

How do you view your target audience?

This is not the Spam that comes in a can

On the telephone

Have you received multiple calls on your landline and/or cell phone that are in the same area code and start with the same three digits as your phone number? Chances are high that you have. Spammers are hoping that you will think that this a local number and therefore will answer. However, when they keep using this technique over and over and over again, and when caller ID shows you names of people you don't know, you learn pretty quickly that this is a spam call and you don't answer.

On email

If you are a website owner, have you received emails telling you that you have problems on your website and that the emailer can fix these "fatal" errors so that your website can function? After the second or third one, chances are good you figured out that this is a scam and you deleted the email and/or added it to your junk list and/or reported it.

or

Have you gotten an email like this one I have already received twice (word for word) from "Tina Richardson:"

Hello Deborah,

I just came across the Mad Mimi piece, "Dyscalculia and MLD Newsletter." Nice job! As a heads up, your site is not WC3 accessible for people with physical disabilities related to dyscalculia. I get it: your website can't be accessibility compliant without sacrificing design, interactivity and

general user experience for visitors without disabilities (paying 50% more for designers and coders might help, but would still fall short).

The very red flag here is that there is no “Mad Mimi” piece that I wrote about dyscalculia.

These are real examples. I get these calls and emails, several times a day. Apparently, the idea here is that I am going to believe that the call is from someone I know, or that my website has a ton of problems, or even that I wrote something that I didn't. In short, all these “marketing” pieces depend on my naivete or stupidity or lack of common sense. They are designed so that a trusting or uninformed person falls for them.

What differentiates spam marketing from real marketing

How you view your target audience determines what kind of marketer you are. If you view your audience as naive, easily swayed or just plain stupid, chances are you are a spammer/scammer. If, on the other hand, you view your audience as knowledge-seeking and perhaps even sophisticated, chances you are a real marketer (and therefore probably more successful).

Real marketing seeks to give potential customers fact-based information on which to base a buying decision. Spam/scam marketing often uses fear-mongering or the assumption that the target does not have enough information.

If you want to be taken seriously, do not view your target audience as stupid, gullible, uniformed, unsophisticated. Instead, view your target as smart and then your marketing will also be smart and successful.