

# **MARKETING MISTAKES THAT CAN HAUNT YOUR BUSINESS**

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*Are you letting one of these marketing errors scare your customers away?*

Ghosts, goblins and ghouls aren't the only things that can haunt small business owners. Many entrepreneurs fall prey to some common marketing mistakes that can have terrifying results for their businesses. Are you letting one of these marketing mess-ups scare your customers away?

## **Mistake 1. Marketing without setting a goal**

Whether you're doing digital marketing, print marketing or word-of-mouth, the first thing you need to establish is a goal. Without one, how will you know if your marketing worked? Start by setting specific, measurable goals for each marketing campaign, such as "increase email newsletter sign-ups by 10% this quarter." With a goal in mind, you'll be better able to design successful marketing campaigns.

## **Mistake 2. Neglecting your current customers**

Many small businesses focus all of their marketing dollars on attracting new customers. While new customers are important, returning customers can be even more valuable. Create a marketing plan to stay in touch with your existing customers. Work to enhance their loyalty and get them to buy from you more and more often.

## **Mistake 3. Working without a marketing plan**

No small business owner wants to waste money, but that's exactly what you'll be doing if you start marketing without a marketing plan in place. Know which marketing channels resonate with your target audience and develop a marketing plan for those channels that will achieve your marketing goals. Your plan should include time, frequency and costs so every aspect is accounted for.

## **Mistake 4. Letting your reputation slide**

Word-of-mouth has always been essential for marketing a small business, and today it matters even more. Whether your business is B2B or B2C, you must keep tabs on its reputation. Set up tools to monitor the online review sites and social media platforms where

your business has a presence. Respond quickly to both positive and negative posts, comments and reviews.

**Mistake 5. Not asking for the sale**

Some salespeople get so focused on “selling” the customer that they never actually ask for the sale. You see a lot of marketing that makes the same mistake. If your marketing talks about your product or service but doesn’t ask your prospects to do anything about it, they may do nothing. Make sure every piece of marketing you create has a call to action that asks prospects to do something, such as going to your website, making an appointment or filling out a leads form.

**Mistake 6. Expecting instant results**

Many small business owners flit from one marketing idea to another, never sticking with one marketing tactic long enough to see results. Whether you’re doing search engine optimization, social media marketing or public relations, it takes time for your marketing to get results. Stop chasing the latest marketing buzzword or trend and focus on your customers. Create marketing that educates them about what your product or service can do for them, promote it in the proper channels, and give it time to work.

**Mistake 7. Not monitoring results of your marketing**

Without tracking results, you won’t know if your marketing is working. There’s no excuse for this: Today’s digital marketing tools let you gather more data than ever before on how customers respond to your marketing messages. Learn to use the analytics tools offered by social media platforms, email marketing services and other marketing apps. By learning from what works and what doesn’t, you’ll be able to fine-tune your marketing message and get better and better results.

Marketing is a scary concept for many small business owners, but like Frankenstein’s monster, it doesn’t have to be frightening. Correct the seven mistakes above and make your marketing work for your business.

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As Benjamin Franklin observed, “if you fail to plan, you are planning to fail.” Let the SBA help your small business plan for success! Assistance is available in languages other than English, including Spanish, and all SBA programs and services are extended to the public on a non-discriminatory basis. To learn more about the SBA’s programs and services, please contact Lana M. Glovach, SBA Economic Development Specialist, at [лана.glovach@sba.gov](mailto:лана.glovach@sba.gov) or 401-528-4575, or visit [www.sba.gov/ri](http://www.sba.gov/ri).