



Marketing at the Points of Choice

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In business we are instructed to market to our target audiences at their various touch points – the places where we are able to connect with and communicate to our audiences. But in today's media environment, the number of potential touch points for even a single target audience is overwhelming. Whether you're looking at online marketing, in print, or in person, how do you choose where and when to invest your marketing budget with confidence that you'll generate response and most importantly, ROI?

Here's the secret: you market at the audience's points of choice. Instead of broadly marketing at any and all touch points, you focus your marketing dollars on the points at which your audience is making a decision to take the next step. Here's how:

Step 1: Identify your target audiences.

In marketing you should always start by identifying your target audiences and learning who they are, what benefits they're looking to receive, and what they will respond to. Get inside your audience's mind so that you can think, talk, and market like your audience.

Step 2: For each target audience, identify the stages in the sales process.

Start at the beginning, when a potential customer first finds out about your company and then identify the stages involved in moving through this process to final purchase for both the customer and your company.

Step 3: Identify the customer's decision points in the sales process.

With all of the stages in the sales process outlined, identify those stages in which customers are making a decision whether or not to move to the next step. This might be the decision to visit your website or your booth at a trade show, the decision to request more information either through an online form or via a phone call, or it might be the final decision to purchase your product or service.

Step 4: Develop marketing strategies focused on these decision points.

Not only do you want to convince the customer to take the next step, but you also want to ensure that the customer has the information and tools to make that decision and seamlessly follow through. For example, if a customer has received a referral to your company and decides to take the next step to visit your website, but after a quick Google search can't find your website, this presents an opportunity.

For both B2B and B2C companies, a growing number of these points of choice are occurring



online. Search engine optimization (SEO), pay-per-click campaigns, and a social media presence are often critical components to have in place for the initial customer decision to learn more about your company. These components ultimately lead customers to your website, so it's equally critical that you have a website with distinctive messaging, clear calls to action, and tools and information for taking the next step - which usually is to request more information. Offline points of choice vary greatly based on your industry, product or service offering, and target audience.

Overall – know your audiences, know your sales process, and then put yourself in your audience's shoes at the various decision making stages in the sales process. If you target your marketing efforts at these key points of choice, your streamlined efforts will be more effective and so will your audience's purchasing decisions.



