



INVOLVING EVERYONE IN MARKETING

by Bret R. Romney

Many times over the past several years I've heard consultants and others who have contact with clients exclaim, "I'm not a marketer ... I don't sell." Two things strike me about that statement. First, many of the people I've heard say that are among the best marketers I know in terms of their ability to help clients see the value of an additional product or service. Second, imagine the impact on a business if all employees understood their impact on the marketing effort, and were committed to doing their part in bringing new business through the doors.

Surely every business would benefit from an increase in the efforts of its employees to market its products and services ... assuming it is done the right way. So how do you motivate others to recognize and accept their role in marketing? And when they do, how do you educate and motivate them on a continual basis to do the right things? Implementing a Marketing Club provides some of these answers.

Monthly Meeting

The purpose of the marketing club is to get people in the habit of recognizing marketing opportunities and to know what to do when presented with one. The marketing club should meet every month. Having a monthly meeting is very effective in keeping focus on this objective.

A Marketing Club should consist of 8-12 employees who have each committed to be more marketing minded and to complete a monthly marketing goal. The club is led by a Marketing Club Leader and meets monthly for one hour. The agenda for the meeting includes:

- 1. Welcome & Assign a Scribe.**
- 2. Goal and Control Reporting** (approximately 20 minutes)
Each club member **briefly** states their goal(s) and activity accomplished to date.
- 3. Accomplishments / Testimonials** (approximately 20 minutes)
Sharing time. Successes, failures and difficulties of marketing efforts so far.
- 4. Member Training** (approximately 20 minutes)
- 5. Other Discussion and Feedback**

Let's take a look at some of these key agenda items:

Goal and Control Reporting

Each month club members will choose at least one marketing goal and commit to report on it in the next club meeting. Goal reports are intended to produce accountability for completing the goal and to provide opportunities for learning by the entire group.

Marketing club goals are not focused on results, but rather on activities that are likely to produce results. Many people are not comfortable with the risks associated with marketing ... being expected to make a sell is way outside their comfort zone. These same people, however, may be very comfortable inviting a client to attend a company-sponsored event or to listen to a colleague explain a new company service. The important thing is to get people interacting with clients, prospects, referral sources and civic/service clubs in a way that leads to new business opportunities.

Accomplishments/Testimonials

Much of the learning and motivation that results from a marketing club is due to the sharing among group members. Learning from both the positive and negative experiences of others gives needed courage and determination to try. Many club members will only venture outside their comfort zone because of the example and experiences of their peers.

Member Training

Each club meeting includes training designed to increase the knowledge and skills of the group relative to marketing. This training often includes assigned reading or exercises prior to attending the club meeting. It is particularly helpful to include discussion questions to facilitate group interaction during the meeting. The point here is to increase member confidence through knowledge and practice. Role-playing of marketing situations is a great training activity. Although club members may not enjoy the experience, they will be much more likely to try something with a client or prospect if they've done it before.

Employee Incentives

Another key to having a successful marketing club is to provide incentives for participation in it ... the more people involved the better. For some firms, this incentive may come purely from the pressure of knowing top management is aware of who is participating and who isn't. However, if this is the only motivation you may not reap the desired results. You need to find a way for people to 'win' personally from their marketing efforts. For those compensated on new business the 'win' is obvious. You need to find a way for everyone to benefit.

One firm I know has assigned a point value to over 100 marketing related activities – including attending the marketing club meeting. Members can accumulate points by completing these activities over a given time period. These points can then be redeemed for valuable prizes, such as gift certificates and other merchandise that have real value.

Conclusion

The marketing club is a great idea for involving more employees from your firm in marketing activities. If you would like to start your own marketing club, check out the sample documents included in the Marketing Club Binder zipped file located in the Marketing Plan folder of the Academy Library.