

THE 4 Ts OF MARKETING

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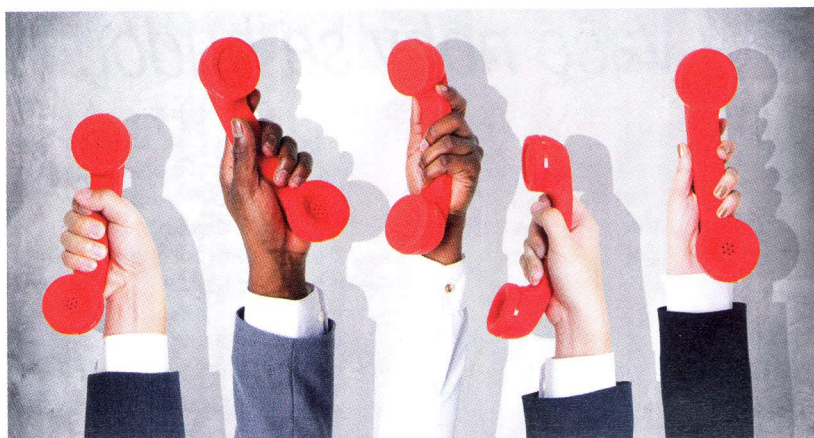
One of the first things that we will ask a new or potential client when discussing their marketing requirements is whether they have a clear picture of who their real target market is.

Targeting

This may sound like basic common sense, but you would be surprised how often the answer is 'no', or 'we don't have any real target market'. I would say that this lack of knowledge as to who is actually being targeted by any marketing activity is the biggest reason some of those companies that have tried marketing in the past with little success have really failed.

The fact is that unless you are selling toothpaste (i.e. everyone uses it) you really do need to have a bit of a picture of your target market before you can prepare any sort of marketing plan – there are so many possible tools and outlets that can be used, how else can you really decide which is the best magazine for you to advertise in, or the most appropriate group to target with a mailing campaign? You really need to be much more strategic than simply placing an advert because it is the 'cheapest' or someone has offered you a special deal – you might as well throw the money down the drain.

If we are faced with a client that has not really considered who they are targeting, we will suggest to them a process of elimination – for example, are their potential customers foreigners, Czechs or both? Male or female? High income/regular/low? Prague-based or all over the country (or outside too?). Once they can answer these questions (and if they



can't, then we would probably recommend that they give up!) then we start to get a better picture of their target customer market, and we can plan, better, the most appropriate tools to use to go after them: for example, let's say a client has a product that they feel would be very popular with professional women – we can then ask ourselves what do professional women do outside of work, where do they go, what do they read, etc, etc – and once we have that figured out, we can pretty easily prepare a strategic plan that exactly fits the target market (and will, therefore, be a lot more successful!).

Talking

As mentioned before, however, a lot of smaller companies (particularly those in the service industry) are wary of starting *any* sort of marketing campaign, as they don't feel comfortable spending the money and believe that their business can be built solely on word of mouth or their own 'friends database'. Now, that may be true up to a point, (especially in Prague, compared to a bigger capital city, where it is very unlikely that you will run into

potential clients during your regular social activities), but remember that just because you know someone doesn't necessarily mean that (a) they will give you whatever work they have (they may have other friends in the same business), (b) a long-lasting and sustainable business needs to be built on something other than just who you know (unless you know a huge number of people!) and (c) even your friends may not actually remember you when it comes to appointing a supplier – I remember a recent lunch with a good friend of mine who arrived flustered and told me that she had had a terrible morning interviewing PR agencies for a potential project, and how tedious that had been... and then looked overcome with guilt as she had forgotten to invite us! Her words – you are in my 'friend box' not 'PR agency' box... are often, I think, quite relevant.

Networking is, of course, a great marketing tool, but it has to be handled with care; the very fact that you are 'out there' does not necessarily mean that you are doing a good job! I have seen many people over the years

