



Are You a Victim of Shotgun Marketing?

By Susan Young, President, AimFire Marketing

As the year begins, many of you may not have put together a marketing plan to guide your efforts in 2006. Although it's okay not to have a formal plan in place, it is not okay to make decisions without some kind of strategy.

Shotgun marketing: Acting on impulse instead of making smart decisions. (Example: Did you really need that candy bar or pack of gum that you picked up in the supermarket checkout aisle, or was it a split decision you made because it was there?)

Your company is a victim of shotgun marketing if:

- 1) An advertising rep calls out of the blue and persuades you or your company to advertise in their "special issue." With no ad budget in place, you think, "what the heck – let's go for it!"
- 2) You have ever hired a PR firm to "do some PR" because you felt like you should "do some PR."
- 3) You have ever paid tens of thousands of dollars to be on one of those paid promotional TV shows where your company is interviewed and videotaped and it's aired on PBS at 3 a.m. on Sunday and on some airline (or if you seriously considered one of these things).
- 4) You paid for a Flash, interactive graphic for your website because it looked cool or everyone else was doing it at the time.

Think about it. If you'd had a marketing plan and a budget in place, maybe you'd actually spend less money on marketing and advertising, and get a greater return. This is possible because you'd be focusing your energy on tactics that made sense and provided you with the most effective way to reach your key prospects.

I've seen so many companies make shotgun marketing decisions simply because the opportunity presented itself. Never mind your revenue or sales goals or your bottom line.

So next time a sales rep calls you wanting you to order customized bobble head dolls of your president for a promotional giveaway, you can respond, "Sorry! This is not something that fits in with my marketing strategy. Thanks anyway!"

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