



The **2** MARKETING MISTAKES You'll Probably Never Make *(and Plan B If You Do)*

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Although there are entire books dedicated to marketing mistakes and a Plan B to fix them, I'm going to focus on only two for purposes of this article (but they're big ones).

YOU DON'T REALIZE BUYERS HAVE CHANGED.

FACE IT: Today's ERP and CRM buyers really don't need you to educate them on the product, show them a demo, or even provide pricing anymore. They can find all of those things online by either simply going to the Microsoft website (www.microsoft.com/en-us/dynamics/erp-small-midsize-business.aspx) or doing a few simple searches. So now that prospects have much of the product, technical, and pricing information before they even start looking for a Partner, how are you going to attract those (somewhat) qualified prospects to your website? And what will they find when they get there?

Today's buyers know as much, or often more, than you do about their industry-specific needs and the many options to solve them (and they know the new players in the game, including Xero and FreshBooks). According to a DemandGen report, 51 percent of B2B buyers said they formed a short list of candidates BEFORE they contacted anyone. Does anyone doubt that number will continue to grow quickly?

PLAN B: If you haven't made a concerted effort to ramp up your inbound marketing strategy, then you're far behind the competition. If you started down that path a few years ago, then congratulations! You're now seeing the benefits of your hard work. I spoke to a Microsoft Dynamics Partner recently who told me their blogging was paying off in terms of attracting qualified prospects that they've been able to close. She said, "Thank goodness we starting blogging two years ago and not today!"

But unfortunately, it's not just blogging (inbound marketing would be much easier if it were). The foundation of inbound marketing is content – and a lot of it – delivered via your website, social media properties, and blog sites as well as "shared" on a frequent basis to a targeted group of prospects.

TO DO: Once that buyer is looking for someone to partner with (hopefully you're on the short list), what are they going to learn about your organization and the people in it from your website, your LinkedIn presence, Pinpoint, and your blog posts? On your website's "About" page, do you tell prospects a story about your company and what you're passionate about? Do customers sing your praises in customer case studies and testimonials? Are your social media properties attractive and current? Are you blogging about topics that are important to prospects (and I don't mean the latest features)? Ask a customer (one that you're close to) what they learned, and liked, about your company after looking at your website.

It's simply an ongoing process of creating, delivering, socializing, and creating, delivering, socializing, and... well, you get the idea.

YOU'RE NOT FOUND.

Which of the following statistics are true?

- 9 out of 10 buyers say that when they're ready to buy, they'll find you.
- 18% of organic clicks go to the #1 position, 10% of organic clicks go to the #2 position, and 7% of organic clicks go to the #3 position on Google.
- 75% of users never scroll past the first page of search results.
- All of the above.

The Cosmo Quiz

1. You're having a glass of wine with your favorite SEO (search engine optimization) BFF (best friend forever) from the office, and she shares some startling facts about the new website strategy you just implemented. (Oh boy...) Which one is true?

- 70-80% of users ignore the paid ads, focusing on the organic results.
- 75% of users never scroll past the first page of search results.
- The best place to hide a dead body is page two of Google search results.
- All of the above.

2. Your marketing co-worker just started a new direct mail and telemarketing campaign to a cold list. Sure, it sounds attractive at first and the projected results are enticing, but you warn him that...

- Leads generated via SEO (inbound) have a 14.6% close rate, while outbound leads (such as direct mail or print advertising) have a 1.7% close rate.
- There's an eight times greater likelihood of closing inbound leads as compared to other leads.
- There's a 62% reduction in the cost per lead from inbound versus outbound marketing.
- All of the above.

If you said they're all true, a gold star for you! We all know about 10 organic results are displayed on page one, so how do you get on the first page? This is one of those times where I wish I had the "secret sauce" shortcut, but unfortunately, it doesn't exist. It takes time, effort, and dollars to build your company into a "page one" presence – and to stay there year after year.

PLAN B: Inbound marketing encompasses a number of tactics: search engine optimization (SEO), social media marketing, original content creation, blogging, guest blogging, etc. Just don't forget that the goal of the website is to be "sticky", and consequently, to convert visitors to leads. Conversion can happen when a visitor signs up for your webcast "3 Things a Smart Distributor Does Every Day to Generate More Business", opts-in to your newsletter, or downloads your eBook on "5 Distributors Who Make More Money Than Microsoft and How You Can Do It, Too".

TO DO: It's hard to be effective at everything called "inbound", so pick the top five to seven things you can do with the budget, people, and time you have at your disposal. My recommended list, based on the Partners we talk to across the country, is:

- » Consistent blogging, but not just for the sake of getting something, anything, on the website. Let's say you're starting a campaign next month to mid-sized electrical distributors in Austin, Texas. Sixty days before your campaign launches, get seven to 10 posts on your blog about the challenges of electrical distributors so that when prospects check you out, your expertise has already been established.
- » Do the same with your social media properties. Re-tweet content from the electrical distribution association in Austin and contribute to the conversations in the appropriate LinkedIn groups.
- » Thinking of LinkedIn, make sure your corporate page and the personal pages of your team members reflect your in-depth knowledge of the industry. As a matter of fact, be sure that your corporate profiles on all your social media sites (Twitter, Google+, Facebook, and YouTube) are consistent and current on messaging and design.
- » Create or curate relevant content specific to electrical distribution challenges, pain points, and their own "Plan B" options when the business isn't doing well (which will likely include Microsoft Dynamics to the rescue). Just remember that the content must have VALUE, or conversion from a prospect to an opportunity isn't likely to happen.
- » Have a comprehensive plan for distributing the fantastic content you've now worked so hard to build. The famous "if you build it they will come" slogan from the movie "Field of Dreams" doesn't often work in today's world. Sure, your content will be posted on your website, mentioned in your blog posts, and tweeted, but go beyond that to the influencers in the electrical distributors' world: associations, chambers of commerce, the Small Business Administration, home or commercial builders' groups, manufacturers, and ISVs are all involved in the "community". And don't forget to ask your electrical distribution customers for their advice – and referrals!

NOTE: Everything I've mentioned above about industry-specific content above can be applied to "horizontal" content as well. There's nothing wrong with targeting QuickBooks users or companies adopting their first ERP system – they need the knowledge you have, so share it via customer case studies, testimonials, FAQs, infographics, social media, and more. 🌐

Need help with Plan A so you're rarely in need of a Plan B? The Partner Marketing Group can help you create content (eBooks, infographics, website content, blog posts, and more) to fuel your inbound – and outbound – marketing activities. Contact Info@ThePartnerMarketingGroup.com or call 605-574-9432.

In the spirit of Plan B, check out three webcasts The Partner Marketing Group created for Microsoft Dynamics marketers titled "Stop Wasting Your Marketing Budget: Avoid These Deadly Marketing Errors": https://mbs.microsoft.com/partnersource/northamerica/readiness-training/readiness-training-news/MSDYN_AvoidTheseDeadlyMarketingErrors

Answers to the Cosmo Quiz:

All of the statistics in this article are true and come from:

- » DemandGen Report
- » HubSpot
- » Pew Research
- » Search Engine Land
- » Search Engine Journal