



Have a marketing plan of action

They say if you have a plan and write it down it is 80% more likely to happen. Well I don't know if this is true or not, but I do believe in the benefits of having a written 'plan of action'. It forces you to define your intentions and answers the when / where / what questions in one document.

A plan of action or campaign is a proactive marketing activity designed to produce a specific result. Proactive marketing activity can multiply your business dramatically.

But the thing is, most marketing is passive, not proactive.

The passive part of marketing is necessary. It's getting clear about who your ideal clients are, refining your message and developing your marketing materials.

All of this is essential; but if your marketing "just sits there" waiting for something to happen, you can wait a long time before you get much response.

When you implement a marketing campaign, you are creating a step-by-step plan to get your message in front of your intended audience, identifying qualified prospects and following up to get meetings with those you can help.

Let's look at a campaign for a professional service. And the marketing 'tool' I'll employ for this example is networking.

Most networking is not campaign-oriented, it's activity-oriented.

That is, we do networking activities and hope that some useful connections and ultimately, a few clients, will come out of it. But there's usually not much of a plan behind it.

If you're a campaign-oriented networker, you think about this quite differently. You have goals, a plan and very specific networking tactics to reach your objectives.

Here is an outline for a marketing plan of action that utilizes networking in a focused way:

Objective:

To gain five new clients, worth £5,000 each, in six months through proactive networking in the Milton Keynes / Northampton area.

Strategy:

Increase credibility and visibility in my target market; grow my mailing/email list to 500 people; have meetings with 25 influencers; have appointments with 25 prospective clients; prepare proposals for 10 prospects; close five projects.

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Tactics:

Search out and join three business networking or professional groups; attend and participate actively; gather names for my mailing/email list; send out a newsletter or other keep-in-touch marketing piece twice a month; set up appointments key influencers as I meet them; get leads to potential clients; contact and send follow-up articles; offer introductory presentations; follow-up for sales appointments; prepare proposals.

Marketing Materials:

Verbal and written marketing message; business cards; executive summary; web site; series of articles; email newsletter and other mailing pieces; printed information for key influencers; scripts for contact and follow-up calls; outline for presentation; sales process outline; proposal template.

Now this is a proactive marketing plan of action that actually has a chance of working. It's not a series of random, unconnected activities with vague aims and indefinite strategies.

If you are not getting the marketing results you want, it may be that you simply have no real marketing campaign you are following. The time and effort it takes to put this together will pay for itself many times over.

If you want to get better results with your marketing, you need to develop and implement a focused marketing campaign designed to bring in new clients consistently and predictably.