

who are your clients?

You often hear topic experts or editors say that they stay away from discussions about religion or politics. Well, I kind of threw that one out the window in last month's article when I spoke about the up and coming election. So now that I've broken down the politics barrier, lets move onto religion!

Of course, I'm not a preacher...well, not of religion, I'll leave that to the experts. No doubt that religions are a subliminal marketing force across the world, with many doing it very well through their various methods, rightly or wrongly.

I had an almighty experience of my own during the recent Easter period. Whilst sitting through mass, the Priest, at the end of his service, spoke about the younger generation losing touch with religion once their parents moved on, which, to be honest, is true in many cases in present times. The Priest asked openly for generation X and Y to fill out a form at the front of the church once they had taken communion. The form asked for email addresses and mobile phone numbers so that the Church could keep it's followers up to date with various events, holy days and any other important items in the religious calendar

I thought the request was a little brazen and quite cheeky. To be honest, most of the generation that he was directing his communication towards did actually stop to fill out forms. Whether it was out of guilt or not, I'm not really sure. However what was created was multiple points of communication with the local community of like-minded individuals. No doubt soon enough they'll be asked to join the Church's Facebook and Twitter pages.

The point here is that even my Priest knows that marketing is important and that knowing who he's clientele is, even more so.

I recently had a client of my own build a database, allowing a central place to collate, manage, measure and communicate. In essence, that's what a database does. What do my customers spend money on? What is their demographic? How can I get more from my current customers? How can I make them more loyal? How can I get new ones? Not only does it allow us to measure and take stock, but allows us to market easier as well.

Tesco, the UK's leading retailer (more known for its grocery arm) at an operating income of around £3 billion a year (that's something like A\$6 billion at the moment) does databases the best that I've ever heard of. Well, they're doing something right at that figure. Quite simple actually. When you purchase your items in Tesco, the store tracks you by your Tesco card as you purchase. It then tracks the items you purchase the most frequent, and then sends you discount vouchers for these. This process almost guarantees you'll go back and may even purchase other items. Creating brand loyalty one of the hardest things for business.

Not sure if I agree or not with the saying of it's harder to keep clients than get new ones, but it sure helps if you have a way. The Peppers and Rogers Group, probably the world leaders in loyalty marketing, whom I had some interaction with in London, loved using this example. I'm sure Don Pepper would be happy for me to recycle this one.

Practising what I preach, I carried out some of my own loyalty, visiting in the past week, a number of my clients; a dietician, a financial planner, an accountant, a real estate agent, a non-for-profit organisation and a project homebuilder.

What do they all have in common? They all have a list of customers and clients like all small business. They all try to be active in a marketing sense. They all know it's important to be seen in the marketplace. They're all trying to be first in the mind in current and potential consumers.

Tesco or the Church. Is there a difference? Take a page out of the marketing scriptures, build a database and get to know your customers.

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a quick one on... managing data & loyalty

- Keeping in constant contact with your customers assists you to be front of mind.
- Providing relevant and meaningful offers of additional related product or services to customers is important.
- Take time to collate, understand and manage your customer data.
- You can learn plenty from the behaviours of your current customers as well as prospective ones.
- Google Analytics provides a great tool to understand the activity of new and prospective customers on your website.
- Brand loyalty is critical to the longevity of your business.

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