

## Under the Marketing Umbrella

Misinformation abounds when it comes to understanding what advertising is and what it isn't. There are several distinct disciplines under the marketing umbrella, advertising being only one of them:

### MARKETING

- Research
- Sales
- Advertising (both image advertising and advertising making a direct offer)
- PR
- Distribution (if the business manufacturers or otherwise provides a product)
- Evaluation of effectiveness

Some business owners believe effective marketing involves only one or two of these, but optimum success depends mightily on strong programs comprising all or most of these disciplines, working in synch. Sales, backed by sound research to determine target demographics, competitive landscapes, industry trends, buying influences and other factors, is the centerpiece of any marketing program, but it must be backed up with solid image-building advertising that creates brand awareness. No one buys a product or service they don't think they need. In organizations where sales teams are understaffed and leads fall through the cracks, good advertising is essential to bridge the gap and support sales. When you realize that 4 out of 5 inquirers to an advertising message never see a salesman, you understand its importance.

So why are advertising budgets the first to be cut when business is on the downswing? Business owners say they while they can easily evaluate the effectiveness of a sales person, it's difficult to do so with advertising. But consider this: advertising reach (the size of an audience) is calculated by the number of impressions (the exposure of an ad message to a person or household). Depending on the product, a retailer can spend hundreds of dollars for a personal sales call to one potential customer versus a few cents to reach that same person via a print ad, a direct mail piece, a website, a billboard or a broadcast spot. Simply stated, there is no better expenditure than advertising, especially when it's backed up with effective PR and distribution programs.

McGraw Hill conducted a study that tracked more than 2,000 product lines sold through one of their magazines. Six hundred of these products ran display ads, 1400 did not. Research determined that the advertised products had an awareness rate **250% times higher** than those that were not advertised – 250%! And the more heavily a product had been advertised, the larger its gain in buyer awareness.

Advertising messages are brand awareness builders and attention-grabbers, but when it comes to building a high level of credibility, public relations is called for. A savvy advertising agency can assist you in creating a "buzz" around your product or service that will provide additional juice to your advertising. PR is defined as "unpaid" advertising through press coverage, trade show participation, broadcast interviews, special event marketing, special promotions and other "soft" means.

Effective distribution channels are essential to successful marketing because if your product isn't easily available to the consumer, no amount of sales and marketing will help you reach your sales goals. The last essential is an objective evaluation of which efforts are working effectively to market your product or service and which are not. Advertising agencies and marketing firms work every day to help clients make these determinations. Marketing professionals can save you thousands of dollars by helping you choose just the right combination of marketing services you need to reach your targets.