

Engaging Professional Marketing Services

Toochikwu Udeinya

Western Carolina University

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The transition from producing a product out of raw material to the purchase of your product is extremely difficult and very different in practice. The production side is somewhat easier after you have produced your first batch, the scientific/quantitative aspect of manufacturing a product is easier to understand and duplicate. However, getting the customer to buy your product is not as easy to understand, duplicate, and guarantee success. Through interviews with successful entrepreneurs like the CEO of Chesapeake Bay Distilleries, Chris Richeson, I have learned that the marketing of your brand is not the most important aspect of your success than it is right up there. You could have the best product in the market but if your target customer group does not have a reason to buy that product than it will sit on the shelves forever.

Marketing your brand and influencing customers to purchase your product is qualitative in nature. As mentioned in *The Advertising Process at Work 2014*, before you see an advertisement on TV it was probably chopped 100 times; this still does not guarantee that marketing strategy worked. The difficulty of marketing especially for a small business is enormous, another caveat to consider is the cost associated with marketing. Imagine spending \$326,260 for a 30-second spot on “The Big Bang Theory” only to see no new sells correlated to that ad. The emphasis on brand association and brand awareness is vital to the health of any business; this is why outsourcing your marketing strategy is necessary.

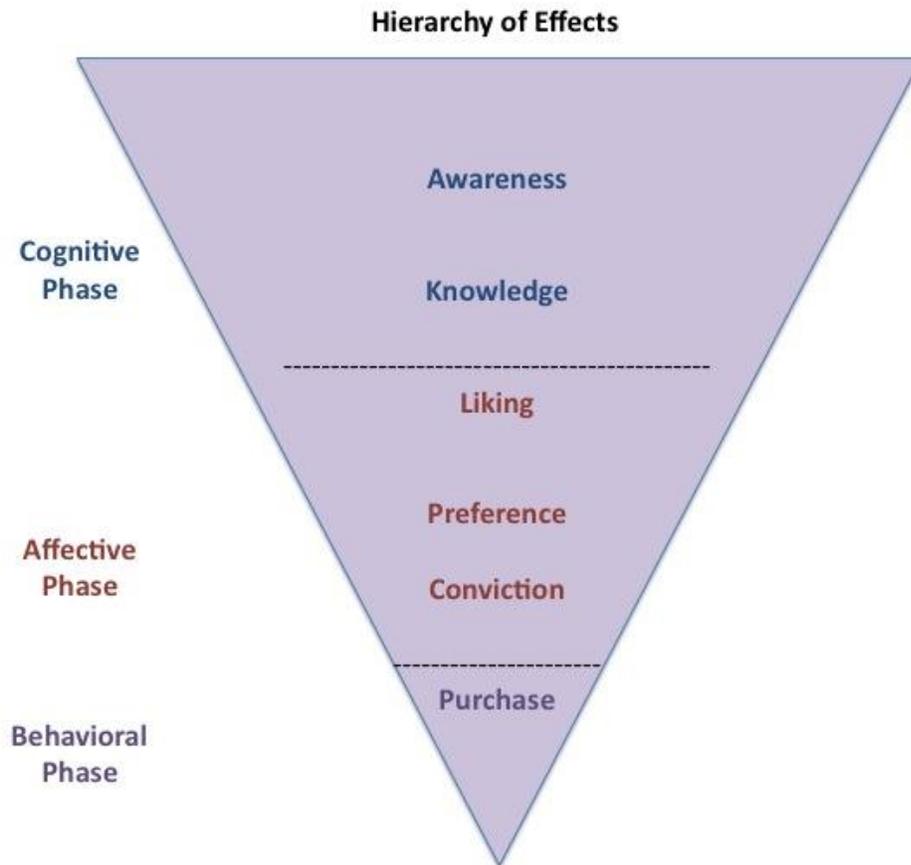
In order to hire the right marketing firm you first need to know what you want in your marketing strategy; what direction you would want to take is also important in providing guidance to the marketing firm. I use the word “hire” loosely because you will be partners with the marketing firm in the pursuit creating a marketing strategy and seeing it come to fruition.

Identifying your goals, strategies, target audience, and competition is the basics that you and your marketing firm can build off (How: Otto 360 Case Studies, 2014). Reviewing past and current products that are similar to yours is critical in that you can assess their strengths and weakness in terms of marketing campaigns. The team should be able to suggest improvements to your key message to the customer and recommend various ways to reach your target audiences. As mentioned earlier marketing is not cheap, so you will need to diversify your advertisement portfolio. Knowing how to reach your target audience through the various media outlets is something your marketing firm will need to demonstrate an understanding.

Planning and research will help identify opportunities for understanding the customer, competitors, and business environment (Hyman & Sierra, 2010); your marketing firm will need to be able to provide this service. For new products the marketing firm should be able to provide test marketing, the results will help refine your marketing strategies. Test marketing can also provide estimates of market share and volume, estimates of the cannibalization rate on an existing product line, and competitor reactions (Hyman & Sierra, 2010).

An open-minded approach is vital in being able to change with what your marketing firm is telling you, this does not mean that you need to follow aimlessly. Being able to adapt is a trait not only for you but also for the marketing firm that you hire. You will need to be flexible for example if running a particular ad on the radio only generates five percent in additional sales while a magazine ad that might cost twice as much generates 30 percent in additional sales; you will need to be able to spend based on results. The creativity needed to take conceptualization of ideas to reality an aspect that your partnering firm should have. Creative advertising is more memorable, longer lasting, works with less media spending, and builds a fan community faster

Finally, the marketing firm should be able to demonstrate an understanding of the basic five steps in the hierarchy-of-effect model; they should also be able to explain how they can achieve these steps.



(MECCA, 2011)

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