

*** MARKETING MAGIC ***
IF I HAD A MAGIC WAND...
BY KATHRYN MCCANN

A few months ago I went to a very entertaining and informative talk by local Marketing guru Malcolm Wicks, of Three Step Consulting, on the topic of *How to Get Customers to Call You*.

One thing in particular stayed fresh in my mind. He reflected on what he would wish for if he had a magic wand. The wish he came up with was this: to stand out from the crowd. However, in the absence of a wand, he went on to explain some helpful, if more mundane, ways of achieving that end.

One of the ideas that he highlighted as being particularly effective was to send out targeted direct mail (DM). He illustrated this point with some persuasive statistics from the London Business School. Sending mailers out randomly with no attempt to personalise the message or to approach particularly appropriate people, he told us, yields a response rate of between 0.5 and 2%. However, if you send out personalised mailers to appropriate people, tied in with a particular event or promotion, you can expect a response rate of between 10 and 50%. Impressive figures!

Malcolm himself claims to achieve response rates of up to 70%. I can't help wondering if he has *some* supernatural assistance!
So how can you go about doing this?

The first step is to compile a mailing list. You probably already have the contact details of past clients. Make sure to include them, as even old customer lists usually yield a higher response rate than lists of prospects.

Then make sure to add hot prospects – people who have expressed an interest in what you offer but haven't yet used your services.

To find new contacts you can buy qualified lists of people who have "opted in" to receive marketing information on particular subjects. See marketingfile.com for reasonably priced qualified lists specified by criteria such as geographical area, sex and age as well as interests (including health interests).

Then, of course, comes the hard part – deciding exactly what to send out. That's a whole other story...

Meanwhile, here are some helpful tips on direct mail from Malcolm Wicks:

- DM works best as part of an integrated campaign.
- The offer is more important than the media.
- Understand your target audience.
- Do tests before rolling out expensive DM campaigns.
- Put your address, website, email address and phone number on the DM if possible. It gives people confidence.
- Talk mainly about customer needs. That's what they are really interested in.
- Always have a call to action and/or indicators about what's coming next.
- Remember, business DM has at most about 3 seconds to have an impact before being consigned to the bin. Slightly more for consumer.
- Don't make it so clever that people forget who it's from.
- Keep sentences, total length and descriptions short.

- Don't use unsubstantiated superlatives about yourself.
- Don't appear desperate.

You can email Malcolm at:
malcolm.wicks@3sc.co.uk or see his website at www.3sc.co.uk.

So, if you have a magic wand, give it a try. Otherwise perhaps direct mail will do the trick for your business!

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