thing happens in business. It's been shown that it can take up to 7 contacts with potential customers before they become familiar with and warm up to your business. That could mean 7 sightings in the newspaper, 7 networking conversations, seven radio mentions – or some combination of these.

On top of that, it can take up to another seven connections, after each 'familiarizing' contact, before a potential customer decides to purchase something from you. When all is said and done, then, it can take up to 49 contacts with a potential customer before that person actually decides to make a purchase from you.

The 7/49 connections theory has some significant implications for marketing:

First, when looking at the annual promotional and marketing budgets for your business, you must know that if you don't have the funds to make at least seven contacts with your target market, you might as well pack up your marbles and go home. You need at least seven contacts just to play.

Second, when deciding on a target market, it's important to segment narrowly enough – and to select a target market small enough - that you are able to reach all or most potential customers at least seven times.

Third, it means that you should never give up after just one marketing campaign. Even if a particular tactic or promotion doesn't appear to have brought in significant results, it may well be paving the way for future sales.

Fourth – and perhaps most important – if you can find a way to speak directly to your target market in a way that is meaningful to them – that directly addresses their needs and wants – the number of contacts required to make a connection with them reduces considerably. Consumers are inundated with information every day and they can't retain it all. When a message is meaningful, it cuts through the clutter and is more likely to be memorable.

It's all about connecting, forming relationships and filling needs. If you know who you can do that with and for; how to speak to them in a way that they will hear you, and what message to deliver, you will have mastered the art of effective marketing. No more hit-and-miss campaigns. You'll be well on your way to a prosperous and growing business.

There you have the six keys to common sense marketing. Let's review them...

1. Specialists make more than generalists.
2. Work the marketing success pyramid:
60% of your success comes from good market research;
30% from sound strategy and,
only 10% from execution.
3. Find and focus on heavy users.
4. Better marketing = less selling.
5. Be customer-focused: work from the outside-in.
6. 7/40 connections.

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