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THE MARKETING EXECUTIVE'S GUIDE: GETTING YOUR MESSAGING RIGHT

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Regardless of how you contact your customers, there are several ways to ensure your message is more likely to elicit a response. Here are some essential tips to ensure you get your marketing messaging right.

#1 SANITISE YOUR DATA

Getting your messaging right relies on having the right data available. Out-of-date or incorrect information will result in ineffective communication. To sanitise your data you must:

> **Ensure that contact names and addresses are correct.**

> **Verify that all information held is complete and fill any gaps that may remain.**

Depending on how 'dirty' your customer records are, the cleaning process could take quite some time and effort. However, failure to sanitise your data will inevitably result in failed messages, wasting time, effort and money. If in doubt, seek professional advice.

IDENTIFY PAINS AND NEEDS

<u>Each of your customers will have business pains:</u> issues that cause problems in the day-to-day running of their business. Your products and services will almost certainly have been created with a view to solving some of these. Using this as a starting point, you already have some of the key elements of a successful marketing message.

However by talking to your existing customers, you will be able to define other ways in which your products and services have met their needs. Many products are used in ways other than that intended by the vendor, but which add value for the customer.

The knowledge of your existing clients and the common problems they face in their industry, will also allow your business to recognise much more value from a pre-segmented mailing list. Existing insight can be applied to create effective mailing campaigns to new leads without specific knowledge of each contact.

#3 MATCH YOUR OFFERINGS TO THOSE NEEDS

With the pains and needs of potential customers identified, it becomes possible to create campaigns which target each. You should also now be able to define the contacts most likely to be affected by each pain or need. Segmenting the customer database by pains and needs, it immediately becomes possible to better target messages. Emails, letters or phone calls can all be made to clients, supplying them with information that addresses problems they really have, rather than hypothetical needs they might not.

Segmentation can also be used on "new" customers, targeting messages to specific industries or job titles for instance. Rather than addressing a specific customer with specific needs, segmentation can be achieved using pain points that are common to an industry or decision maker, maintaining the all-important relevance on which successful marketing relies.

Using segmentation you then have the option of running multiple campaigns simultaneously or focusing solely on one segment at a time. Whichever way you choose to conduct the campaign, there is a much greater chance that the message will be relevant, and therefore of interest, to your contacts.
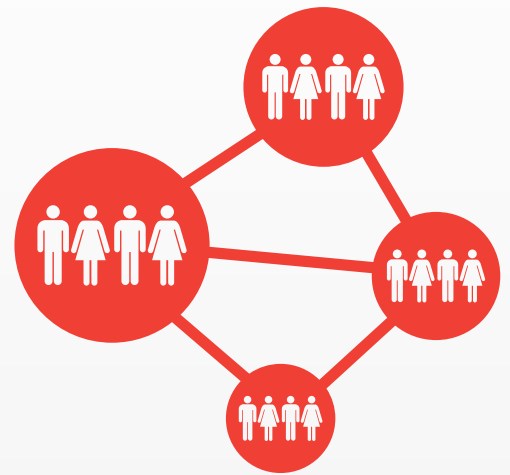
#4 GET IN CONTACT

With data cleansed, needs defined and customer base segmented, it is finally time to make contact with clients. Before sending any messages you should:

Check the contacts within your segment to verify that messages will not be sent to people who have previously opted out of your mailings.

If contacting by 'phone, make sure each number is legally compliant and checked against the Telephone Preference Service registers.

That the details of each contact and subsequent follow-ups are properly recorded for further analysis.

That you fully respect any resulting requests for removal from your mailing list.

#5 COLLECT FEEDBACK

Without <u>collecting feedback</u> it becomes impossible to define whether a campaign was a success or failure. As noted above, your sales and marketing team must collect data about each interaction to help you further refine future marketing efforts. For instance you may find that:

One particular offer is more successful than others.

There is a significant lag between your message being received and a purchase being made.

One of your segments yielded more leads than others, giving insight for new campaigns and messages.

Feedback reveals more previously unidentified needs or opportunities that can be exploited in future.

You have chances to resolve issues and provide exceptional customer service, improving brand image and potentially creating new sales.

REMEMBER:

Messaging is the start of an ongoing dialogue with customers, so it is essential you try to improve your communications at every opportunity.

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