

1001 WAYS TO MARKET YOUR SERVICES

Even If You Hate to Sell

"With so many great marketing ideas in this book, you'll leave your competition in the dust."

—Jay Conrad Levinson,
author of *Guerrilla Marketing*

With contributions from:

- ★ Ken Blanchard
- ★ Peter Drucker
- ★ Tom Peters

RICK CRANDALL, PH.D.

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Introduction

This is the only book that lets you pick from more than 1,001 real examples of successful marketing. The more you know about marketing and the more imaginative you are, the more you'll be able to adapt. Single ideas have produced millions of dollars for some companies. Why not see what they can produce for you?

If you're in a hurry, flip to any chapter, and you'll see ideas that you can use. I believe in practical value, not theory. For a further brief discussion on the themes of this book—and instructions on how to contact me—see the Afterword. (For a general “Bible” of marketing that covers the topic from A to Z, you may like my book *Marketing Your Services: For People Who Hate to Sell.*)

Marketing is defined as *anything* you do to get or keep a customer. For people who think they hate marketing, the good news is that customer service is the best marketing. And among the “anythings” in this book, I guarantee you'll find many ideas you'll like! (And I guarantee your results or your money back—see page 365.)

In order to sort out the 1,001+ ideas for your use, check or highlight those you like as you read. This is proven to help your memory and your action. Don't be overwhelmed or distracted by the large number of examples. This book should be a feast. Take what you need, and come back for more anytime. To help you take action, each chapter ends with some quick reminders, ideas, and nags—your Action Agenda.

Good hunting!

Contents

Introduction	vii
1 Who Are You? And Whom Should You Accept?	1
2 Integrated Marketing	17
3 Personal Contacts Bring Business	27
4 Santa Claus Selling	37
5 Seminar Selling	47
6 Trade Shows and Event Marketing	59
7 Promotions	73
8 Using the Phone to Build Relationships—and Sell	85
9 Sales Techniques	99
10 Managing a Sales Effort	113
11 Personal Mail	121
12 You Too Can Be a Junk Mailer!	129

13	More Unusual Mass Mailings	139
14	Using Newsletters Effectively	151
15	Low-Cost Guerrilla Ideas	159
16	Brochures	175
17	Advertising	183
18	TV and Radio Commercials, Billboards, and Other Advertising	197
19	Publicity Builds Your Image and Business: Publishing Your Way to Fame and Fortune	207
20	Publicity in Many Forms: From Stunts to High Tech	225
21	On-Line Marketing	235
22	Service That Builds Relationships	251
23	Service That Sells	265
24	Networking	283
25	Earning Referrals: The Ultimate Marketing Tool	299
26	Strategy and Tactics in Your Marketing	321
27	Strategic Positioning	337
28	Research Helps You and Others	347
	Afterword (and guarantee)	365
	Sources	368
	Index	369

Who Are You? And Whom Should You Accept?

“People suffer from the same disease as products. They try to be all things to all people.”

—Al Ries and Jack Trout,
Positioning: The Battle for Your Mind

You may be surprised to know that the most important thing you can do about your marketing is not choosing what methods you use but rather defining *who you are*. Before you can attract and serve others, you must make it clear to them—and yourself—what you offer them.

Even in a world of intense competition, who you are is more important to your clients and customers than *how you do what you do*. Who you are is often even more important than *what you do*, since it determines how you actually help people.

For services, people must “buy” you before they will consider buying what you offer. Credibility and trust are crucial. Your “bedside manner” can be more important than your technical skills. And people will judge your “manners” more quickly.

TECHNICAL WAYS OF DESCRIBING WHO YOU ARE

The marketing field has many technical terms that concern who you are and who you serve. These include “positioning,” “niche markets or marketing,” “targeting or target markets,” “segmentation or market segments,” and “USP” (unique sales proposition).

The best definition of positioning is how you are seen, *in the minds of prospects and customers*, compared with their alternatives. Delivering services is a relationship, however small in some cases. Clients/consumers must have relationships with you in their minds, or they will not buy your services. If you accept the importance of relationships, it’s up to you to establish and maintain them with your market, and one-to-one with each customer.

Positioning

Positioning can involve who you are and what you do. But it can also be defined by how you do it, where you do it, or for whom. Remember that your biggest competition in the customer’s mind is probably inertia: most people end up doing nothing!

THEY SELECT YOU AND YOU SELECT THEM

The first part of this chapter gives you examples of how service businesses have established positions in different ways, with different markets. But relationships are a two-way street. Not everyone will want to consider a relationship with you. And *you should not try to do business with everyone*. So, the second part of the chapter will show you examples of how to find, or select, the right customers.

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Clean Contractors . . .

To position yourself, you have to know your competition. One contractor asked his competitors’ customers what they liked and disliked about competitors’ jobs. He found that the contractors’ images were often of dirty workers, old trucks parked in front of houses, and messes left behind. So, he issued uniforms to his workers, had them park in back or out of sight, and gave them vacuums to clean up after themselves. Business boomed.

A More Playful Image . . .

The law firm of Bartlit, Beck rented an office with a central space big enough for a basketball court. So, they put one in! When clients visit, they can't take their eyes off the basketball setup and eventually end up playing. This puts their relationship on a different basis, humanizes the firm, and can't be forgotten.



Positioning Against Big Competitors . . .

Price is a tough way to compete, but some services can do it. A Florida accountant goes right after his main competition with this headline in his mass mailing: "Why go to H&R Block when you can have a savvy tax accountant prepare your taxes for the same price?" He guarantees to meet the Block price if you make an appointment by February 15. I'd change the headline to "Why go to H&R Block when you can have a *real* tax accountant for the same price?" A little shorter, and emphasizing that H&R Block workers aren't accountants. His headline produced 791 new clients from a list of 100,000 over-\$40,000 income earners. By focusing on higher-income earners, he was able to point out that they needed more advice. If you're competing with a bigger, more well-known player, you look stronger advertising straight at them.

Positioning with and Against the Big Guys . . .

An ad in the *Business Journal* said, essentially: Foot, Cone and Belding is the biggest and one of the best ad agencies in California. Now you can get the same creative ad, but without the big overhead. We are a group of ex-FCB creative people who have formed our own firm, etc.

This approach allows them to play on their credentials with the big firm's name. They appeal to the types of clients who want to save money but are willing to pay for big-time service.

Be Approachable

If you're part of a big company or a status profession, you may tend to intimidate people. Humanize yourself to put people at ease. Tell a lawyer joke if you're an attorney, for instance.

Positioning and Publicity Through Speed . . .

When you're outspoken, you make good copy. Robert Macdonald of LifeUSA insurance company has offended much of the industry by insulting their slow procedures, while building a \$273 million business. And he gets lots of publicity! They pay agents within 24 hours. They issue customer policies within 48 hours. And they answer questions from agents within 48 minutes! When you pick a simple rule such as speed or customer service to build your company around, you can achieve great things and get attention.

Be an Advocate . . .

If your clients have an "enemy," you can position yourself well by attacking it. For instance, one accountant became a popular radio show guest on taxes because he aggressively went after the IRS, and he was an ex-IRS agent! A similarly toned yellow pages ad carries the headline "Sorry Uncle Sam." It then goes on to explain that the company protects clients from the demands—over demands—of the IRS. It also offers a free consultation. They report that the ad worked well. But what it misses is some sort of guarantee that if there is ever a dispute, or you're audited, they will go to bat for you free, take care of it, and so forth. That's the kind of attitude clients want!

Competitor Bashing . . .

Competitors make it almost too easy for Glendale Federal to get attention by bashing big, impersonal banks. And it works, because it's cute, and true! They've opened 6,000 new checking accounts a month from their all-media campaign. And they get lots of publicity for their attack ads such as: "I just got a letter from my bank. I knew it was from my bank because they spelled my name wrong!" On voice mail: "For a summary of the new ways we'll be jerking you around, press 1. . . ." Wells Fargo claimed harassment when GF

Offend Someone

If you're not offending someone, such as the IRS if you're an accountant, or competitors, you may not be taking a strong position.

employees passed out aspirin in its parking lot! More publicity for Glendale!

Extra Niche Services . . .

To help out, one accountant started to offer a bill-paying service for senior citizens. This takes a chore off some, and is necessary for others. More important, it positions him as unique and service oriented. It ties him together closely with clients so he gets lots more referrals from this group—two to three per month. It also makes it easier for him to do their taxes later.

Farming a Neighborhood . . .

Farming is a realty term that means “specializing in a specific neighborhood.” You usually send a newsletter on home prices to local owners and others and generally are considered *the* expert in that area. Use this idea to become an expert in a niche. You might be the only professional in your area to “farm” certain trade group meetings. Some real estate agents cooperate with other providers to better serve their areas: for instance, getting a chimney sweep to offer a special to the neighborhood they farm. Or a window washer, a roofer, a painter . . . ?

Joint Marketing

Combine your efforts with others to take care of your similar clients. Jay Levinson calls it *fusion marketing*. It can “explode” your business!



Leading-Edge Technology . . .

Printers, and many other service providers, sometimes try to get the jump on competition by having capacities that others don't have. PrintSource was the first U.S. installation of a digital machine that allows custom printing. Being a test user can give you an edge—but it can also cost you a lot of time as the bugs are worked out of a new machine. Doctors have the same benefits/problems with new high tech.

Get Your Foot in the Door . . .

Norm Pilgrim sends repeated mailings out locally. They pick a low-cost service to advertise which gets people in

the door. They show the low rate and ask, "Are you paying too much for _____?" They've grown from 34 clients to 1,250 in five years. Once people are in the door, they find other services to sell to customers. They do no other prospecting.

Become a Cause . . .

Bob Juniper is a good example of representing a cause to improve your visibility and marketing. His body shop was expected to get in bed with insurers that controlled payments. Instead, he chose to attack the whole system. Radio ads and billboards were his biggest media, but the message was the key. One ad asserted, "Quality collision-repair standards are being systematically destroyed by insurance direct repair programs." Bob says that insurance companies encourage consumers to go to certain shops where they have negotiated lower rates for lower-quality work! He's positioned himself as the consumer advocate by yelling that individuals can go to any shop they want, distributing educational literature, and so forth. Since the heavy marketing, annual revenues are up from \$1.2 million to \$6.1 million. Some people hate him, but other shops now pay for the right to use his proven ads in their markets!

Auto Body for Women . . .

Wahkins Paint & Collision decided to focus on women as clients. The owner, Terry Roarke, started by talking to every woman who came into the shop. This resulted in teal awnings, softer lighting, plants, and women's magazines in the waiting room. Bathrooms were toned up and decorated with art. Employees went to seminars on listening, and a new manager was appointed who was particularly patient and gracious.

Denying Your Heritage . . .

The Corporate Image Store says they are *not* a PR firm. But that's what they do, just in an unusual way. You pay

Being Easy to Buy For

If you are strongly identified with an industry or a hobby (positioning), it's easier for people to remember you. You should buy others presents related to their personal interests. The bonus is that they'll do the same for you.



only for actual results with the media. They use a two-page fax to explain their approach and list specific prices for results. Positioning yourself as “not like a lawyer” etc. highlights your differences.

Evangelical Marketing . . .

If you really believe in the value of what you’re selling, like Ted Tencza, at Dialogic (which sells computer telephony), then you’re out there helping everyone, promoting the entire industry, and faxing out free information to anyone who asks. That’s why he gets mentioned in the most relevant trade magazine, which says, “We love him.” They also put his articles on their website. Become an evangelist for your area and reap the rewards too. (See Guy Kawasaki’s book—listed in the References section—for more on evangelical marketing.)

Toy Publicity . . .

Top gun Leslie Fastiff has the reputation of doing almost anything it takes to win a case for his clients but also of having the charm to get along with opposing teamster lawyers. Trucking firms have been major clients. A page-one business story featured him in front of a collection of model trucks representing every major firm he had represented. It’s an eye-catcher in itself and impressive in the numbers represented.

If your niche-oriented practice is strongly associated with a particular industry, when people come into your office, they should see things that signal that industry to them.

Leading-Edge Positioning . . .

Sorrento Mesa Printing has lots of clients in technology and the sciences. They position themselves as the preferred consultant by reading high-tech publications and keeping up on cutting-edge issues. They say, “Our cus-

Niche Research

Find out the trade publications of your customers in *Standard Rate and Data* at the library. Even easier, ask customers for old copies of magazines they get—many publications have coupons for free subscriptions.



tomers want more than a good price. They want someone they can turn to for advice, a sustaining educational resource rather than a vendor.”

Go with What Customers Know . . .

Bellcore wasn't as well known as their best-known software switch feature "ISCP." So, they developed a logo that featured the ISCP initials for all of their software. This raised the profile of their other services and products and opened sales doors for them.

Environmental Marketing . . .

Many printing companies such as Ink Works and Alonzo have specialized in soy-based inks and recycled paper for years before it became popular. This business practice gives them an environmental niche appeal that has helped them to be successful. Associating with a cause will tend to draw people to you, whether it's cosponsoring events or speaking out for something in which you believe.

Positioning Success . . .

CompuTrainers sells E-mail systems. Their competition varies from the much bigger Lotus to freebies on-line. Through careful positioning, CompuTrainers grew from zero to \$1 million in one year. Their best customers are suggested by their positioning statement: Somebody who has already tried basic E-mail and wants more, but doesn't want to spend the money and time customizing Lotus Notes. If you don't want to sell on price at the bottom, and aren't big enough to sell at the top, this is a logical position for you.

Selling on High Price . . .

High price is one way of suggesting that you are the highest quality. It works for the Big 6s and McKenzies of the world. One such consulting firm considers it great advertising to publicize the fact that they won't take on reengineering or consulting clients for less than million-



dollar jobs. This positioning can also work for smaller service providers. You can operate under a slogan of “We’re the most expensive and darn well worth it.” Some people like to buy the highest price, either for status, or because it reassures them about quality. If you charge more, you’ll attract the types of clients who don’t quibble about price, and you’ll be able to afford to offer little extras that your competitors can’t.

“Productize”

Develop units of your services that you can sell like a product. This makes your services more tangible so customers know exactly what they’re getting.



Specialize, Specialize, Specialize . . .

In realty, you’ve heard of the value of location, location, location. Niche specialization works wonders too. Jim Richardson specializes in selling real estate to biotech companies. He realized that they were a huge, growing business segment in his area. Further research showed that they had different stages of development that required different amounts of space. By specializing, he knows individual company requirements and has cornered that niche.

Products Enhance Services . . .

Here’s an extreme example of “productizing” your services. The Seattle office of a Danish computer consulting company, Computer Resources International AS, was almost defunct. They had some proprietary software coding that helped them achieve their consulting goals and also helped their clients develop their own software. The new president, George Schaffner, began to use the software as the entering wedge to compete with bigger companies with better reputations such as EDS and Andersen Consulting. The software was unique and proprietary. They were able to sell that, then customize it and consult on how to use it, rather than the other way around.

Necessity was the mother of invention. Since they didn’t have a budget, they were forced to bootstrap. To

create the product, they forced their consultants to do the programming necessary to turn the code into a product. They also used their own product to create the software, thus giving them a closer view of what users faced. Schaffner also changed the positioning of the one-million-dollar product to “insurance” rather than a programming tool, because it could keep projects from failing.

SUSPECTS: People or companies you suspect should need your services because of the business they're in, or similar reasons.

PROSPECTS: People or companies who recognize their needs for your services and have the money to pay for them.

DO THEY DESERVE TO WORK WITH YOU?

The last section made the point that who you are—positioning—is very important. You can't market and build relationships effectively unless prospects and customers understand what you do. And more important in today's world, many of them want to know *what you stand for* as well. In their eagerness to obtain business, too many companies don't ask that same question of their prospects and customers.

Many prospects are not qualified to do business with you. They don't recognize a need and have the budget, authority, time, or attention to hire you. Just as others judge you before they enter into a relationship with you, you should judge them. Don't waste your time with unqualified prospects. Even further, grade your customers by what they offer you. Then fire those who aren't worth a relationship!

Qualify Giveaways . . .

Business Matters always gave prospects a free 30-day period to evaluate their software. But some people who took the software weren't qualified prospects. Worse, because they had no real commitment, many didn't get around to evaluating the software. Now Business Matters requires a credit card or purchase order up front. It's still a 100 percent money-back guarantee, and they won't process the payment for a month. The sales conversion rate has jumped from 50 percent to 70 percent. Giving away seminars, newsletters, or other

