Marketing by attrition?

Is your idea of marketing to send out the same offer over and over and over and over again in the hopes that your target will get so tired of hearing from you that they'll just pay up to get rid of you? No? Well, it seems to be the force behind a lot of marketing, especially direct mail and email marketing. I call it marketing by attrition and I think it is probably the least effective type of marketing there is (not too mention the most annoying to recipients).

An example

Case in point is Sirius XM. A few months ago, I bought a new car that included three months free of Sirius XM radio. Before I even had the car a couple of weeks, I got a letter from Sirius that said I could sign up for $5 per month for a year(!). But then, I read in the small print, I would be charged $16.99 per month after. SiriusXM sent me this exact offer in a letter several more times. Then, when my three-month trial was over, they sent me another slew of letters. So many in fact, I don't have an exact number.

The offer is always the same. I am still not interested, but I bet they will continue sending me letters for the next year or more.

Is there a strategy?

What is the strategy here? Is there a strategy? Or is it a mandate that hasn't been ever reviewed?

It seems to me that there's some sort of mandate or directive at large companies, which have hundreds of thousands of potential clients, to keep marketing the same offer to each person who doesn't sign up for the product or service. And

keep sending it until they sign up.

But what happens if the target doesn’t respond?

Experience says that if a target doesn’t respond to your marketing, you may need to change something. Perhaps you need to revise the offer. Or perhaps you need to change your marketing tactics. In the marketing by attrition “strategy,” there seems to be no course correction other than eventually giving up. I wonder if there is a certain number of mailings that these companies send out, perhaps based on cost, after which they conclude the cost of having you as client is too high. This method seems highly ineffective and costly.

What would work better?

Perhaps what would work better is to really understand what motivates each particular potential customer. This could involve sending out a survey or having a better sense of each customer through demographic and psychographic data.

Bottom line

If you are marketing by attrition, you may be fighting a long and losing battle.