

Looking for the magic bullet...

Are you looking for the magic bullet? The one solution to your marketing problems? Well, I can't help you. That's right—I can't help you find the magic bullet because there is no magic bullet!

A while back I had a client who was trying to re-grow his dwindling business. So he launched a social responsibility program. And when that failed to work as planned, he tried a new product and used postcards to sell it. And then that didn't work, so he tried doing do-good projects and used press releases to promote them. And then that didn't quite work either. You know why? Because all of these are tactics and there was no overall strategy or vision. One tactic, whatever it may be, will not result in sustained and increased sales.

When I was in grad school, we learned all about a new concept at the time: Integrated Marketing Communications (IMC). The concept was that your marketing efforts should integrate various tools, such as advertising, public relations, sponsorships, other one umbrella. I have always believed in this view.

Today, people seem to believe that the magic bullet is social media. Build a Facebook Fan Page and you will get clients! Be on Twitter and you will get clients! Write a blog and you will get clients! No, no, no!!! You certainly should consider social media, but one or all of these tools will not guarantee marketing success, especially if you are pursuing each of them haphazardly without an overarching strategy.

There really is no magic bullet. Marketing communications is about strategy and also about trial and error. Some things will work better than others. Something close to a magic bullet may be measurement. If you measure success, you will find out what works best for you. If you don't measure, how

will you know your impact?

Have you been looking for a magic bullet? What have you found?



The answer to your marketing needs

I recently read that to get leads for your business, white papers are the answer. (For those that don't know, white papers are backgrounders, in-depth write ups about a subject area.) For one second I thought, yeah! that is the answer and I was about to put it on my to-do list. But wait, I thought, there is never ONE answer to marketing. That is the magic bullet thinking that gets lots of people in trouble.

Marketing should be about using a mix of strategies and tactics that can promote your service or product to its target audience. For instance, say you are marketing denture paste. You could advertise in the AARP magazine (if the budget allows) or in a local seniors newspaper. You could sponsor an event targeting those 65+. You could do many things, but you wouldn't necessarily advertise in Blender Magazine or choose a skateboarding teen as your spokesperson. You have to go where your target audience goes.

So, my advice to you is that if someone tells you that to market your business, all you need to do is this one thing, walk away. Walk away fast. There is never a one-size solution nor any kind of magic bullet. Marketing is about creating awareness and that can take time and many forms.

I had a client once who was looking for the magic bullet. So, he hired me to re-do some copy, and he hired a PR guy to get some publicity, and he redesigned his website. He thought that each thing he did would bring a huge influx in business. And none of it did. Sure he got a better website, and good publicity, but because nothing was strategic and everything was a quick response to I need to get more business, it didn't work. And he kept wasting money wanting to find the one thing that would work instead of working on many different tactics that would give his brand cohesiveness. I could never make that client happy because one piece of copy or one press release is not going to turn you into a million dollar business.

A couple of nights ago, I was watching CNBC and they had a show entitled The Oprah Effect. As you no doubt know, anything that is seen on Oprah, almost automatically becomes a bestseller. You may think then that Oprah is a magic bullet. Well, yes and no. It does get you tremendous exposure, but in order to get on Oprah, you have to have a good product, good marketing and a good story. Those are part of the marketing mix. You also have to be ready to play in the big leagues. What if you can't deliver? Then your business is going down the tubes.

In sum, stop looking for one solution and look at the whole picture. What do you need to do to give yourself a marketing boost?

