

Women's Leadership Forum: Marketing Leadership

What's In It For You?

What makes exploring the latest in marketing worth a day of your time? A starting point in answering this question: the basic assumptions about marketing – rules that were true for more than a century – have stopped working over the last half-dozen years. This year's Leadership Forum offers a look at the new environment, the new rules, and the new strategies that are redefining the path to business success.

Whether you are self-employed, operate a small business, work for a big business, or are looking for a job, what is new in marketing touches you. Here are some things that will be highlighted in the Forum on September 25:

The End of Mass Marketing: The notion of selling “generic” products that meet everyone's needs, mass advertising to attract “generic” customers, even the fixed “generic” price... are all eroding away. They are being replaced by specialized products and services, niche markets, one-to-one marketing, and adaptive pricing.

For You: Tuning your products, your services and your promotions to take best advantage of new marketing resources and a new market environment.

The Globalization of Markets: More and more of your business neighbors are focusing their products and services on select group of customers throughout the U.S. and around the world. The development of targeted products and services to meet the needs of fewer customers located in much larger geographical areas is a continuing trend.

For You: Rethinking who your customers might be and how to connect with them.

Search-engine Advertising. This new economy is founded in significant part on the ability of buyers and sellers to find each other quickly and inexpensively on the Internet. A key technology is search-engine advertising, creating the ability to match my need with your product in a matter of seconds.

For You: Affordable access to search engine advertising and how to make the most of it.

Custom Product / Custom Pricing. By narrowing product requirements (for instance, not just shoes, but rubber soled walking shoes) it is possible to provide increased customization (styles, sizes, service policies, etc.) and increased margins.

For You: New ways to think about what products and services you sell and how much you charge for them.

Authenticity in Promotion. Consumers don't believe advertising any more. The era of “authenticity” has created a new model for marketing communications – one in which modesty and service are key elements.

For You: Changing your “voice” and your message to catch the ear of your customer.

Importance of Referral. Now called “viral marketing”, this is the most “authentic” promotion possible. New strategies have emerged to encouraging your customers to spread the word, including through online social networks (Facebook, LinkedIn) and in Web 2.0 communications like blogs and instance messaging.

For You: Strategies to initiate and encourage “viral marketing”.

Brand Power. One of the things that hasn’t changed is the rule that says building a brand is the best way to insure long term success. What has changed is how brands are created – the things that cause potential customers to think of you when they need you. The new rules use many of the old ideas with the new tools.

For You: Rules and techniques for building brand in the post-mass-marketing world.

Partnerships. Relationships with other providers offer intriguing new strategies – sales of goods/services on each-others sites, co-branding combining two or more brands to increase the strength of each, and cross-adverting and linking with each referring customers to the others web site.

For You: How to take advantage of opportunities to multiply your marketing investment through partnerships.

Portals and Consolidators. Some of businesses have chosen to let someone else do marketing’s heavy lifting. Subscribing to portals (e.g., a trade association or a Chamber of Commerce) or a product consolidator (www.AsktheBuilder.com) that attaches product advertising to consumer services content creates both brand and advertising linkage.

For You: Finding the best Return On Investment for your portal participation expenditures.

One-on-one data. The ability to capture information about your customers and to develop communications that speak to their interests and needs ties them to you and your products/services. This is the flip-side of search advertising – the ability to turn the customers who find you into life-long customers.

For You: Strategies for making the most of the data you have and capturing data you need.

New Business Opportunities. The new world of marketing has opened the door to new business opportunities for becoming a public relationships “placement correspondent” responsible for insuring clients names and products appear in online forums, blogs, and social networking sites to the creation of web consolidator Websites and Blogs providing consumer services with attached advertising opportunities.

For You: Ideas for new products and services for your business, new job opportunities, and new businesses.

We do hope you will join us. In addition to sharing and learning, the Women's Leadership Forum is a great place to meet old friends and build your network. To register go to www.SantaCruzChamber.org or call (831) 457-3719.