



BRAND YOURSELF

TOP 10 PRIORITIES FOR MARKETING THAT COUNTS

BY LINDA MARIANO

What makes marketing stand out in a crowded marketplace? Is it the brand or the way it is positioned? Perhaps you have never realized it, but you are a brand unto yourself and everything you do is a reflection of that brand.

But realizing that truth is where marketing that really counts begins.

Think about your brand and how it is perceived: What are its key elements? Are they easily recognized by your customers? Creating marketing that is in sync with your brand and that reaches your customers are the two most important keys to success.

No matter how you are involved in the art industry, you can use this list to evaluate your marketing on a continual basis and be on your way to creating marketing that counts!

1. MAKE YOUR BRAND EVIDENT IN EVERYTHING YOU DO.

Be consistent. Always use your logo, as it can define who you are and make you stand out. Add a descriptive tagline that tells more of your story. You want to build a collector or con-

sumer's interest by giving him or her information in a catchy, appealing way. Always make sure that your logo and tagline describe what you do and who you are:

- Coca-Cola: The Pause That Refreshes.
- Home Depot: More Saving. More Doing.
- MasterCard: Priceless.

These are all great examples of how companies enforce their brand message through marketing.

2. MAKE SURE YOUR BRAND TRANSLATES.

The way you position your brand is a critical component of capturing your customer's attention. Whether it's an advertisement, flyer or signage, every element of your marketing materials should tell the story of the art, the artist, the gallery—of *you!* Make sure your marketing materials are easily understood and memorable by using great on-trend colors and design. This is a great way to capture your audience's attention. Once you've done that, they'll be intrigued and ready to experience your message.

3. ENGAGE INTEREST ON EVERY LEVEL.

So you've gotten the public's attention. Now what? Now

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you tell the story behind your brand. Ideally, the tagline will start this story and the colors and design of your logo will reinforce it. Now you need a one- or two-sentence description of the artist and his or her inspiration or the gallery and who and what it features. A few examples that illustrate brand and story concept are:

- Romero Britto: Art is too important not to share.
- Wyland Worldwide: Reaching out to people everywhere with a message of art, nature and community.
- LeRoy Neiman: Indelible images that helped define the 20th century
- John Scanlan: Windows to the world.

4. SYNC YOUR MARKETING STRATEGY WITH YOUR BRAND.

Now you need to evaluate everything you are doing to get yourself out there. Why, how and when are you doing it? Remember the old adage “If you do what you did, you’ll get what you got—but the results will be less.” Taking a step backwards is not what you need to do in today’s fast-paced marketplace, so if you have a “tried and true,” it’s time to refresh it! Exploring new avenues and strategies can lead to expanding your brand and reaching new customers.

5. DETERMINE THE BEST MARKETING STRATEGY FOR REACHING YOUR TARGET CUSTOMERS.

Identify who you are trying to reach: Repeat buyers? New customers? Remember that your database needs constant replenishment; statistics prove that attrition and the economy make the effectiveness of even the very best list of customers decrease by 15 percent or more each year. Getting a new customer means thinking outside your normal demographics, so consider reaching out to new affiliations, partnerships, non-competitive markets and businesses.

Your marketing plan is key to maximizing your reach and bringing in new and repeat customers. There are the traditional marketing avenues: Print advertisements in newspapers and magazines; television and radio; direct mail catalogs, postcards and letters; flyers and handouts; phone calls to former and potential customers. Regularly sending out attention-grabbing press releases can get you free exposure in local publications. Of course, don’t forget social media! Be

there on Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Pinterest.

Give everything an updated look. Start with an attention-grabbing headline and add a powerful image. Create copy that sells and make sure you have a call to action with a strong incentive that warrants that action.

Remember, it’s a campaign! You need an integrated plan with multiple points of messaging. Advertise in the right venues to reach your target audience. Keep in mind that, while moderately-priced product has a more general market appeal, affluent audiences and high-end collectors expect high-end product and events. In this case, repetition is a good thing: It will reinforce your brand and your message.

6. IT’S A BRAND NEW DECADE—DIFFERENTIATE YOUR BRAND AND MARKETING.

Of course you have a Website, but have you utilized it as one of your critical marketing tools? Your Website is essentially your online brochure or catalog, the paramount place for your brand presentation. Evaluate it with the same critical eye as you do your other marketing materials. Make sure your logo is on every page and that your tagline is short, snappy and engaging. Your Website is the place to tell your story, so make sure it is as interesting and compelling as that story. Make sure your visitors can easily see what is being sold or promoted. Don’t forget the call to action, and be sure your contact information is on every page.

Another good way to reach out is through e-mail campaigns, which is an easy, inexpensive way to send updates and new information. Treat an e-mail campaign the same way you would any communication by including your logo, tagline, contact information and, of course, clear directions and response capabilities. Use your e-mail campaigns to drive traffic to your Website, gallery, studio and special events.

Get your “fans” and socially networked collectors onto your Website by linking everything from your various social networking platforms back to it. Create a blog where you write about your area of expertise. It’s all about inviting comments and interactions, encouraging discussion and making your online presence a “happening” one. The fun part is that you get to see what people are writing and can then use your knowledge to learn from your visitors.

Don’t forget community and charity events as a way to

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reinforce your brand. Low- or no-cost opportunities like open studio hours, gallery walks, art fairs and shows, decorator show house parties and local charity events are great ways to get to know people who support and appreciate the arts. What's more, they help spread the word about *you*!

7. GIVE YOUR CUSTOMERS WHAT THEY WANT.

Make sure you know what your customers want—either by asking them directly or simply examining the information you already have about them. Take a look at your bestselling pieces, specific purchases and requests for things that you do not currently offer. Now compare what your customers want with what you currently offer. Increasing your sales could be as easy as offering your most popular pieces in different sizes or colors or with other framing options.

8. INTEGRATE YOUR ART, GALLERY AND MARKETING.

Make every customer a repeat customer. You want to give each and every person a reason to come back. It is the experience they have with you that makes your gallery, studio or artwork memorable. Some even say that the artwork they take home is the “souvenir” of their experience! Imagine that great experience as a pebble dropped in a pool, with ripples expanding outward. That's what can happen when your customer has a great experience and wants to tell everyone about it.

What's happening on a daily basis in your gallery or studio? You need to have a fresh, exciting presentation that invites customers to experience more—more about the artwork, more about the artist, more about every aspect of your brand. While you may have special events and promotions, make every day an event to improve your effectiveness in how you engage your customers. Your programs and campaigns (plus

that all-important experience) will bring them back over and over again.

9. MAKE AN IMPACT.

Make your brand memorable and distinct from your competition. Create an experience worth remembering and repeating, and make both your product and presentation exciting. Set you, your artwork and your brand apart by offering what the customer wants, making sure to add something new or unique. As Peter Drucker, the great icon of marketing and brand management, said: “The aim of marketing is to know and understand the customer so well [that] the product or service fits him and sells itself.”

10. DON'T FORGET THE BOTTOM LINE.

Don't retreat! Get out there and be seen! In a challenging economy, aggressive businesses win by initiating advertising and marketing strategies while their competitors are trying to save money.

Remember, keep it real—and that means relevant. Great brands with effective marketing say to people: “Here's what we've got. Here's what it will do for you. Here's how to get it.” Now get going to build your brand with an effective marketing strategy! **ABN**

With a career that spans 30 years, **ABN** Contributing Editor Linda Mariano is a leader in marketing, brand management, e-commerce and promotion initiatives. Through her company, **LM² Art Marketing & Licensing** (www.LM2ArtMarketing.com), Mariano brings her expertise and years of experience to help artists and art industry leaders set and achieve high goals. She can be reached at LMariano85@yahoo.com.

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