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MARKETING TIPS FOR MANUFACTURERS

Ways to Improve Results and Empower Your Sales Team

By Trevor Reed, REED Marketing Communications Design, LLC

Naturally, young manufacturing companies want to keep expenses down as they ramp up their revenue. For example, to avoid adding staff (and HR costs), many businesses task their sales team with not only selling but also marketing.

Bootstrapping marketing efforts by assigning those responsibilities to sales staff may work well in the near term. However, as companies mature and evolve, problems arise if there's no marketing strategy that will grow with the business. Busy sales professionals can become over-extended and overwhelmed when handling marketing as well as sales efforts. Moreover, their lack of design and writing expertise can lead to inconsistent branding, unclear messaging, and ineffective marketing materials — all of which can destroy a company's brand reputation.

So, what are you to do if your sales team doubles as your marketing team?

Fortunately, there are ways to improve your marketing efforts while empowering your sales professionals to focus on what they do best — bring in new business.

1. Be distinctive. Gather a sampling of your marketing materials and look at them objectively. Do they have visual characteristics that make you stand out from your competitors? If nothing jumps out as distinctive to you, it's likely your marketing assets won't stand out to prospective customers either. Consider adding a unique color, freshening up your image library, or refining your typography. Integrating even minor upgrades across all your communications will help you get noticed in a crowded marketplace.

2. Be relevant. Sit down with your leadership team and document the characteristics of your ideal target audience, the problems they experience, and how your business can help them overcome the obstacles they face. Next, weave those talking points into your marketing messaging to facilitate emotional connections with prospects. It's critical to go deeper than merely describing product features. Address the benefits of those features in terms of how they will solve the specific needs and challenges of your ideal customers. That is the key to generating customer interest, inspiring action, and increasing sales.

3. Be consistent. One of the biggest challenges of marketing is that, at any given time, your message may be seen by a large percentage of people who have no immediate need for your product. That is why consistency is so important. Once you've created a distinctive brand image and crafted a compelling message, you need to present them consistently across all media and modes of communication. Develop a set of brand identity standards and messaging guidelines to set the ground rules for your marketing materials. Then share them with everyone in your organization. Consistency is critical for creating a strong, mature, and memorable brand.

I encourage you to keep these three tips in mind as you hone your branding and strive to give your sales team the marketing tools they need to succeed. And if your manufacturing business needs some design and marketing support to accomplish those objectives, I'm just a phone call away at 717.517.1727.



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