

Immersion Branding - Laser Targeting Means More Bang For Your Marketing Buck

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What if you could spend a fraction of what a national company spent on their marketing campaign, yet still create as much exposure to your target market? It's possible with a method called Immersion Branding.

This simply means geographically targeting your market (a neighborhood, shopping mall, office building, etc.) using an integrated marketing campaign. This technique is particularly effective for those companies with a limited marketing budget, and those companies that are very familiar with a defined target market. Whether your product is B2C or B2B, Immersion Branding can give you a great return on your marketing investment.

"Shotgun Marketing" (attempting to communicate your brand message to anyone who will listen) has been a popular, yet ineffective marketing technique for many companies. Big companies can afford to use this technique. Smaller companies must be more creative to compete. Immersion Branding, by contrast, focuses directly on the prospect - where they live, work, shop and play. Using this technique, each marketing dollar spent is laser focused on reaching a qualified prospect with a consistent brand message. Let's take an example.



Say you are selling widgets to midsize companies in a metropolitan area. After a little bit of research using business lists, you find out there is a concentrated area of potential customers on Main Street between 10th Street and 14th Street. In fact, there are 3 large office buildings in that area that house 150 very qualified prospects. You know from your existing client base that your customers typically drive their cars to work, like to stay fit, and drink lots of coffee. With this information, you are now equipped to hammer your message home. But first, you must understand the two truths in branding:

1. People buy brands they recognize
2. People won't recognize a brand until they've been exposed to it 27 times

No wonder cold calls hardly ever work. Convincing your prospect that your widget is the best takes more than one call or one ad. To really get through to your market you must have a compelling and consistent brand message that's communicated using a variety of means. This integrated approach has proven successful time and time again vs. "one outlet" campaigns.

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Using our example, we would assemble an Immersion Branding initiative that looks something like this:

- Lease a billboard at the highway exit near the 3 office buildings.
- Buy space on coffee cup sleeves at the coffee shops located in the lobbies of the 3 buildings.
- Buy ad space on the interactive elevator screens in each of the 3 buildings.
- Cosponsor half price lunches with a local deli using coupons for workers in those 3 buildings.
- Buy ad space on the treadmill screens at the fitness club in each of the 3 buildings.
- Send a direct mail piece to the company decision makers in each of the buildings
- Follow up with a timely phone call that relates to the call-to-action of the direct mail.

Of course, your brand message should be consistent and compelling among these media choices. Be sure to provide a simple message that speaks to your market and addresses a pain they are encountering in their life or business. Each exposure should be so similar looking and sounding that, subconsciously, the prospect may meld all of their exposures to your brand into one total experience.

Sticking to one overriding message is also important. Trying to say that your company is about service, quality and low prices will dilute what's truly important about your brand. Choose the element that you are best at, and the element that your market cares about most. The more laser-focused your message is, the more memorable – and effective - each exposure will be.

In the example above, assuming each member of the target market is exposed to just 3 of these messages a day, it will take 9 working days (27 exposures) before your brand registers in their brain. Now, we're talking about major exposure to your brand.

This brand "awareness" will help pave the way to getting a foot in the door – and will give you a much better chance of success than a typical cold call.

Another few weeks, and your brand will be as recognizable to your target market as some of the world's biggest brands are to the masses.

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