

Visibility

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Introduction

Here's a question: Do people even know that you are in business? It is shocking how many companies leave marketing solely to word-of-mouth. The only way to get new customers is to use all the tools you can to maximize the number of target customers who know about you. Visibility comprises all of the actions taken by a business to ensure more potential customers know that it exists. In other words, visibility is actively creating word-of-mouth marketing.

Waiting for word-of-mouth marketing to start generating a significant amount of business often takes a long time. Plus, it's an uphill battle: every time your company does something wrong, the affected customer will tell 30 people, but if you do something well, only 3 people receive the message. Waiting for word-of-mouth instead of actively informing your customers usually means you have to wait longer for your first sale, which results in an even longer wait for sales income. And if you run out of cash, you are out of business!

This module is for anyone who is starting a business or trying to get the word on the street, who finds that they don't have enough customers in the sales funnel, who wants to expedite word-of-mouth marketing, and anyone whose family members or close friends still don't know you have your own business. If even your family and friends don't know what you do, you don't have enough visibility.



The Model: Visibility

Visibility Tools	Ready to Use	Start Using	# of Leads	Comments

Overview of the Model

There are hundreds of different marketing tools that can be used to generate visibility for your business. Some are expensive but reach a lot of people, like TV commercials and billboards. On the other hand, some are free but require a lot of hard work to be effective.

Some visibility tools bring in business simply by being used, regardless of how effectively. It is better to create and use a visibility tool, than to work on 20 and have nothing to show for it. Other visibility tools are effective simply because they communicate well to your target audience. This model helps you chose your visibility tools, create and use them, then test them. This ensures that you only use marketing tools that help your business, allowing you to spend your time and money on better marketing.

Visibility Tools

What visibility tools will work for you? Make sure that you use the ones that will maximize the number of customers who know about you. Here are some examples of visibility tools:

- Business cards that you are handing out to everyone you meet
- Social media with a easy way to forward to friends
- Flyers promoting your business and its address
- Postcards and direct mail
- Articles in a newspaper

Let's explore the tools that are the least expensive and take the least amount of time, as these are the tools you're most likely to start with.

- **10-second introduction:** How do you introduce yourself to potential customers, partners, suppliers, and investors? How do you introduce yourself to a stranger? Make sure that you have a clear message about what your business does. If people don't understand what your business does, they won't remember it. If they don't remember it, they will not call you with business opportunities.

- **Referral program:** Actively ask your network of friends, family, partners, customers, suppliers, past customers, and colleagues for business. But don't just ask for business, make sure you explain to these people how you help your customers. If they're not confident in what you do, they will not refer business to you.
- **Give a prize away:** Radio stations, events, charities, associations, and company charity events all actively look for sponsors. Donating your product or service as a prize is a cheap expense--it costs you less than the retail price. Plus it promotes a positive image.
- **Email signature:** People are used to seeing a name at the bottom of an email, but don't stop there. You can add a link to your webpage, your company tagline, or you can constantly change your signature so that people are excited to see what you will have the next week or month. Plus when messages are forwarded on, your email signature is still there for the next person to see.
- **Voicemail:** Don't just mitigate a negative impression by making sure that your voicemail is professional, but use it as another means of advertising what you do.

Only use visibility tools in places that you know your audience will be. If you focus on where your target audience is, the response from them will be much higher.

When will it be ready to use?

Visibility tools cannot all be made in a few hours, days or sometimes even weeks. For example, a 10-second introduction could take hours to think up, but a business name could take days, while a webpage takes weeks. What's the deadline for your visibility tool? Write down your deadline to complete the development of the visibility tool. Commit to it. If you write this down it increases the chance that you will get it done when you say you will.

When will you start using it?

When are you going to actively start using the visibility tool? This is the day that you will put up the flyers, go to your first networking event with your new business cards, or have your polished 30-second commercial. The first step is creating the visibility tool, but the second is using it. Write down the date you will actively start using it.

of Leads

There is no point in continuing to spend your time on a visibility tool if it isn't working. How do you know which ones to keep using and which ones to put away? Keep track of the success. How many additional leads did you get from each visibility tool? Three? None? 1053? By keeping track and comparing the tools, you can decide which are worth your time and more importantly, which to replace. You want to keep improving your marketing. If you don't know where your customers are coming from, ask.

Comments

Is there anything special that you did when using the visibility tool that is worth keeping track of? This could be the particular message or the month in which the tool was used. Was there anything that you really didn't like about the tool? Or maybe you would only use it for one part of your business. This section allows you to keep track of the success of the visibility tool that might go beyond the number of customers you reached.

Quick Conclusion

Marketing is neither scary nor crazy. You should approach marketing as logically as you would accounting or research. There should be a rationale for doing things, testing to see if your methods work and you should always look for ways to improve your methods. If you don't evaluate your marketing, you are wasting money. And until you use this model, you don't know how much of your marketing budget you are wasting.



Top Mistakes to Avoid

1. **Waiting to start marketing your business**
2. **Not taking a logical approach to figure out what type of marketing to use**
3. **Continuing to use an ineffective marketing tool**
4. **Not knowing which marketing tools work and which don't**
5. **Forgetting to ask customers how they heard about you**
6. **Not evaluating your marketing techniques on a regular basis**
7. **Stopping the use of visibility tools--you always need to reach new customers**

Now What?

- Visibility, especially great visibility, takes 1000 days to really work. Every day that you put off starting is another day you put off a sale
- Start with the three tools, see what works, tweak them, and continue to test them
- After three tools have been developed and implemented, start working on the second set of tools (another three)
- Continue to evaluate and only spend money on the tools that generate business
- Are the leads you generate closing? Have you looked at how you are generating credibility and likeability around your company? There are different marketing tools for this.

If You Learn Anything, It Should Be This...

People can't do business with you if they don't know about you.

The Model In Action:

Sally has had a massage therapy business for the last three years and has been relying on word-of-mouth marketing to attract most of her business. Her business has been trickling in, but after three years she still isn't making as much money as she'd planned. She decides to use the Visibility model to help ramp things up.

Visibility Tools	Ready to Use	Start Using	# of Leads	Comments
30-second pitch	Week 1	Week 2	25	At family reunion, found 25 relatives who didn't know I had a business.
Referral program	Week 2	Week 3	10	Asked family to refer business.
Cold call businesses	Week 3	Week 4	8	Phoned 5 local office buildings, had 1 offer space for a day.
Send postcards to locals	Week 1	Week 4	10	500 postcards to local residents, cost \$500.

Sally looks back at the visibility tools that she used in the last month and realizes that if she wants word-of-mouth to work, she needs to have a strategy for it. The most effective visibility tool was the 30-second pitch. But the referral program and postcards also generated leads with little effort. However, cold calling businesses didn't generate as much business as she was hoping and so she will focus more on the local market rather than businesses in the future. She is looking forward to next month when she is going to try manning a booth at a local event and donating massages to a silent auction.