

If You Want Things The Way They Were...

If you long for "the good old days" the way they were a couple of years ago, then things have to change. I'm not talking about the economy or the politicians. I'm talking about us and our business.

If we want to regain the success of days past, then we need to change our marketing and how we go about doing it. The problem is that when things become challenging, there's a tendency to rely on what used to work. And here's what happens. As we continue to do more of the same marketing and our results decline, we typically end up doing one of three things.

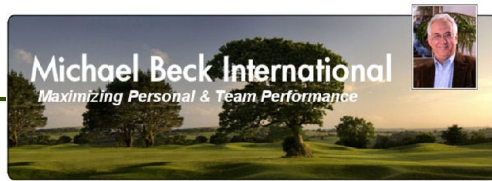
One course of action is to start doing less of that marketing because ...well...it's not working as well as it used to. Taking this course of action amounts to resigning ourselves to "riding it out" and accepting that things are going to be lean for a while.

The second course of action is to start doing more of that marketing because...well...it's not working as well as it used to. The problem with this course of action is that it ignores the underlying cause of why it is no longer as effective as it used to be. And so by just doing more of what we used to do, we often alienate the people we're trying to attract. The reason for this is that whatever it is about our marketing that no longer works hasn't changed. When we continue to market in a way that doesn't connect with prospects and we do more of it, it ends up becoming annoying and ultimately pushes people away.

The third course of action is to become more assertive in our marketing because...well...it's not working as well as it used to. By being more assertive, I don't mean in its frequency, but in the message and/or manner in which we conduct our marketing. First of all, most of us aren't pushy by nature, so getting "assertive" doesn't come across very well, and causes our prospects and us to both become uncomfortable. Secondly, by not addressing the root cause of the problem and simply delivering the same message as before - just more insistently - we *really* push people away. You know how hard it is to make a sale when you really, REALLY need it? The same negative dynamic occurs when being assertive during challenging times.

And the final aspect making this third course of action counter-productive is that during challenging times, people are edgier, more frustrated, and have much less patience. Being "assertive" during challenging times will always backfire.

So if doing less or doing more of the same marketing isn't the answer to growing business during challenging times, then what is?



Obviously the answer is doing something different. Which is all well and good, but what exactly is this "different" thing? There's an old saying that goes: "Observe what everyone else is doing and run the other way." It's tempting to look around, see what everyone else is doing, and jump on that bandwagon. But here's the problem...

Most people don't know what they're doing. So just because the masses are doing something, doesn't make it effective. And even if something *is* working for someone, it doesn't mean it will work for you. Finding a marketing strategy that's working well for someone can give you important insights. But rather than simply copying their strategy, it is important to understand *why* a strategy is working for someone. We all know of someone who has had a great deal of success using one particular marketing strategy or another. And it's good to make note of what they're doing. But there are two critical aspects to take into consideration before implementing it.

The first thing to consider is when they had their success. Are they having their success right now, or did their strategy only work well five years ago, during different times? The second thing to consider is *how* they did what they did. People often succeed with their marketing because they do it in a way that closely matches their style of communicating. If you try marketing in *their* style, you won't have anything near the success they had or that you want.

I've seen very successful marketing strategies that worked because they suited the marketer's style really well and happened during better economic times. In fact, I've tried a number of them in my own business. And while some of them worked well for me, others failed miserably.

Here's what I observed... If a marketing strategy is extreme in any way - in its message or form of delivery - it only works if that style is a close match to your personal style. If it doesn't truly reflect who you are, it will never work. If a successful marketing strategy isn't extreme, you may have some success with it. But if you don't tailor it to match who you are, you'll only have "some" success and not great success.

Typically, the marketing strategies that work best during challenging times are those that improve the connection to and relationship with your prospects. "Pitchy", impersonal marketing just won't have much impact. Also, because the most effective marketing strategies during challenging times are those that deepen or establish a relationship with our prospects, it becomes *critical* to conduct that marketing in a way which reflects us as best we can. The message and the delivery of that message need to be in alignment with who we are.



So if you want things the way they were, you need to take a step back and reflect on how you're marketing. Often the thing we most resist or most fear is the thing that makes all the difference to our success.