

8 Deadly Marketing Mistakes

Marketing Mistake #1

You must be the Marketer of your Business

Most jewelers that we speak with struggle to find the time and dedication to seriously focus on the marketing of their business. Believe me, we have all been there. Formulating a marketing plan, creating copy and materials and selecting the right media takes a truly concerted effort on your part.

For years, we used to dread working on marketing and often threw things together when we were desperate to attract some new business or run a promotion. This “hit or miss” approach did not serve us well. Along the way we wasted a lot of time and a ton of money on marketing that did not produce any results, - or at least any results that we could track.

We finally decided, years ago, to become real students of marketing principles and processes and to develop a master plan to drive our marketing efforts. We attended national seminars, invested in a library of books, CD’s and other materials from the great marketing guru’s and formed local groups of entrepreneurs (from all types of businesses) to further study and implement the varied principles of sound marketing.

Now, I know that most people are not going to dedicate the time or resources to do what we did to understand how to market effectively. It did take an agreement between all of the members of our jewelry firm to support the cost and time involved to “get up to speed” in the marketing arena.

However, the pay-off has been astronomical compared with the time and resources expended.

I will never forget sitting at a national marketing seminar a few years ago (not a jewelry industry event) and hearing words that completely changed my thinking about my business and the marketing of it.

I was listening to a big-time marketing guru, Dan Kennedy, speak about how most business owners view their role in their businesses. He has worked with thousands of business owners, in all categories.

He stated that, when he asked the owners to describe what their primary role in their business was, most answered; managing my employees, waiting on customers, doing appraisals/repairs, running the finances/paying the bills, etc. Very rarely did anyone ever answer that they were the “marketer” of their business, i.e., the “Marketer of ABC Fine Jewelers”.

And, there lies the fatal flaw. Once you understand that marketing drives everything that happens in your business, your focus switches from being the “doer of your thing (i.e., replacing watch batteries, answering the phone, paying the bills), to the Marketer of your thing.

Or, as Dan Kennedy stated, “The quantum leap in income starts with the decision to be in the marketing business first and foremost; to be more the Marketer of your thing than the Doer of your thing.”

Now, I know that most independent jewelers don’t have the luxury of turning over all of the daily duties to someone else. Our business was not structured that way either. However, once we understood the importance of creating and implementing great marketing for our business, we shifted many “duties” to allow for the “priority of time” needed to get the marketing done.

In our recent marketing survey, we discovered that most jewelers feel their biggest marketing challenges are; creating materials and writing copy, marketing consistently and finding the time to work on marketing.

What we implemented to solve this problem was allocating dedicated time to work “ON” our business instead of “IN” our business, every week.

What that means is that whoever the “marketing person” is in your business, possibly you, sets aside select time, each week, to work specifically on your marketing, - nothing else. In our case, our “marketing person” works away from the business, in an environment conducive to creative thinking and without interruptions.

We know that many of you are already working very long hours. Our survey indicated that most jewelers are working over 50+ hours per week. So, ask yourself what your time is worth and if you are truly spending it working on the highest income producing activities in your business.

It is likely that some of your daily activities are not worthy of your time and could possibly be delegated to someone else. Thus, freeing you up to concentrate on the highest income producing activity of them all, - marketing your business to its greatest potential!!

The marketing of your business has to be your #1 priority. I know that sounds like a daunting task, but once you decide to go for it; there are many fabulous resources to help make the process easier. We will share some great ideas with you throughout this Special Report.

The key to successful marketing is formulating a plan, putting some systems in place and automating your marketing to make it as simple as possible to implement, year in and out.

Marketing Mistake #2 Cutting Back on Marketing in a Slow Economy

From our survey responses, we know that most jewelers are reporting that their businesses are flat or down this year. However, we are working with a number of jewelers who are reporting that their revenues have stayed steady, including our jewelry store. The one common denominator is;

WE HAVE CONTINUED MARKETING

*When business is slow the first inclination for everyone is to cut expenses, - and that includes advertising and marketing. This is the one area that you can't afford to cut way back on. **The smart idea is to reevaluate your marketing and what you are spending your money on. All of your marketing efforts need to be judged on the results that they are bringing you, - your ROI (return on investment).***

You must look at your marketing as an investment in your business. All business is driven by marketing in some form. Take the time to do a marketing analysis on your business to determine if you are spending your money wisely, - to its best advantage.

We have a Marketing Assessment that we utilize with our jewelers to determine how their dollars are being spent and to reallocate available funds to their best use. No one can afford to waste money on ineffective marketing and advertising in today's economy.

There are proven, effective strategies to maximize the dollars that you have to spend, - stretching them to cover the areas that will impact your bottom line, the most.

Often, “grass roots or guerilla” marketing is an essential component to a solid, cost effective marketing program.

These days, if you are waiting for customers to just walk in your door, you may be waiting a long time. Utilize some time each week to take your message to the streets. This can be done in numerous, fun and educational ways.

Attract business to you with programs that establish you as the jewelry expert in your local area. There are many ways to market your business that are very effective and inexpensive.

The most important thing is to keep marketing in some manner, no matter what.

In the following chapter, we will pose some important questions for you to think about when planning your marketing. And, offer some great ideas for programs that will enhance your marketing position in your local area.

Marketing Mistake #3

Not Marketing Consistently or Cost Effectively

Creating and developing a consistent marketing strategy is one of the biggest challenges facing independent jewelers, or anyone in business for that matter. You have many decisions to make;

- What are the messages that I want to consistently put forth?
- How do I select the best medium for my messages?
- How can I insure that I'm spending money cost effectively?
- What will be my means of tracking marketing results?
- How can I do this consistently without it being cumbersome?
- How can I simplify this process in order to get started now?

Our recent survey indicated that most jewelers struggle with marketing consistently. And, we know that a great part of the struggle is finding the time to work on marketing and actually developing and creating the materials themselves. *Writing copy and creating synergy between all of your marketing materials is a crucial component to the success of your campaigns.*

Once you develop a process for handling this, the task becomes much simpler and more enjoyable (yes, some of us actually love to work on marketing). The trick is to have a "plug and play" system that allows you to set in up once and then it mostly runs on auto-pilot .

We have found that mapping out a yearly marketing calendar is very helpful in setting up your system. It should obviously contain programs targeted to the primary jewelry purchasing occasions throughout the year. But, there are many months in between that could allow for some fun, "out of the box" programs to drive traffic to your business and boost your "viral marketing" (word of mouth advertising).

This could be a great combination of fun contests, in-store promotions, service offers and consumer education materials that would position you as the jewelry "expert" in your local area.

I can tell you, it's very profitable to be the "go to jeweler" in your town, - the expert that everyone seeks for reliable information. This is one of the primary positions that we have taken for all of these years.

However, one of the vital keys to making all of this work is starting a program and sticking with it, - the consistency of being seen by your own customers and new prospects month after month, - after month.

In a recent National Jeweler article, “Knocked Flat” (Feb. 2008), the jewelers who reported that their revenues were up attribute this to aggressive marketing. Mark Miller from the Diamond Vault in Reno, Nevada states, “my revenues were up 40% due to more aggressive and consistent marketing”. He advises, “never stop marketing, get a plan and stay with it”.

Well, he is absolutely right!! There is no substitute for a consistent, aggressive marketing plan that is well thought-out and strategically designed to maximize every dollar that you spend.

And, this leads up right into Deadly Marketing Mistake #4, - Being an “Advertising Victim”.

Marketing Mistake #4 Being an “Advertising Victim”

Even though you may not know the term “Advertising Victim”, we have all been one.

This is when your local advertising rep, - newspaper, radio, TV, coupon book, - it doesn't matter, take your pick, - convinces you that what he is selling “today” is a great advertising deal for you. How many times have you jumped at an advertising opportunity only to be sorely disappointed with the results? I used to do that a lot!!

Well, I don't know about you, but I finally got tired of “advertising reps and marketing people” trying to tell me what will work in my business and trying to sell me advertising that I don't need. They have never “LIVED” in my store, - a jewelry store. They don't know the issues that we face on a daily basis and how we tackle them.

The problem with not having a systemized plan is that you fall prey to the next “bright, shiny object” that comes your way. In this case, the advertising “deal” that is sure to bring you lots of traffic and boost your bottom line. And, often you are acting out of desperation for something to work, now. And, this never happens.

And, there is a very good reason why this never happens. General advertising does not contain the components needed to generate results and a proven return on investment. It's like blind archery, - fire off a shot and see if you can hit some kind of target. This type of marketing is not designed to solicit a direct response from the consumer.

Direct response marketing is the only type of marketing/advertising that you should be utilizing. Sporadically placing an ad in local media is pointless and a waste of money without direct response components built in to your copy.

A number of years ago, when we formulated our plan to market and advertise our company more efficiently and cost effectively, we applied all of the direct marketing principles that we had learned, through our years of studying, - and trial and error.

It is amazing that incorporating some specific tracking and response mechanisms into our marketing has made all the difference in producing programs that provide the return on investment that we have come to expect.

These days, you cannot afford to spend money on marketing and advertising that does not deliver great results. So, you have to embrace a system that will keep you on a dedicated marketing path. This system should allow you to strategically place your advertising and marketing dollars into programs that will consistently provide a great return on investment for your time and money spent.

In fact, we don't allow advertising reps to come into our business without an appointment time, of our choosing, - no drop-ins. If you adhere to this rule, this dramatically cuts down on wasted time and the chance that you will fall prey to whatever is being offered "now". Unless we have a specific need, we don't see them at all.

And, since we systemized our marketing, we don't have the need to try and run an unscheduled, "fly by the seat of our pants" promotion to generate traffic or cash flow. Our marketing runs like clock work, and delivers consistent, trackable results. No second guessing if we have spent our money wisely.

On the backside of this binder is one of the sayings that we have posted in our offices to remind us to always be forward thinking and not be afraid to make a change;

**IF YOU DO WHAT YOU
ALWAYS DID**

**YOU WILL GET WHAT YOU
ALWAYS GOT**

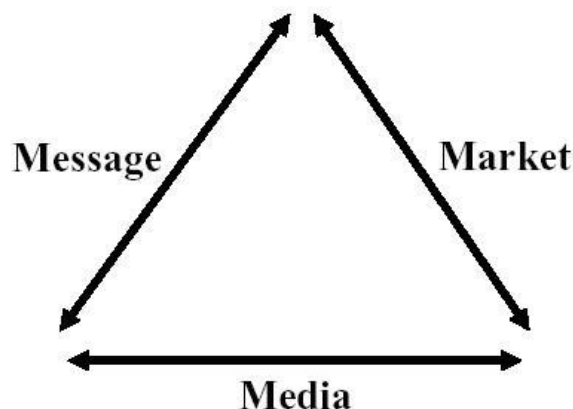
It is time to seriously rethink how you design, select and schedule your marketing and advertising. Nearly every jeweler responding to our survey indicated that their marketing is a struggle for them. We think you will find some additional information to help you in the coming chapters.

Marketing Mistake #5

No Market – Media – Message Match

We have always heard, “you can’t be all things to all people”. And, in the jewelry business this is very true. Most jewelers operate their businesses to try and serve a certain clientele. Some are discount oriented, some are mid-range and some are considered high-end. For this discussion of marketing, it doesn’t matter what type of customers you sell to and service, - the principles of marketing remain the same.

However, it is imperative that you know who your “WHO” is. The idea behind this is that it allows you to most efficiently and cost effectively target your “WHO” (target market) with the right message and the right media. The best selling, direct marketing author, Dan Kennedy, describes this as a triangle or three legged stool. Each side or leg supports the other and without all three components, your money and marketing message is wasted.



Knowing the best way to reach your target market is determined by “WHO” your target market is. You need to know some things about them; where they live, income levels, married or single, kids, what they read, entertainment they like, hobbies and buying habits. The more information that you can collect on your current customers, the more you can discover their commonalities. This will allow you to market to new prospects that are similar to your current customer base.

You will also need to select advertising media that are congruent with your target market. For instance, if you are a higher-end store, you would not want to advertise in the freebie, throw-away publications. This is not where your target market will be looking for you.

Using language and visuals that are appropriate for your target market is essential. No matter what level your business operates on, you want your target market to feel like you are speaking directly to them. You provide merchandise and services that they can use and they are comfortable coming to your store.

It takes a little bit of research to determine what media and message is the best fit for the customers that you are trying to keep and attract. Ill-fitting messages and misplaced media will fail to supply you with the constant traffic and new customers that you need to boost business.

Understanding what segment of the market to target will allow you to strategically plan how you reach them and with what message. This is the way you maximize your time and dollars spent. As we like to say;

**MarketSmart or Market Stupid,
It's only your hard earned time and money!**

I know that is a crass way to put it, but you can save so much time and money by having a great marketing plan that capitalizes on all of your strengths and plays to the market that will appreciate them.

Marketing Mistake #6

No USP – Plain Vanilla Marketing/Advertising Following the Wrong Crowd

It is important to understand that your point of differentiation is critical to a successful marketing strategy. Every jeweler, or business owner of any kind for that matter, needs to ask themselves this crucial question;

THE BIG QUESTION

Why Should a Potential Customer Choose to do Business With You Over all Others?

When you answer this question you will have the basis for establishing a USP or Unique Selling Proposition for your business. You need to know what separates you from the crowd. What does your business offer that you can't find at every other jewelry store in your area?

If you are using phrases in your marketing and advertising like; Fine Jewelers Since 1970; Excellent Service; Top Quality Repairs, Family Owned and Operated; these are all examples of plain vanilla/generic language. Everybody in the jewelry industry uses this.

You need to tell all of your prospects and current customers something special about YOU. **The one thing that is immune to competition is YOU.** Who you are and what you are all about.

The Biggest Sin in Marketing and Advertising is being BORING!!

Every day your customers and potential customers process hundreds of advertising messages, from all different media. They are bombarded with lots of generic, boring advertising, - everything looks and sounds the same. They are not paying attention to it. All of the big jewelry firms and chains have lots of money to flood the market with advertising, most independents do not. Did you know that the average person views an advertisement (7) seven times before the message sticks with them?

Your goal should be to craft a message that is so compelling, entertaining and unusual that it is impossible to ignore!!

Everyone always talks about “branding” for your business. The true “brand” that you want to promote is you. Most of the typical branding that you see is what we call “image” advertising, which is characterized by a specialized logo, pretty images or pictures and slogans. **The idea is to not do the same thing that everyone else is doing. The worst plan is to copy all of the other jewelry retailers, especially when you don’t know the results of their marketing.**

A USP or Unique Selling Proposition is not an ordinary slogan. A USP answers the most important question that you will ever ask yourself, - THE BIG QUESTION above. For most small businesses, **personal branding** is far superior to corporate/business branding.

*Work at creating name–brand identity and recognition for yourself and your business with a carefully selected target market. You can have great impact in a more narrowly defined market or niche for the resources that you have to spend. **A giant market is only useful to someone with a giant wallet.***

Your most basic strategy should be; Begin with WHO your business is for? Then, WHAT do you want to be known for with the WHO? Then, HOW can you represent, symbolize and summarize that in a memorable way.

Marketing Mistake #7 Not Using the Power and Influence of Your Own Customers

**April 2008, Instore Magazine
“The Big Survey”**

**“75% of jewelers state that they contact their own
customers only 1-4 times per year”**

Our Survey Results Mirror This Statistic Exactly

It is a proven and profitable marketing strategy to consistently “touch” your current customers at least once per month, in some manner. This would include direct mail, phone calls, emails, customer events, etc.

Everyone always wants to focus on getting “new” customers. ***Did you know that it is substantially more expensive to acquire a new customer than to keep your existing customers?*** It is a well-published and widely known marketing fact that the easiest customers to sell are, - in this order;

An Existing Client – A Referred Client – A New Client

It is important for you to understand the concept of “lifetime value” of your customers. In the jewelry business, once you acquire a new customer and work to build a relationship with them, the “lifetime value” of that customer can be very substantial.

Over the years, most clients will rely on you for gifts, self-purchases, repairs, appraisals, etc. This adds up to a lot of business over time. So, it is vitally important to maintain a great relationship with the customers that you already have.

In order to keep any great relationship going, you need lots of communication with that person. The same is true for your jewelry clients, - it is crucial that you talk to them regularly and thank them often.

The Big Mistake that most jewelers make is that they think that once someone has done business with them previously, they will continue to do business with them in the future.

This could not be further from the truth. Did you know that “your” customers are being solicited by other jewelry sellers every day? Through general advertising, direct mail, newspaper inserts, catalogs, internet, - someone is trying to get “your customer”.

Your only defense is to develop a strategy that puts you in front of your customers, - in some manner, - on a regular basis. That way, when they have the occasion to need a jeweler, you are at the top of their mind and list.

We call this strategy, “putting a fence around your customers”. Build the fence strong enough and they won’t stray. Ignore them, by not communicating regularly, and they will look for greener pastures. Whoever happens to be talking to them the most and has the best relationship with them will be rewarded with their business.

Also, since your existing customers are the easiest to resell to, this should give you a great incentive to keep them very happy. And, when you have lots of happy customers, they will refer you like crazy to their friends, - which is the second easiest customer to sell.

Then, when you add a great referral program to your mix of marketing, your advertising dollars are really working cost effectively for you.

I know that all of this sounds like a lot of work. However, there are systems that you can drop in place to make the process as simple as possible. Our final chapter will give you some great ideas about how to use marketing systems in your business.

Marketing Mistake #8

Not Developing Systems to Automate Your Marketing

It is interesting that most jewelers would never run their business without a clear set of operating procedures and systems in place. This would include things like; opening and closing procedures, how repairs are taken in, security measures, the selling process itself and documenting transactions.

However, when it comes to marketing and advertising, most jewelers have not attempted to automate this process. When you can streamline your marketing by choosing the most efficient and cost effective programs for your business, - the process becomes greatly simplified.

It is fair to say that marketing is difficult for many independent business owners, - not just jewelers. **You must think of marketing as the engine that drives your business, - and the engine must constantly have fuel to keep it running.** When it sputters and stops or only runs sporadically, you will experience a real downturn in business and profits.

The only real solution to this ongoing problem is to implement strategies that will integrate your marketing and advertising into a systemized program that is automated wherever possible. It is not complicated to put your marketing on auto-pilot, and, once it is completed, it will run like clockwork month in and out.

Wouldn't it be nice to have your marketing and advertising planned out for a year in advance?

You would know exactly what you are doing each month and you wouldn't have to revisit what is happening all of the time. You could map out what components will work best for your type of business, - one time, - and then implement the strategies as planned.

Nearly every one of our survey respondents indicated that they struggle with marketing in some way. Whether it is writing and creating the copy, finding programs that are affordable, marketing with some consistency or even finding the time to work on it, - there is some difficulty in getting the marketing done.

And, when there are constant roadblocks, it is easier to “put it aside” to work on later. Or, return to the “advertising victim syndrome” and fall prey to the advertising reps latest gimmick.

**Believe me, we know what you are going through, -
we have been there ourselves;**

- ✓ Frustrated with spending money on marketing and advertising that is not delivering the desired results
- ✓ Struggling to come up with the time to concentrate on marketing when you are already stretched to the limit
- ✓ Not enjoying writing and designing copy and feel that you are not good at developing marketing ideas
- ✓ Seems like there is too much time involved and too many obstacles to getting a system in place
- ✓ Currently, money is tight due to the slowing economy and you can't afford to invest in marketing that doesn't work

We Would Propose That You Take a Different Approach to Your Marketing and Advertising.

We have developed a system for our marketing that we have used for years with great success. All of the strategies are time-tested and proven, “from the trenches”, used only in independent jewelry stores.

We have done all of the homework, spent a fortune on experts and consultants, made the mistakes, fixed the problems and designed a system that is simple to use by any independent jeweler.

Being jewelers ourselves, we know what will work in a jewelry store. We view effectiveness and cost efficiency as the hallmarks of successful marketing programs, - and our programs have both.

It's simple to put this system to work for YOU!

It does not matter what your current situation is, either. This system has been used by stores on the brink of bankruptcy to turn business around. It works when the economy is bad, when competition has gotten murderous, even when everything else you have tried has failed miserably.

**And, do you want to know something
really important?**

This system is designed to save you time. That's the reward for putting your marketing on auto-pilot.

**Less work, more customers, increased sales, higher profit...
and more time off!!**

I don't know about you, but I'm interested in anything that will save me time and money.