
The easy way to monitor your Advertising Campaign Response

by Sue Mazur, Coffee News Australia, May 2, 2009

One of the biggest mistakes a business can make is to fail to accurately monitor their advertising responses - and yet choosing the right means of advertising has a huge impact on a business.

If you truly knew what form of advertising worked and what didn't, then you could save your business substantial money, gain the best response from your budget and have the best chance of success.

Even businesses that understand the importance of monitoring their responses experience problems. This starts when you rely on asking customers where they found you.

You can have the most sophisticated CRM system installed, codes on the cash register, or an old fashioned pen and paper to monitor what you've been told, however without understanding the context and limitations, we often fail to understand these are still human reliant - customers don't always remember - and just aren't concerned as to where they found you, Sometimes they'll say anything to respond because you've asked, and they want to help you.

Add to that the many different points of response the business receives - phone calls, visits, website and email enquiries etc - makes it even more difficult to accurately gauge the overall impact of a advertising medium.

Then, how do you measure a referral - do you assume it is from an existing customer? This may not be correct - if someone sees your Ad and they have a friend who needs your service - they tell them about you. The client will select 'referral' when asked, as they were referred by a friend - but the source came from your ad.

You can see the challenges that cannot be measured by a one dimensional question "and where did you hear about us".

Plus we're also human reliant - do we always ask - or are we only getting a random sample?

Therefore, what can you do to minimise being human reliant. More accurate ways to monitor an advertising campaign may be:

1. Have an individual phone number for each of your advertising campaigns and ideally use an on-line system to log responses;
2. Have a customised page on your website for each promotion to use and track hits;
3. Have each promotion make a separate identifiable genuine offer the market is interested in that has specific perks, savings, or benefits. Only offer them in that campaign (not outside) and measure all enquiries, not just sales (keep in mind you are tracking response from medium, not the uptake of the offer/product which can be easily changed if the medium gets results).

If you can't do these, then know your numbers - what were your customer numbers before the start of a promotion, and what were your customer numbers at the end of the promotion. Because we are investing so much into our business, a business often gets carried away believing it has grown simply because our doors are open now, or solely from our own efforts as our confidence and business grows (ie the Referral scenario above), and we no longer need to advertise. Visibility in the marketplace is essential to grow your business, and keep your share-of-voice above your competitors.

Coffee News comment: The key is finding a low-cost medium that will give you multiple market exposure - like Coffee News!

