



MARKETING FOR PRINTERS

10 Tactics to Get
You Started

GIMBEL &
ASSOCIATES

Table of Contents

LET'S GET STARTED.....	3
1 KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS.....	4
2 KNOW YOURSELF AND YOUR VALUE.....	6
3 MAKE SURE YOUR WEBSITE ROCKS	8
4 MASTER GOOGLE AND SEO	10
5 DEVELOP A SOCIAL PRESENCE	12
6 PRODUCE GREAT CONTENT	14
7 EMAIL WITH CARE	16
8 GO OUT AND MEET PEOPLE	18
9 IMPRESS WITH DIRECT MAIL	20
10 GIVE AWAY FREE STUFF	21
WRAP UP	22
ABOUT GIMBEL & ASSOCIATES	23

LET'S GET STARTED

You know the old maxim: printers are great at executing marketing programs and delivering results for their clients but not so very good at promoting themselves. Part of the problem is that marketing can seem time-consuming, complex, and expensive. And while it can be all those things, it doesn't have to be. Marketing is based on a few fundamentals: know your clients, decide what you want to tell them, and choose the tactics that work best.

This ebook aims to demystify marketing and offers some concrete, jargon-free advice with 10 basic tactics to help you get started. If you've not done significant marketing, start with a couple items and concentrate on those. Once you get your marketing legs and develop a feel for what works, you can adopt more advanced or focused strategies. You may do some work yourself, but it may be a good investment to hire some help.

As you become more adept, you'll be able to fine tune each of the ideas we outline and customize them to meet your goals. For example, your marketing may have a three-pronged approach: spreading the word about your services as widely as possible, customer retention, and lead conversion. Content marketing is a tactic that can work for all three, but you need to adjust your content based on what you want to achieve.

Marketing is as simple or as complex as you choose to make it, but your marketing plans should be pliable and evolving. If something doesn't work, figure out why, and adjust your plans accordingly.

Our goal is to provide you with basic information and ideas to help you market your printing business. If you need extra help though, please contact us at info@rogergimbel.com. We can give you specific advice and work with you to create your marketing strategy.

Let's get started.

Roger P Gimbel, EDP
President
Gimbel & Associates

1 KNOW YOUR CUSTOMERS



Any communication or marketing program starts with knowing your audience. You need to know and understand your customers so you can create content, promote offers, or deliver messages that resonate and ultimately lead to an engagement with you.

Start by creating profiles for your clients—both as corporate entities and for the key individual positions with whom you interact. Marketing people call this “building personas”. Your job in developing personas is to understand business approaches, challenges—or pain points, and goals. You can’t convince anyone of your value as a print service provider until you have a clear picture of your customers.

For company profiles, examine the industries you serve. Try to compile as much information as possible regarding each of your customer’s position, market share, location, size, profitability, growth patterns, challenges, pain points, and goals.

For individuals, look at their positions in the company, responsibilities, and professional challenges. Supplement that information with relevant personal information, such as age, particular characteristics, interests, gender, values, how they like to do business, and so forth.

Note that a persona is not an individual, but an aggregate representation of individuals with whom you work. Print buyers might be one persona, marketing managers, another.

This information is far more accessible than you might think. Here are some strategies for getting the data you need:

- Talk to your clients and ask them about their business, their challenges and their plans. Take them to lunch or invite them to an open house. Don’t sell them, just listen. Be interested and be genuine.

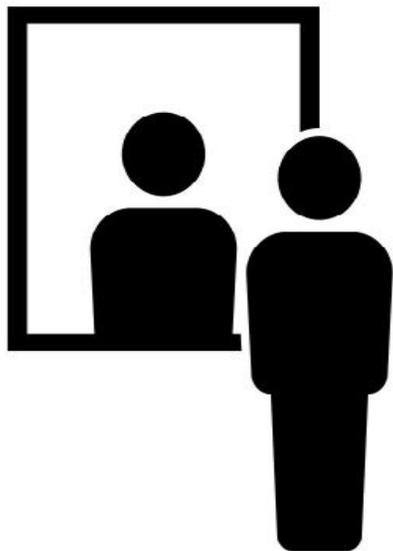
- Survey your clients and ask them what they enjoy about working with you, what they find challenging, and how you can improve your products or services.
- Follow clients and prospects on social media and listen to what they say, how they respond to posts, and how they engage with followers.
- If you have several clients in one industry, read about the industry, attend relevant trade shows, and gain an understanding of industry trends.
- Track your interactions and communications with clients. Try to discern their buying habits, how they like to communicate, their purchasing history, how easy or challenging they are to deal with, how quickly they pay, etc.

Once you have good picture of your audience, you can move to the next step: how to refine your message.



2

KNOW YOURSELF AND YOUR VALUE



Once you have a clear idea about your audiences, you need to determine what you want to tell them. Or put another way, assess how you can help them overcome their challenges and achieve their goals. Your marketing strategy can be broad-based and designed to enhance your brand, or more focused on announcing a new initiative such as a move into a new sector. You may have several programs running simultaneously.

To be effective, any messaging must explain what sets you apart, what value you bring to the client, and why they should deal with you. You should also understand your goals and develop a method for measuring success so you can adjust and finesse your plans. Be as specific as possible when setting goals so you can measure your progress.

This is arguably the most difficult part of marketing. It's not easy articulating what sets you apart and the benefits you bring to clients. Bringing in an objective third party may be a good investment.

Here's what to think about when developing your messaging:

- Understand your place in the market. How are you different from your competitors? Study their websites and their content.
- Understand how your clients perceive you. Again, arrange a meeting or a phone call, or do a survey. Most people will be very accommodating in sharing their opinions.
- Make a list of your special capabilities, expertise, and professional accolades you've received. Are you better, faster, or cheaper than your competitors? Do you offer the only specialty service for miles

around? Do you focus on a specific market segment or niche? Start with a big list and refine your attributes into a few words or a couple of sentences.

- Be careful you don't fall back on relying on trite phrases, such as "We offer exceptional service." Great service is the standard today. The value you deliver needs to go way beyond that.
- Make sure whatever claims you make are truthful and reflect who you are.

Knowing your customers and determining your message are the two most strategic elements of any marketing program. They will influence and shape the tactics you employ to deliver your messages effectively.

Over the next few pages we'll take a closer look at those tactics.



**Who are we?
What do we
do best?**

3

MAKE SURE YOUR WEBSITE ROCKS



Your website is the face you present to the world and is often the first touch point between you and potential clients. Invest some resources into developing a professional and effective site. It does not need to be super long with dozens of pages, but it should be clear about what you do and how you help clients.

- Focus on what your customers or potential customers need to know, not what you want to tell them about your company. Think about the personas you identified and decide what your site needs to communicate to them.
- Don't focus on the blistering speed of your presses. Clients don't care about that. Focus on your services and how they deliver results for clients.
- Make the site clear and easy to navigate. Don't make visitors work to understand how you can help them. If you have a specialty, say so in clear language. Avoid jargon of all kinds.
- Make sure your site is optimized for mobile—that's how most people access the internet these days.
- Invest in a designer and a programmer who will give your site a professional appearance with the image and brand you want to announce to the world.
- If you have an ecommerce component, make it easy to use so clients don't give up in frustration.
- An effective adage in storytelling is show, don't tell. Bring your website to life by showcasing interesting case histories of projects you've produced for your clients. Try to quantify results and benefits as much as possible.
- Add a strong call to action and make it easy to execute.
- Track your client engagement with tools like Google analytics. How do visitors come to your site? Where do they go most often? Where do they spend the most time? Study the results and use the findings to create a better experience.
- Keep your website current. Update it with relevant information regularly. It strains authority if you say something on your site that is not true.

4 MASTER GOOGLE AND SEO

Hundreds of books have been written about digital marketing, an area that evolves continually. Every digital marketer, and every consultant has a strong, and different, opinion about what works best, or even what constitutes digital marketing.

If your objective is to get your name in front of as many individuals as possible, then consider paid advertising on search engines, particularly Google. Your company will appear as a sponsored ad right at the top of the search results page.



SEO optimization is another strategy that will help your site rank higher in search engines. Search engine algorithms change all the time, so it may be a good idea to put a staff member in charge of maintaining this program. Facebook and other social media platforms are other options that fit under the digital marketing umbrella.

Here's what to consider:

- Understanding your target customers' buying habits is the first order of digital marketing. For example, if you offer quick turnaround business cards, then search engine ads might be your best bet. Facebook ads are also an option. High-end or customized niche products may require a different approach.
- Monitor traffic on your website through Google analytics. Where do most visitors come from? That may be where you want to start your online advertising efforts.
- Look at Google's Pay per click search advertising, or Google ad words. These are the paid ads that show at the top of the page whenever you enter a search term.

- You must bid to buy certain words and phrases to drive customers to your site, so do the research to figure out which words will work best for you.
- Also leverage the Google platform for customer reviews.
- Optimize your website for SEO. This may include finessing your code and content so your site ranks higher in search engines for specific keywords and phrases without having to pay for it. Think about all the terms for which a client might search and incorporate them into your site. Google publishes guides on how to do this, or you can hire an expert website developer.
- Search engines reward sites with higher page rankings when they consistently add quality content. Publish content that answers customer questions or solves a problem to boost search result rankings via SEO.
- Paid aids on Facebook or other social platforms can also be effective. If you want to reach small business owners, for example, Facebook can deliver those for you in any area.



- Notice the social media activity of others in the industry. See what works, what doesn't, and build from there.
- Once you join a platform, engage with your followers. Answer their questions, add to their comments, address their concerns, and try to strengthen the connection to your company.
- Give some thought to how you will measure success on any platform. It shouldn't be just a numbers game to get thousands of followers. A better strategy is to use social media as a complement to support other programs. Social media can be great at driving followers to your website, for example.
- Social media is the ultimate virtual water cooler. Follow your clients and your prospects. Set up alerts to notify you when you or your company are mentioned, and when target industries or your clients are included in posts. This will give you insights into how your audience thinks and approaches their business. Follow your competitors as well—it's a great way to stay abreast of what they're doing.



6

PRODUCE GREAT CONTENT

Content marketing is the process of using original content to attract and convert prospects and leads. Deploying content such as blogs, videos, ebooks, or case studies can establish you as a thought leader in the industries you serve. By displaying your authority and expertise, you help build acceptance from potential leads.

The best content marketing provides value. It should educate and inform first, do a hard-sell second. One important consideration is that content is not about you. It's about what your audiences need to hear. Put yourself in their shoes and assess the most valuable and useful content as they navigate their business challenges.

It may take a few months of consistent posts to deliver results. You cannot build trust in a week.

Some other tactics you should consider:

- Think like an editor or hire someone who does. The point is to develop content your readers need to know or helps them perform their jobs more efficiently. Your messages will only be effective when content is concise, organized, and free of errors.
- Your aim is to do a soft sell with your ability and authority, and to show your clients and potential clients you can be a trusted source of information. Offer truthful material that inspires new possibilities.
- Develop a weekly or monthly content schedule. Ideally, develop a plan for six months to a year and schedule topics in advance so you're not scrambling to find something to publish.
- Sources for content are more abundant than you think. Here are some examples:

- Look for problems that come up repeatedly with clients and create blog posts to address them. Font issues, image file preparation, and confusion about variable data campaigns are common issues print service providers experience with their clients. Write about these topics.

- People love reading about others who faced similar challenges. Talk about how you helped a client solve a problem. Or have a client talk about how you solved a problem for them. Customer case studies are good formats for communicating this kind of information.

- Share developments. If you're launching a new division, a new service, or have a new press, tell your community. Focus on how it will help them, not the nitty gritty of the technology.

- If you've produced an eye-catching product, show it off. People like to be wowed.

- Share insights. For example, if you provide signage and fabrication services for trade show booths, share trends you're seeing at different shows.

- Contemplate a variety of forms for sharing content. A blog doesn't have to be a straight narrative. You can configure your blog post as an interview, a list, an infographic, a photo essay, or a video. Also consider ebooks, podcasts, and webinars. Mix it up.

- Give content a prominent place on your website. Share it on all platforms, including social media and newsletters. Content needs to be seen to be effective.

- Consider how you can optimize your content for SEO on Google so you can extend your reach. Develop some key search terms, but don't try to game the algorithm with irrelevant content.



7 EMAIL WITH CARE



Having an extensive email list is the holy grail of marketing. You can rely on SEO to be found, but reaching out directly with relevant information is much more effective, especially with existing clients. Email is very cost effective. You can use it for promotional messages and regular client newsletters.

If you've gone to any online retailer, publication, or organization you'll notice they try hard to entice visitors to sign up for their newsletters. Big publishers like The New York Times offer scads of newsletters that feed their subscription drives.

For other businesses, trigger-based emails reach out to clients at key points in the sales funnel. Use one of the CRM software programs available to automate this critical function.

These are the key guidelines for emails:

- Make your emails personal—not just by name but by personalized, relevant data. Relevance is key to higher ROI.
- Pay attention to the subject line. It has to be catchy and offer some benefit. Second only to the sender's identity, the subject line determines whether an email gets opened. An email with a subject line like "January Newsletter" delivers no clue about the value of the content and will generate lower open rates. Choose something more intriguing.
- Never miss an opportunity to collect emails and client information. Develop a sign-up form that asks for only the information you need to begin communicating.
- Use an actual email address and avoid the generic, donotreply@email.com. You want to create authenticity with your clients or prospects and engage in conversations. For example, make it easy for prospects to contact an account manager by including their direct contact information.
- Try to segment your list to make your emails meaningful. If you're doing an open house for small business owners, you don't want to send the invite to large clients, for example.
- Make your emails optimized for mobile by implementing responsive email design.
- Use emails sagely. Marketers can experience a big backlash against email that is irrelevant, screechy and intrusive.
- Track the open rates to find the best time to send emails.
- Always include some call to action to drive recipients to your website.

8

GO OUT AND MEET PEOPLE

EDITOR'S NOTE:

Face to face meetings are going to be difficult or impossible at times when social gatherings are unsafe or not allowed. When the situation improves, add these steps to your marketing strategy



Despite all the connections that technology enables through webinars, podcasts and virtual meetings, sometimes nothing beats a face-to-face event, so make it part of your marketing plan. You can learn a lot from body language and other non-verbal communications that gets overlooked in the virtual rooms. Also, it's a terrific opportunity to showcase your work tangibly—nothing engages the senses like a wonderfully printed piece.

Local or national events and trade shows are great for strengthening connections or making new ones.

Here are some event exhibiting guidelines:

- Define what you want to accomplish and be as specific as you can with your metrics. Do you want 50 good leads? Do you want to close some deals? You must define your expectations to assess your ROI.
- If you're exhibiting at a trade show for an industry you serve, try to get a speaking slot on seminars or panel discussions. It's a great way to get in front of an audience and build credibility.
- Give booth visitors a branded item to take away. Think about the expected attendees, and choose giveaway items within your budget. If they sit for a presentation at your booth, you can reward prospects and customers with a more expensive giveaway.
- Network ahead of time and if you have access to the attendee list, make appointments.

- Do as much pre-show promotion as possible. Pay attention to the social media initiatives from event organizers, participate in the show guides, and so on.
- Be seen at the show and participate as a sponsor. Trade show organizers are open to many creative solutions.
- Invest in an attractive, professional and eye-catching booth. It doesn't have to be super complex or large, but it should be inviting and arouse curiosity.



9 IMPRESS WITH DIRECT MAIL



For printers, direct mail would seem a no-brainer. Studies repeatedly prove direct mail works. It cuts through digital clutter, isn't intrusive, and carries high credibility. It also showcases your capabilities. Wow recipients with personalized messages, great graphics, tactile stock, eye-popping finishing or any special effect you want to highlight.

Printed matter needs less cognitive power to process, yet engages on a deeper neurological level. Recipients get the message quickly, keep it longer, and experience it with more senses and emotions. No doubt you've done your fair share of printing direct mail, but it bears summarizing the best practices.

- Showcase what your print shop can do, and use substrates with tactile appeal, specialty inks, or whatever may make your target audiences stop and look.
- Direct mail shines at driving people to your website where they can take advantage of a promotion. QR codes are handy for this.
- Target your pieces and campaigns as much as possible. If you serve car companies, software firms, and furniture designers, devise campaigns with appropriate images, text and offers that will resonate with recipients.
- Make pieces as trackable as possible with printed codes, QR codes, and URL's.
- Make the message easy to understand, so recipients get the idea in a few seconds. And don't forget a strong, easily executed call to action.

10 GIVE AWAY FREE STUFF

Everyone loves free stuff, and the options are endless—pens, cups, water bottles, phone accessories, notebooks, toys, etc. Everyone from consultants to cosmetics companies gives away free samples. It can generate goodwill and keep your company top of mind.

Consider these ideas about free items:

- Create something that engages the senses and showcases what you can do. Showing something makes a more lasting impression than talking about it.
- Make giveaways part of a multi-channel campaign. For example, use social media to drive traffic to a landing page where visitors can register to receive a free offer.



- Distributing free stuff can feed your mailing list and add to your important data collection. Ask customers to provide some relevant information about their business or their buying habits and reward them with a free product or service. Timing this step to critical times in the sales funnel can be very effective.
- What can you give away? Use an item your company manufactures or personalizes. Make it useful and something that will be kept for some time. Get creative.
- Sampling is most effective when it's directed at the right audience or individual at the right time, bolstered with a personalized message.

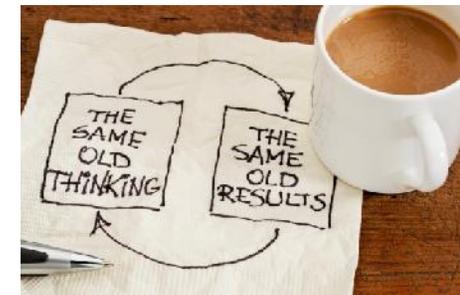
WRAP UP



Marketing programs come in endless permutations, with tactics limited only by your imagination, budgets, and the amount of labor you want to invest. This ebook will help you get started on your journey, unleash your creativity, and open new possibilities for promoting your business.

We'll leave you with a recap of key points:

- Begin by understanding your customers or target audiences
- Develop your message clearly and simply; articulate what makes you different and what value you bring to customers, whether you're marketing your brand or a particular service
- Be clear about what you want to achieve
- Choose tactics and platforms you think are the best fit for connecting with your audiences and achieving your goals
- Make sure all the tactics you choose complement and support each other
- Make your messaging consistent with all tactics and across all platforms but customize for each
- Always measure your programs to ensure you're achieving your goals and don't be afraid to adapt and alter course.
- Make a difference in your business. Try a year-long marketing plan and see what happens.



ABOUT GIMBEL & ASSOCIATES

GEARED TO YOUR SUCCESS

We're an international management consulting firm working to ignite business growth through digital technologies. As an independent company, we offer clients customized consulting services to achieve their sales and marketing goals.

We provide consulting engagements in the following areas:

-) Business development
-) Sales strategy
-) Sales training
-) Digital implementation
-) Strategic planning
-) Marketing plans
-) Workflow analysis
-) Integrated marketing services
-) Variable data
-) Data analytics
-) Micro modeling
-) Software deployment
-) Customer workshops



With our extensive background in print production, digital, inkjet, workflow, marketing communications, training, and direct marketing, we help our clients accomplish their growth and efficiency goals.

