

Diversify Your Marketing!

by Adam D. Bishop, MBA

There are many ways to market and advertise your services. Should you pick just one? Several? I recommend that you use a multi-tiered approach to your marketing strategies. Establish your identity pieces (business cards, brochures) and target which media best serve your budget, your goals, your message and your particular market. Diversification increases new business and referrals—and it also allows you to test and track several advertising avenues.

Ideally, you should consider all venues and media to market your business:

1. Direct Mail pieces—brochures, flyers
2. Signage and Billboards
3. Print—newspapers, magazines, newsletters, trade journals
4. Local Radio—advertisements and talk shows
5. Local Television—advertisements and talk shows
6. Web Site and Internet Banner Ads
7. Existing Clients and Referral Marketing
8. Tradeshows—local, regional, national
9. Network marketing through organizations, clubs
10. Public Relations—hosting or sponsoring local social events

Why do you need to diversify your marketing?

As the old adage goes, “don’t put all your eggs into one basket.” And just like your stock portfolio adviser says: *Diversify, diversify, and diversify!*

Diversification will reduce your level of risk and provide a steady influx of new business from different sources. Sales is the key to the success of your business, so you must have multiple strategies working at all times to provide your company with maximum sales.

Sometimes one strategy might take longer than anticipated to generate your forecasted sales. If you have a couple other strategies in place, staggered to hit different market segments, you will have a more consistent level of sales and you’ll reduce your risk of huge dips that could have a major impact on cash flow.

How do I diversify my marketing strategies?

At the beginning of the year sit down with your marketing managers/team and plan out your marketing strategies for the year. I recommend that you use plenty of notebook paper.

Key: You must plan your marketing strategies at the beginning of the year. This will help you establish a budget, with clear objectives and goals written down. Then, everyone in the organization will have a road map of what needs to be done and where the company is going. Just by writing down your goals, you will have an eighty percent chance of success!

Finding one particular strategy that works great for you doesn’t mean that you should terminate your other strategies. Stick to your original marketing strategies that you set at the beginning of the year and you will experience greater results than you would have ever imagined.

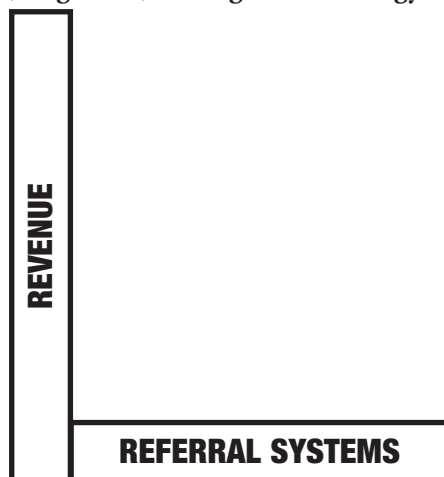
The biggest problem that most agencies face is failure to stick to their original plan and starting a “shotgun” or panic strategy when sales are down—dumping a huge amount of money into one strategy and waiting for the calls.

When a company is already suffering from a cash-flow problem due to lack of sales, this panic strategy is an expensive way to yield very few results.

Remember, it can take 30 days or more for a new strategy to take hold.

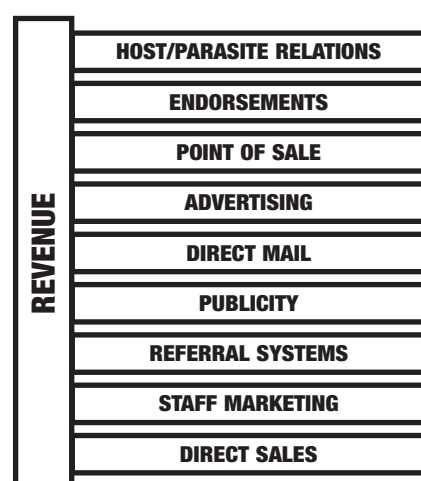
A diversified strategy such as the “Parthenon” strategy (Diagram B) can target several market segments at once using multiple marketing strategies simultaneously. By using multiple strategies you and your marketing team will be able to leverage your time while at the same time bringing in more referrals faster. It will also significantly reduce your agency’s level of risk by increasing the number of referral sources you have—whereas the shotgun strategy or the “Diving Board” strategy (Diagram A) targets a single segment and relies on only one strategy or referral source for referrals. A diversified strategy also provides you with the benefit of having your audience experience repetition of your marketing, which is by far the most effective strategy to get the market to recall and identify your company name.

(Diagram A) Diving Board Strategy



What would happen to revenue and profitability if you combined a wide array of marketing approaches?

(Diagram B) Parthenon Strategy



If you are currently relying on only one or two marketing strategies and/or referral sources to bring in referrals you would be better off to consider diversifying your marketing strategy and developing the “Parthenon” strategy. A strategy that will guarantee a strong flow of referrals into your agency month after month.

You don’t have to start off by adding all the strategies illustrated in the Parthenon Strategy (Diagram B). Start off with two or three and build on them as your resources increase or your team is ready. Diversifying your marketing program will bring you incredible results!