



MARKETING IN THE SECURITY INDUSTRY

DO YOUR CUSTOMERS KNOW WHO YOU ARE?



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Marketing is something we all know we need to do. It's the key to building and expanding your business. But it's crucial to understand what it means. Most people think of "marketing" as being synonymous with "advertising." It's not.

Anyone who has taken a "Marketing 101" course will recognize the 4 "Ps" of marketing:

- **Product** – What you sell.
- **Price** – How you price your product (premium, moderate, aggressive).
- **Place** – How you get your product to market.
- **Promotion** – How you communicate to the marketplace (inform, educate, persuade).

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The graphic above is a representation of the many things that comprise what we call “marketing.”

As you may have surmised from the title of this article, I’m going to be talking about promotion. Consider the following question: Do your customers know who you are? *(It was in the title, after all.)*

I can hear you now, “Of course they know who I am. They bought my system. They paid me to install it.” I’m sure you’re confident they know who you are, but do they?

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Branding

How strong is your brand? I am writing this from the perspective of a manufacturer who provides one small part of what you sell: access control readers and credentials. At least once a week, if not more often, I get a call that proceeds something like this:

“Hello Tom, I’m John Doe with XYZ company. I got your name from the Farpointe website and I need your help. I have a box of cards and we need more. The box says they came from Farpointe. How can I order some?”

“Well,” I say, “those are available from the access control integrator that installed your system. Give them a call, and they can take care of you.”

After a small pause, I hear “I don’t know who that is. Can I buy them directly from Farpointe?”

So, I ask you again, do your customers know who you are? In the example I outlined above, the person tasked with buying more cards had no idea who to call. The buyers saw “Farpointe” on the box and called us. The integrator that sold and installed the system missed the opportunity to make sure that his customer (the one who paid him) really knew, and remembered, who the security expert is. (Now, luckily for this dealer, Farpointe will not sell to end users, so we can help find that dealer for the end user to make sure he does get that order).

Building and maintaining your brand isn’t that hard, but it does take commitment. Think of everything that you put into the hands of your customers, starting when they are only prospects. How many things show your logo, phone number and web site address?

- Do you co-brand all of the manufacturer data sheets and brochures you provide with your proposals? If not, you should.
- Do all of the panels, cameras and devices you sell have your logo and contact info on them? If not, they should.
- Do the access control credentials you sell promote your business with your logo and web address? If not, they should.

Selling

Selling, or to be more precise, “personal selling,” is one of the best ways to promote your business. It also helps you build your brand. To be really effective, it has to become part of your company culture. This means EVERYONE sells. From your sales people on the streets, to your installers, to your service people, to office manager, work to instill a culture of selling. Look for opportunities to sell your customers on the value your company brings to them. This can mean an opportunity to sell more (since you’re buying that, maybe you’ll also be interested in this), or it can mean providing some “free” advice that sells the customer on your value as their “go to” security provider. Make sure that everyone on your staff understands the value of the sale, for as one of my favorite sayings goes, “Nothing happens until somebody sells something.”

Advertising

Advertising your business is less about the “how” and more about the “what.” Huh? By “how” I am referring to TV, radio, direct-mail, etc. The size of your business and your revenue stream will dictate what you can afford and I’m not here to tell you which is best for you. I will tell you, however, that your messaging is the key.

Advertising is kind of like fishing. The ads are the bait, and inquiries are what you catch. How can you get more inquiries? The answer is to offer something that resonates with potential customers. This is especially true the ones who don’t know you yet, or maybe didn’t even know they were interested in security.

There is a lot—and I mean A LOT—of boring security company advertising out there. There are tons of companies that have been in business for 20, 30, 40 years. There are plenty of security companies that sell burglar alarms, CCTV, access control, fire alarms, etc.

The key here is to differentiate yourself from the competition. Instead of promoting a “burglar alarm,” promote a benefit that it brings. How about that it can let a parent know the EXACT MOMENT their kid arrives home? Instead of promoting “access control,” why not promote the benefit of access control, like “no more keys,” or “lock down your facility in seconds.”

Mr. Marco Chaffiotte, owner of Enterprise Communication Consultants, a Brivo Dealer in Jersey City, New Jersey, has embraced custom-branded credentials and readers. Every credential shows his company logo and web site. In addition, he has started branding his readers as well.



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Mr. Rick Caruthers, Galaxy Control Systems' Executive Vice President, encourages his customers and partners to consider private-labeled access control credentials from Farpointe. Says Caruthers, "Private labeling promotes your brand, encourages card reorders and generates leads."

In the world of direct-response advertising, there is a simple formula to follow: AIDA:

- **Attention** – The very first thing an ad should do is grab the attention of the person. Remember, they're not out searching for your ad. It will get delivered to them at an unexpected time and place. It must "speak to them."
- **Interest** – Once the ad has their attention, it needs to grab their interest, because, well, if they're not interested, they will move on or tune out. What do you do that will interest them?
- **Desire** – This next step is harder but very important. You want the ad to create desire. It may be a desire to buy, it may be a desire to learn more, it may be a desire to get the free thing you're offering if they call, but it does need to create desire.
- **Action** – This is something far too many ads lack: a call-to-action. The ad must ask the viewer listener to do something: call now, visit your website, complete an on-line form. The call-to-action generates leads.

Internet

No missive on marketing would complete without talking about the internet. It's everywhere, and you need to leverage it. The section above talked about advertising and the internet is one of many ways to advertise. The great thing about the net is that you can find prospects who are searching for what you have to sell.

Have you ever done an internet search for a particular type of product and, then, all of a sudden, you notice ads for the type of product wherever you go? From Facebook to news sites, to sports sites, you're inundated with ads for that type of product. You can put your ad in front of shoppers the same way. This is not a simple task and you will need to help of an experienced internet marketing company but I highly recommend it. It will help you build your brand, it will help you generate sales leads and it will help you sell more.

Marketing has changed a lot over the years but, in many ways, it has stayed very much the same. Figure out what you want to sell, where you want to sell it, how much you want to charge for it and then determine how to let your prospects and customers know about it.

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