MAXIMISE YOUR MARKETING – PART 1

In the first of a two-parter, Karl Hartey offers advice on how to get the most out of your promotional activity

What is marketing? The usual definition is something along the lines of: "The process by which you attract new customers". Attracting customers is essential – which means marketing is a vital skill. So how to proceed?

Ground Rule: The objective is to spend as little money as possible on marketing.
Before You Start: Ensure you have the correct business image. This needs to be in place before you start marketing.

Elements of your business image:
- Business name
- Logo
- Literature
- Environment
- Strap Line

INTERNAL MARKETING TACTICS

1.GRADE YOUR EXISTING CLIENTS

Grading is a team event. The team should be involved as they have to deal with clients as well.

Category 'A' Client
Someone who loves you and loves what you do. Not only can they spend money with you today, but they have the capacity to continue spending money with you for their lifetime. They're also well-connected personally or professionally and are at the centre of a network which means that if you do a good job for them they are likely to recommend you to others.

Category 'B' Client
Someone who loves you and loves what you do. However, they may not be able to spend quite so much money now or in the future, and/or have a lower level of connectivity.

Category 'C' Client
Someone who can't make their mind up about you and/or your products and services. They don't respond to letters, don't fill forms in, fail to arrive for appointments on a regular basis, and are not committed to having a regular relationship with you. They're likely to recommend you to other category 'C' clients. 'C' is for Choice - they must choose whether to become an 'A' or a 'B' or a 'D'.

Category 'D' Client
The Victor Meldrew/BMW [Bitcher, Moaner & Whiner). 'D' is for Delete. Get rid of them. Keep putting your prices up and they'll probably go away. If this doesn't work, speak to them and suggest other people who can help them.

The objective: To end up only with' A' and 'B' clients. Preferably 20% 'A's generating 80% of the profit and 80% 'B's generating 20% of the profit. All 'C' clients have either chosen to become 'A' or 'B' clients or have been deleted. All 'D' clients have been deleted.

2. CREATE A MENU

How are your new and existing clients given the opportunity of buying more from you? For this to happen, they must be aware of ALL the products and services that are available to them and all the ways that these products and services can benefit them.

You need to create a MENU of the full range of products and services you have to offer (see last month's article). Once you have created your menu, you need to do something with it! Be pro-active:

- Include the menu in your brochure
- Include the menu on your website
- Display the menu somewhere in your reception/waiting area
- Include the menu with your recall letter
- Include the menu with your end-of-treatment letter
- Make sure that the language of the menu is about the clients' outcomes and not about your 'mumbo-jumbo'.

3. PRODUCE A WELCOME PACK

Provide new clients with a Welcome Pack. A practical format is a printed folder with a pocket into which you can insert the following:

- Mission Statement
- Practice Information Leaflet/Brochure
- CVs/Profiles
- Menu of Services and Products
- Testimonials
- Terms and Conditions
- Promises
- Prices.

4. DEVELOP A REFERRAL SYSTEM

Do you have a system for asking existing clients to refer others to you? When do you ask for referrals?

➤ The first time you make contact with Potential New Client (PNC). Somewhere in the information you give to them, include a sentence like this: 'The bulk of our business comes through personal recommendations. If we do a good job, we would be very happy for you to refer others to us.'

➤ The first time you physically meet a PNC. Let them know that: 'Most of our new business comes through personal recommendations. We promise you certain things - if we do a good job we'd like you to refer others to us.'

➤ During the selling process: Client 'How much will this cost?' You 'We get paid in two ways. First, we are paid for the specific service we provide, and second, if we do a five-star job, we ask you to recommend us to others. Is that OK with you?'

➤ At the end of a treatment, write an end-of-treatment letter along the lines of: 'We have now completed this treatment. How was it for you? Any problems please let us know. You will recall that our business grows through personal recommendations. Here are three copies of our leaflet/brochure/referral card. Please feel free to pass these on to anyone else who you think would benefit from our product or service.'

➤ Any newsletter or other printed marketing material. Include referral permission, e.g: 'We have vacancies available for the right type of client. Please feel free to recommend us to anyone you think would be interested.'

If you have a website, it's essential that you have a referral permission statement and the ability to recommend others to your website.

5. PRODUCE A REFERRAL CARD

Your Referral Card gives people an insight into what you do and what sort of clients you are looking for. Roughly double the size of a business card and printed on both sides, ideally it should include the following:

- Logo
- Contact details
- Your photo
- Description of ideal client
- Mini menu of what you offer.

A Referral Card can be included with information sent with the end-of-treatment letter and/or handed out at networking events.

There'll be further exploration of marketing actions in next month's article.

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