

TELL IT WELL 0.2

# Ten Red Flags That Your Marketing Communications Aren't Working

Stop! You may be on a collision course with a marketing disaster. Pull over for a moment. It's time to rethink your marketing communications. Check their value, impact, usability, and verify that your communications are aligned with every aspect of your business plan. Take time to look at these ten warning signs that your target audiences aren't hearing the right messages about your company at the right time.

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**1**

## **YOUR SALES REPS ARE PITCHING YOUR OLD STORY.**

There's a serious disconnect somewhere within your organization, and it's compromising the clarity of your internal communications. As a result, the sales reps don't have either the training or the collateral materials they need to get your current messages out to the customer. So update your sales track, deliver appropriate support pieces and alert the field. Now is also a good time to check for other big holes in your digital communications, and to ensure that all messaging integrates with your company's chosen positioning.

**2**

## **YOUR SALES REPS ARE WORKING WITH OUT-OF-DATE MATERIALS OR CHANNELS.**

If any part of a sales piece is outdated, many reps won't use it. Instead, they are left grabbing for whatever they can get their hands on to win the sale. We know one sales rep who actually mixed and matched literature from other firms! If this is happening in your sales organization, don't be surprised if prospects get so muddled by your messages that they take their business elsewhere.

Managing your digital content library will improve consistency and enable reps to quickly reach prospects via digital and social channels, improving the number of touchpoints along the sales lifecycle.

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**YOU'VE JUST LAUNCHED A NEW PRODUCT, BUT YOUR SALES REPS AREN'T SELLING IT.**

Maybe they don't even realize the product or service has been introduced—or if they do, they don't know how to sell it. Maybe it's too novel or complicated and it's just easier for them to pitch other things. Take the lead in making sure that other departments—sales, finance, product development, research—are talking to you, and that you're all heading in the same direction.

As products are developed, make sure your marketing department is working in tandem, creating collateral to support digital communications and prospective sales meetings.

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**YOUR MARKETING ASSISTANT CAN'T EXPLAIN WHAT YOUR BUSINESS IS. NEITHER CAN YOUR MOTHER.**

They would understand the nature of your business better if your marketing communications quickly and concisely defined your company's character, philosophy, benefits and value proposition. But that can happen only if you make these messages simple enough for anyone—even lay people—to understand them. If your messages are fuzzy, ambiguous or

inconsistent, it may be because your brand isn't clearly defined or because you aren't using the right communication tool. Rewire your communications in a way that tells your story well by defining how it should be told, whether it's an interactive experience or video or guerilla marketing takeover. It's up to you to tell your brand story.

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**CUSTOMERS ACT SURPRISED BY YOUR NEW CUTTING-EDGE IMAGE.**

A message that doesn't fit with your culture will be rejected by the sales force. And if that wrong message somehow does get in front of your target audiences, they won't respond the way you want them to. A case in point: A traditional banking institution launched a hip new promotion to its high-net-worth clients. But the marketing communications no longer made an honest representation of the bank and its offerings—a mistake made frequently back during the dot-com era. The bank learned the hard way that a surprised customer is a former customer. By delivering messages that are consistently clear and true to the goals and culture of your organization, you give customers greater confidence in all of your offerings..

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### **YOU CAN'T TELL YOUR OWN WEB SITE FROM THE COMPETITION'S.**

The text on your site pages is subject to the same scrutiny as every other part of your company's business communications system. To be effective, it has to differentiate your company while it supports the message, feelings and image that you've put so much effort into developing. Sameness can be deadly. If you can't tell what makes your firm different by reading your pages, neither will visitors to your site.

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### **PROSPECTS ARE SAYING, "THIS WAS EMAILED TO ME AND I DON'T KNOW WHAT IT IS."**

The attachment they received seems unrelated to the product or service they requested information about. First off, you should be thinking embedded video over attachments. When was the last time you opened an attachment to an email if you did not request it? Get back to the fundamentals of integrated marketing: Make sure each communication connects in some way with your overall corporate message, and that fulfillment packages are a natural outgrowth of your advertising.

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### **YOUR CAPABILITIES BROCHURES ARE COLLECTING DUST.**

Boxes of the glossy 16-pager your company poured its marketing budget into are being moved into a closet, where you won't have to look at them anymore. They are constant and nagging reminders of the time, information and financial resources wasted on that splendid piece, the panacea that was supposed to address every one of your sales and marketing needs. If that brochure hasn't been used to promote your company, what has? If you're not sure what materials your sales team is using, that's a red flag in itself.

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### **CLIENTS THINK YOUR FIRM STILL OFFERS WHAT IT DID THREE YEARS AGO.**

Be sure you're not recycling outdated marketing messages that prevent customers from thinking of you in new and better ways. For some types of companies, cross marketing is the most effective tool for building multiple relationships and retaining customers. By making re-selling a priority in their communications plan, they let their customer base know they're still the same great company they always were, with added capabilities to better serve their needs.

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**YOU LOST THE BUSINESS—AGAIN.**

Your product or service would have been perfect for that client. So why did they go with the competition? Maybe your communications aren't being directed to all your target audiences. To be sure they call you next time, take a look at your marketing communications system. Is it up-to-date? Is it being used? Keeping your company on your prospects' screens is one of the prime purposes of marketing communications. No where is it more true that out of sight is out of mind.

Contact us to learn how we can take your financial marketing strategies and activities to the next level.

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