

BUILDING TOP OF MIND AWARENESS

FIVE KEYS TO HELP YOUR CONTACTS
REMEMBER YOU, ALWAYS

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1. SWING AWAY

AND KEEP ON SWINGING.
REPETITION BUILDS TOP OF MIND AWARENESS.

The first key: repetition

No one learns how to connect a bat with the ball on the first try, just as marketing can be a series of swings and misses. These skills are refined over time through repetitive action. Some tweaks in the motion may be made along the way, but once you find your groove, repetition is the key to maintaining excellence. Not only that, but repetition is essential in generating top of mind awareness.

Thomas Smith, a London businessman, wrote a guide called *Successful Advertising* in 1885. The sayings he used are still being used today and form the foundation for the Theory of Frequency in advertising and marketing, which has essentially become the authoritative guide for generating Top of Mind Awareness (TOMA).

It takes a minimum of 20 impressions to develop top of mind awareness (and to generate a sale). Why? According to Mr. Smith:

- The first time people look at any given ad, they don't even see it
- The second time, they don't notice it
- The third time, they are aware that it is there
- The fourth time, they have a fleeting sense that they've seen it somewhere before
- The fifth time, they actually read the ad
- The sixth time they thumb their nose at it
- The seventh time, they start to get a little irritated with it
- The eighth time, they start to think, "Here's that confounded ad again"
- The ninth time, they start to wonder if they're missing out on something
- The tenth time, they ask their friends and neighbors if they've tried it
- The eleventh time, they wonder how the company is paying for all these ads
- The twelfth time, they start to think that it must be a good product
- The thirteenth time, they start to feel the product has value
- The fourteenth time, they start to remember wanting a product exactly like this for a long time
- The fifteenth time, they start to yearn for it because they can't afford to buy it
- The sixteenth time, they accept the fact that they will buy it sometime in the future
- The seventeenth time, they make a note to buy the product
- The eighteenth time, they curse their poverty for not allowing them to buy this terrific product
- The nineteenth time, they count their money very carefully
- The twentieth time prospects see the ad, they buy what is offering

Impressions are one thing; making those impressions count is another thing entirely. Anyone can send 20 messages. How is your messaging different than others? What makes your messaging better? Why should prospects pay attention to your messaging? When will you see a return on your messaging efforts? How do you provoke contact (i.e., get them to call you)?

To stay in the game, you need consistently remind contacts of your value. The best way to really hit home with your contacts is to provide repetitive (but not redundant) communications that showcase your firm as a valuable resource, but more importantly, demonstrate that you are a group of smart, interesting, real people available to provide a service.

"A baseball swing is a very finely tuned instrument. It is repetition, and more repetition, then a little more after that."

-Reggie Jackson



2. NURTURE & INSPIRE

WITH INFORMATIVE, EDUCATIONAL CONTENT.
GREAT CONTENT BUILDS RELATIONSHIPS.

The second key: inspired content

Let's face it: there are many other service providers out there with the same bag of goods to offer. You need to differentiate yourself from those other guys and ensure that the relationships you forge are strong enough to withstand a little competition. How do you build all of those relationships when there are only 24 hours in the day? You can't be expected to call, email, meet, lunch with or otherwise personally connect with everyone you know on a weekly basis. But you also know that you must keep in touch with clients and contacts regularly and remind them that you are not only the best at what you do, but also completely accessible to meet their needs on a variety of matters.

Begin building those relationship bridges by proactively providing communications that educate, inform and entertain (even if only a little bit). Email newsletters are the perfect media for accomplishing this. Actively engage your clients, prospects and referral sources while remaining unobtrusive and avoiding offense by timing your e-newsletter just right (not too often, but often enough) and making your messages as valuable as a face-to-face meeting, lunch date, or golf outing with you personally.

So many email newsletters today are chock-full of the same old song and dance: buy this, buy here, buy me. Consumers today are exhausted by sales pitches. They don't want to be sold. If you are going to deploy an email newsletter that launches on any kind of frequency (in order to boost your top-of-mind awareness quotient), how do you ensure that your contacts value your content and appreciate your efforts to

bond with them electronically? How do you know it will actually help you develop and grow those relationships?

People want to be nurtured and inspired. Avoid using your email platform as a recurring advertising campaign that merely promotes your services and products. If you send out essentially the same content over and over again, you are teaching your clients and contacts to ignore your messages. Instead, provide communications that give your readers some meaty information to chew on while also inviting them in for a behind-the-scenes look at the key team members who serve them.

When you provide digital communications that are branded to your firm and brimming with unique, insightful and informative content, you reinforce your status as a reliable, accessible source of quality information. Regularly providing human communications with timely, relevant and educational content is the second key to building top of mind awareness.

“Education is a kind of continuing dialogue.”

-Robert Hutchins

3. PROACTIVELY RESPOND TO NEEDS

RESPOND TO NEEDS BEFORE THEY BECOME NEEDS.

SEGMENT AND TARGET YOUR AUDIENCE WITH RELEVANT MESSAGING.

The third key: targeted marketing

Can you relate to your clients' issues and concerns? Let clients know that you understand their pain points by addressing those issues and providing solutions in your messaging. What's the best way to communicate your ability to alleviate their pain and solve their business dilemmas? Ensure that your messages are specific and relevant to each and every recipient, regardless of the media you employ to communicate that message. If your contacts consistently receive emails and other materials and messages from you that respond to their needs before they bring them to light, you will certainly earn top of mind awareness. No one can compete with enlightened and informed messaging that speaks directly to the receiver.

Segmentation may initially be a giant undertaking, but in both the short-term as well as the long run, there is no better way to customize your messaging than by drilling down through your database to identify and tag as many specific data points as you can. Segment your list by industry, geography, interests, assets, gender, age, income, current products, goals, needs... The more data points you classify, the more targeted your messaging can be and the higher your top of mind awareness quotient will rise. Clients and prospects truly value being sent information that is clearly tailored to them, their needs and their interests.

How well do you really know your target markets? How do you proactively uncover clients' needs and provide solutions? If you don't already have notes and comments in each client or prospect record, consider sending out a brief survey to accumulate the information needed. Set up a Preference Center where your database members may subscribe to your newsletter, blog, social media, hardcopy mailing lists, and mobile updates and identify their specific areas of interest (by

industry, product, service, location). Once your surveys are complete and/or your Preference Center is established and in use by the majority of your membership, use that data to determine which methods of communication and content areas are the most popular – perhaps you have more clients in a certain industry than you realized, or more who would prefer to have your newsletter sent to their iPhone. Once you have segmented your database and compiled different distribution lists for different interest areas and data points, ensure that you utilize that information to its fullest potential – customize and target your messages to recipients based on their needs. Respond to their needs before they even realize what their needs are.

Know that your referral sources will value different messaging than your clients. Relationships with prospects require a little more cultivation and a softer approach. Clients want to know that you understand them and their individual and business needs. Your ability to successfully reach each of these groups directly depends upon your capacity to respond to their needs before they ask for help.

“All clients' needs and expectations are vastly different.”

- Bruce Bennett

4. ELICIT AN EMOTIONAL RESPONSE

PEOPLE MAKE EMOTIONAL BUYING DECISIONS EVERY DAY.

CONNECT WITH YOUR SUBSCRIBERS ON AN EMOTIONAL LEVEL.

The fourth key: appeal to their emotions

People make emotional buying decisions every day. They choose laundry detergent because it's the same one Mom used when they were little. They buy a certain brand of peanut butter because they love the jingle. They pick up a particular shampoo because it has been successfully branded as more masculine than the others (at least in their minds). Consumers also make emotional decisions about their service providers. In a perfect world, professionals like accountants, attorneys, bankers, and payroll processors would be selected solely based on raw skills and abilities, but this is not a perfect world. Clients will choose you, and stay with you, if they like you and have an ongoing relationship with you (and your company). There is no better way to generate top of mind awareness than by building relationships.

How do you build relationships to grow your top of mind awareness and your business? Follow each of the tips in this whitepaper. They all work in tandem to enhance your position as a trusted advisor, as a go-to resource, and as a reputable, reliable and known entity. But take it a step further...

Ensure that your messaging imparts a human element. People are interested in other people. Share your firm's charitable and community activities. Announce your intern's college graduation, your associate's wedding, your receptionist's newest bundle of joy, and your manager's promotion to partner. When you demonstrate that there are live human beings behind your products and services, you begin taking your relationships to the next level.

You've already made sure that your messages contain technical content that appeals to each of your readers by segmenting your lists. You can take that one step further, too.

Develop a recurring "Ask the Expert" column in your email newsletter, on your blog or via your social media sites. Highlight the partner or key team member for each practice area or industry that you showcase. Solicit questions from your contacts in person, online, and have "Ask the Expert" drop box with note cards in your lobby. Your clients and referral sources will appreciate the "Dear Abby" solutions you present in an educational format, and they will value the fact that each answer is provided by a real person, someone they can reach out and contact, especially when the content is clearly and definitively pertinent to each reader.

People respond to people. They prefer to interact with people. They trust people, not websites or direct mail postcards. The more human interaction you are able to inject into your marketing and communication campaigns, the more positive the emotional response. The more positive the emotional response, the better your relationship and the higher your top of mind awareness will soar. Let them get to know you.

"A person buying ordinary products in a supermarket is in touch with his deepest emotions."

- John Kenneth Galbraith

5. DEVELOP A BRAND FAMILY

WITHIN MULTIPLE PLATFORMS.

ECHO YOUR BRAND PERSONA ACROSS MULTIPLE CHANNELS.

The fifth key: integrate diverse media

Maximize your top of mind awareness by integrating diverse media into your marketing and communication efforts. Incorporating each of the previous four keys, develop a system that reinforces your message as well as your brand across other vertical channels, too, including video, social media, print and the oft-forgotten personal phone call.

Most importantly, ensure that your company's brand is consistently applied in each and every message and throughout all distribution venues. It's perfectly fine to have brand identities for each type of campaign as long as the brands all clearly belong to the same family. We live in a visual world – your brand is as important as the message that it carries with it. Integrate a variety of media into your top of mind awareness campaigns to carry your brand throughout multiple platforms.

Video is the most consumed media on the planet today. 30 hours of video are uploaded to the internet every minute. Most of those videos are for pure entertainment only and offer no true value. However, videos could easily be a convenient treat for your audience, particularly when they offer valuable insight, help contacts get to know you better, and provide substance. Using a simple handheld video recorder or webcam, you can capture great content that visually conveys the sincerity, casualness, humor or whichever tone and attitude you wish to impart – all to elicit the emotional response and provide the kind of educational content that will help you build relationships.

Capture impromptu shots of your team hashing out details at the water cooler, or sit down and record the finer points of an article you have just written. Put a face on your company. When your clients and referral sources see and hear you in short, informative video pieces, you will garner attention and build awareness.

Word of mouth advertising has evolved into an online (and extensively more public) experience. The power to respond and react to the online conversation is what social media is all

about. In March 2011, over 830,000 people "liked" Dale Earnhardt, Jr. on Facebook. As of October 2012, that number had risen to over 1.4 million. Although professional services may not be as sexy as racing, the impact of social media in business is undeniable.

Social media has become an integral component of the modern marketing mechanism, working to create a bond between customers and products like no other channel has been able to forge before. Take advantage of this medium. Develop a plan for what you want to say, how often you want to say it, what platforms you want to say it from and who will say it on your behalf. Remember that social networks are just that – social.

- Focus on joining (and getting others to join) the conversation.
- Use your online influence to get positive messages out about your firm and share relevant information with your clients and prospective clients.
- Integrate social media with your e-newsletter and other distribution channels for enhanced exposure.
- Grow your brand awareness organically and virally by allowing your recipients to share your newsletter and email content on their own Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter feeds.

"A house of brands is like a family; each needs a role and a relationship to others."

- Jeffrey Sinclair



STAY TOP OF MIND

Top of mind awareness cannot be developed overnight. It takes a series of consistent, relevant, unassuming, informative, educational, entertaining and human communications to build relationships.

- Get to know – really know – your prospects and clients.
- The more pertinent and targeted your messaging is to each of your recipients, the more value you present, which translates into higher return (and awareness).
- Remember to reveal the human side of your organization and your key team members.
- Shift the perspective of your communications from selling services to communicating a human experience.
- People relate to people.
- Your contacts will think of you first when you have created an emotional tie through your sincere messages, especially when your messages arrive in a variety of formats, but all relate back to you and your firm, and are specifically geared to the recipients.

Top of mind awareness grows organically over time. If you follow the guidance in this whitepaper, you will see your relationships grow and evolve for better relationships and more business.



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