

22. The "4 Ps" Of Marketing

Product – Price – Positioning – Promotion

Product

- In your case, your "product" is the service you provide to your customers. Your product is not just a residential cleaning service; it is a product that offers your customers a better life free from mundane housework chores. Your cleaning service is the homemaker's answer to more time for leisure and other recreational activities.
- People buy a product for the benefits they receive and gain from the purchase of that product. For example, why do most people buy a ¼" drill? Because they need a ¼" drill, not because they want a ¼" hole!
- Why do your customers want a clean home? Sure they want a clean home, unless they are handicapped, they mean to quite nicely thank you. The reason most people hire you is that they want more time to do other things than doing housework instead of cleaning homes.
- Your real product, then, is not the time for your clients; your vehicle for providing your company's professional and dependable cleaning services.

Price

- Price is an important element of any company's marketing program.

An eight ounce filet mignon priced at \$10 in a grocery store might sit behind the counter forever; \$10 for a filet mignon in a five star restaurant would have customers lined up for blocks! Here in America, you would be aghast if a restaurant asked you to pay for a glass of water; you would sign over your home for a few drops of ice water if you had been adrift on a raft for days without any. (In some countries, water is sold and consumed more costly than fine wine...and people pay the price.)

- **People don't really buy price; they buy "value".** In fact, they buy *perceived value*. Perceived value is determined in the mind of the consumer based on whether or not the product or service being received is perceived to be worth more to the customer than the money being exchanged for it. Remember, it is not what something is

worth (or said to be worth) that determines its value; it's what it's worth in the mind of the potential purchaser.

- To many dual-income and single-parent families, leisure time is a precious commodity today. In terms of your overall marketing program, it's extremely important to convey that the price of your product has more intrinsic value to the consumer than the dollars and cents being exchanged for it.
- Having said all that, the *target market* for any product needs to be able to afford the cost of acquiring it. So, one thing to perceive that a Mercedes is not for everyone is that to be in a financial position to write a check for one month's monthly lease payments.
- From a competitive standpoint, price is obviously a factor in marketing your service. If a consumer perceives that there is a difference between your service and any other residential cleaning service is price, and your price is higher than the other, what do you think the client will patronize?

Positioning

- How you position yourself is a major and an important element of your marketing strategy. This will help determine the price you can charge and therefore the customer is willing to pay for your service.
- Do you want to be known as the cheapest house cleaning service in town? If that's where you're headed! If that's where you're headed, you'll build a company you're going to have "real" competition. If you position yourself as the "price leader" you'll have to be going head to head with all the little independent cleaners who don't have the overhead you do, many of whom work in the underemployed economy.

Do you then want to position yourself as the Rolls Royce of house cleaning services in town? We heard of one company that charged several hundred dollars per cleaning visit and got it, too! Of course, their client roster didn't consist of hundreds of clients, either. They managed to a small group of extremely elite clientele. And we're not sure you'd want to get into doing some of the chores they took on.

- You really don't want to be the Timex of house cleaning companies in town, and you probably want to avoid trying to be the Rolex, too. You should want to aim at being the Seiko — dependable, excellent quality, and great value for the money. Then, strive to outperform your clients' expectations in all those areas.

- How you position yourself in the market is an important element of your overall marketing effort.
- You need to come up with a slogan that the public can learn to associate with your company; one you will use in all of your advertising. Slogans aren't necessarily "positioning statements," but they do make a statement about a company's product, service, or personality.
- Think about the kind of message the slogans convey about the following companies, and/or their products or services.

- **Verizon:** *Most Reliable Network*
- **AT&T:** *Reach out and touch someone*
- **Bounty:** *The Quick Picker Upper*
- **Lexus:** *The Passion in Pursuit of Perfection*
- **Nissan:** *Everything you want, nothing you don't.*
- **Holiday Inn:** *Where the night is no sleep*
- **Microsoft:** *You and your passion*
- **FedEx:** *When it comes to time, we're in a league of our own*
- **UPS:** *"We're the tight ship in the shipping business."*
- **Avis:** *We try harder*
- **Lenovo:** *Innovation. Small. Smart. Get it?*
- **John Deere:** *Nothing runs like a Deere*
- **Coca-Cola:** *Open Happiness*
- **Pepsi:** *Refreshment*
- **Banana Boat:** *We do it the easy way*
- **United Airlines:** *The friendly skies*
- **Washing Machine:** *Save time. Save the planet.*
- **Delta:** *Great at what we do.*
- **HP:** *Comes with a warranty. Leave Happy.*
- **Panasonic:** *Just slightly ahead of our time*
- **Beck's Beer:** *The king of beers*

You might want to adopt a slogan that conveys the message that you're the professional house cleaning company that takes pride in your work and your trade. *"We do best what you hate most."*

Perhaps you want to convey that your staff can be trusted: *"Trusted for more than just cleaning excellence."*

- Maybe you want to promote the dependability of your company: *"You can count on us to be there."*
- These are just a few ideas to stimulate your imagination. Spend a little time on developing your company slogan. You'll have to live with it for a long time once you adopt it.

- Your positioning needs to be reinforced by the look of your advertising materials, the demeanor and attire of your cleaners, your organizational cleaning system, professional business format, telephone and face-to-face presentation, and your customer rapport.
- Positioning strategy is critically important in attracting the attention of the largest number of potential clients as possible from your primary target customer base.
- Your target clients will typically be dual-income married couples, single parent families and affluent retirees. They are generally between 35 - 65 years of age, with a combined household income in excess of \$60,000 annually (over \$75,000 in areas of the country with a high cost of living).
- You can't be all things to all people. Since you would want to position your company above the "average house cleaning" town, you should avoid slogans like, "We're the best and cheapest in the rest," for example. You really don't want to attract an audience who really can't afford a quality cleaning service.

Promotion

- "Promotion" is defined as your marketing plan that includes "advertising" and is the "level" backing by the overwhelming majority of residential cleaning services throughout the country. While in some communities there is no single brand name, the term "Yellow Pages" springs to mind when you think of the subject. There is a tremendous opportunity for your company to take advantage of this situation.
- Advertising includes several activities as:
 - Door hangers
 - Direct mail promotions
 - Website
 - Newspaper inserts
 - Newspaper display advertising
 - Newspaper classified advertising
 - Yellow Page advertising
 - Use of "Welcome Wagon" type of programs
 - Cross promotions
 - Referrals

Promotion also includes television, radio, billboard and telemarketing programs. While you may very well progress to using one or more of these media, we will keep our discussions in this course to those media and events we just referenced.

- A vital part of your promotional effort is the process of selling the customer on making an appointment for a free, no-obligation, in-home consultation. The objective here will not be to sell the client on your service over the phone, but rather to book an in-home presentation (assuming you plan to do in-home presentations rather than quote prices and attempting to book the client's business over the telephone).
- Your consultation appointment will involve selling the client on your service, calculating the price, explaining your service, and selling your service to the client.
- "Public Relations", or "PR", should be a part of your overall promotional strategy as opportunities to get press releases, PR, as opposed to advertising, publicity, or you receive coverage from the media on a noncommercial basis. Advertising, publicity, or PR is generally publicity for which you may not pay a fee to the media providing the coverage.
- For example, articles in newspapers and magazines about business people, new products, or other related subjects are "PR". Such "free" publicity can be an important ingredient in your promotional strategy. See the chapter on A Word about Public Relations.

Summary

- Marketing is a broad range of components and activities related to selling and providing a cleaning service. In short, virtually anything you do or experience in any form that your business has to do with the form of marketing activity — good or bad.
- Both potential and existing clients can be influenced both positively and negatively by your marketing activities. Being late for an initial consultation, appointment or failure of your cleaning team to show up as scheduled is a form of negative marketing.
- Negative marketing in any of the "4 P's" can dilute or negate the positive effort you exhibit in the other three areas. Excellent results from your promotional efforts can be wasted if you fail to convert client inquiries to appointments, or if you fail to convert appointments to sales.

If your product doesn't live up to its billing, first-time customers won't become long-term clients, the secret to building a viable and substantial residential cleaning service.

- The purpose of this course is to help you utilize all the elements of Marketing - Product - Price - Positioning - Promotion - to help you build a successful residential cleaning business.

NO PRINTING