

Episode 8

Your Marketing Questions: Answered

00:28

Hello and welcome to another episode of my weekly marketing. Sometimes in marketing, we just have a question and we're not sure of the best course to solve the problem or get the question answered. We wish we had a hotline to professionals but that's not always the case. Granted, we have Google and our ChatGPT. But it still can't always help you make an informed decision. That's why I want to do a regular ama or ask me anything episode, and create a way for you to ask questions to me in an organized way. So today, I want to answer a few questions that you, my podcast listening friend, have asked. And I'd like to make this a regular addition to my show. So listen to the very end to find out how you can have your burning marketing questions answered as well.

01:15

So here's question number one. This one has been asked to me by many people, but this time it is being asked by David M. Quote, "I started building an email list but it's going slow. I noticed that there are several places to buy email lists online. Can't I just buy a list?"

01:32

David, I love this question because like I said, I get it so often. Here's the thing. You will always want to put yourself in the shoes of the customer. As a business owner, you may think, if they just knew about my business they'd want to buy from me. But the reality is this: 30% are not interested at all in what you're selling. Another 30% don't have a need for your product or service. And still another 30% are not ready to buy. So that adds up to 90% of people who do not want to receive an email from you. If only a small percentage of that 90% flakes your email, spam email programs such as Gmail and Yahoo will start sending your emails to the spam folder. When that happens, your email service providers such as MailChimp or Constant Contact or whoever you have, will take notice because it affects you, their reputation too. And they'll take swift action to shut you down. You may even get blacklisted and if that wasn't enough of a reason not to buy a list. Know that it's illegal in Europe and Canada to send an email without the recipient's consent and they can come after you with hefty fines.

02:36

On the flip side, if you build your email list one at a time you create a list of warm leads who want to hear from you. If you continue to offer them value and don't just spam them, they begin to know, like and trust you so they'll be ready to buy when the time is right. Because here's the

reality, if you don't earn their trust first, they won't buy. Although it's slower, email marketing is tried and true and it has some of the highest ROI you can find in the marketing world. So my recommendation, buying an email list may look like a good option, but it's one that will likely get you into trouble. You're better off growing your list one by one by offering your potential customers a download, a coupon, webinar or another creative freebie so you can nurture them as leads. And a PS, the same advice is true for buying social media followers. They will engage or ever be your customers, you're better off building your following organically.

03:30

So my next question is from Matt G. He writes, "We opened a small pet shop a few weeks ago. Foot traffic and sales have been great. We started breaking, eating right away. My question is this. The foot traffic has started to slow in the past few days. We're in a small town. What can I do to get more buzz generated to get more traffic into the door? Am I missing anything?"

03:50

Great question, Matt. First off, congratulations on your new business. As a lover of fur babies myself, I hope your business does very well. Regarding your question, it is important to remember that marketing should not be a hit or miss event or be focused entirely on buzz. A lot of business owners do what I call a shot in the dark marketing, where they run an ad or have a promotion without any long term marketing strategy. As I like to say, strategy builds success.

04:15

What I would recommend first if you haven't done this is to really focus on your ideal customer and determine exactly who that ideal customer is. I know it's sometimes hard to focus on one person, but until you have an idea about who your best customer is, you won't know where to aim your efforts. I have a free download for that purpose and I'll put the link in the show notes. After you figure out who your ideal customer is, it's time to put their shoes on. Not literally of course but let's take a 1000 foot view of your customers next steps, which I call it the trail to the sale.

04:47

First off, awareness. This is how your customer will find out about your business. Since you're in a small town, this process should be a little easier. I'm guessing there are not a lot of pet stores around. But either way awareness is anything you do to make people aware of you. From your website, search engine optimization, which is called SEO or a Google Places listing. Your objective at this point is to just get the word out. This could be anywhere your ideal customer will see and remember your name. Even things like events, sponsoring a little league or a youth soccer team hitting up your local TV station during National Dog week for an interview about caring for a new puppy, all of those will work. Facebook and Instagram ads are inexpensive for a smaller audience, even assignment or your car for your business or distributing a discount coupon at a local animal shelter. We give people that sense of awareness about your business.

05:38

Think about all the places your ideal customer visits both online and in person. Also, because you're a small business and you likely love animals, tell your story on your website. Establishing credibility earlier will be important and something that will pay off in spades in a small community. As the same goes people don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. You can really brainstorm here and see what works best. Marketing is all about trying things out.

06:04

Okay, the second step in all these is the consideration stage. The question to ask at this point is how can I tell them more about my business and get them on my email list? Even for brick and mortar businesses, as I said earlier, email gives you the biggest bang for your buck. That's where you can start nurturing the sales process. The easiest way for a brick and mortar store to get subscribers is with a coupon or free shipping promotion. I'd recommend putting up on the homepage of your website asking for no more than their first name and email address or for a cell phone number if you open to try and texting.

06:37

Let me tell you I'd be the first to admit that pop ups are annoying, but they do really work. So once subscribers are on your list, then I'd recommend a minimum of one email per week. It can be a weekly special email, newsletter or any other content that they find helpful. So something like recipes or pet health tips. Again, here's where you can brainstorm. The idea is to keep giving a value in each email along with promoting your products and keeping your business top of mind for the customer.

07:07

So the next stop on the trail to the sale is to compare stages. You may be in a small town but there is surely a lot of competition online, if not in your same community. Your customers are going to be comparing your business to others before they buy from you. It's just a fact. So think about how they'll do this. Make sure you have great reviews online from customers and make sure that you can give them something that they can't get from Amazon or other online retailers, which is a great service. Keep in mind that no matter how unique your product or services, you do have a competitor. It's the thing they're currently doing to solve their problem. So if you offer the only dog washing station in town, your competition is likely their laundry room sink or they're currently washing their dog.

07:51

Next is the evaluation stage. Customers don't need to evaluate or try out every product or service but it's smart for higher priced products to offer a sample or a guarantee. It's simply giving the customer a chance to try before they buy. It could be a 48 hour take the pet home to try it out policy or just dog food samples. I know I have a picky eater of a dog and I'm guessing I'm not alone.

08:14

The next thing you want your customer to do is to buy. So I call this a sales stage. And at this stage you should be looking at pricing, product bundling and other services to get customers to make that purchase. Make sure you and your staff have irresistible offers for your products and you're able to tackle objections for why the customer isn't buying so that when they have a conversation with you, you can just assure them that they're making a good purchase.

08:41

The next step is supersize. I always recommend including this step. Simply put, it's an upsell. Think of simple add ons you can recommend when people buy a product. If they're buying a fish tank, recommend a POM food, gravel and all the other supplies that they need. If they have a new puppy or kitten, there's plenty of opportunities for upsells here, it can start with a simple conversation at the checkout or when the customer comes into the store.

09:06

My next step is to serve stage. Serving is one that's missed by a lot of businesses, likely even your competitor. Ask how you can serve them after the sale. Maybe it's just a thank you email with a discount for their next purchase or sending them a text to let them know it's time for more flea and tick treatment. Loyalty programs are also great additions, a simple punch card or getting an app or software that will encourage repeat sales. This can go a long way to create loyal customers, something you surely want in a smaller community. I know I never miss my free Starbucks coffee when I have enough points.

09:42

And last but absolutely not least, is the send stage. When I say send I mean having customers send new customers to your business. How can you encourage referrals? Maybe it's a monthly drawing for anyone who refers or leaves a review. Or perhaps it's a freebie from the treat aisle. Either way people like to be thanked and appreciated when they refer to your business. So that's a not so short list of the trail to the sale. I know it's a lot to take in so I have a free download with this framework on it too, that I'll put in the show notes. Good luck with the new pet shop, Matt. I know you're doing great.

10:16

So my next question is from Ashley. She writes, "Hey, I'm in need of some help. I'm a graphic designer. I just looked into thumbtack for acquiring customer leads and at the moment it's very much out of my budget, especially since they build weekly. It's also hard to get noticed there. Same with Upwork. Any other suggestions? Any help is appreciated."

10:36

Well, hey there Ashley. As a former art director and owner of a design agency, I know exactly what you're talking about. Designer isn't something people need every day, but when they need one they're hesitant to work with somebody they don't know and they start asking around for referrals. For my own business, I did a few things. First, I was active in Facebook groups and on Reddit chats. You'd be surprised how much business I was able to get through those platforms if

you just answer questions people have and stay active. Note I didn't spam them or promote my business into groups, that will get you kicked out! If anybody had a question, I had them DM me.

11:12

What also worked for me was meeting people in person. I did a lot of networking and joined the Chamber of Commerce and got involved with committees. Businesses that use the chamber also hire designers, or no people that want to hire designers. I also added a note to the bottom of every invoice letting people know that I gave away gift cards for referrals. Since my ideal customer was a small business owner I offered a logo design as a loss leader for my business. A loss leader is typically a product sold at a loss to attract customers, which is to say I didn't make really much money on logo designs, but because I knew my customer, I also knew that new businesses often want to have a logo design first before anything else. But they'll also eventually want a website, a brochure and other things designed on the road. So by offering a very competitive rate for a logo, you might also get their additional work down the line. I also bundled packages together for commonly designed items and included my pricing on my website.

12:11

And one more thing I know this is a bit more expensive, but it also considers Google ads. A designer is something you turn to Google to find when you need one. But get some help on your ads at least at first. If you follow Google's ad tutorials, it's easy to lose your shirt. They're in it to make money after all, and they don't teach you how to save money. I'll add a link to a good Google Ads tutorial in the show notes.

12:34

Whew, that's a lot of questions. As promised, if you have questions if you're all in, I'd love to get them. I have a special email address which is questions at my weekly marketing.com For you to send me any marketing questions you have. Or you can text your marketing questions to me at 612-268-2757. That's my real phone number 612-268-2757. I can't guarantee you'll have the time to answer all the questions, but I'll give it my best shot. All of these will be included in my show notes for today's episode, but you can find that my weekly marketing.com forward slash seven. That's all for this time. As always, I appreciate you listening so much. See you next time. Bye for now.