

**IMPROVED MARKETING  
KNOWLEDGE UNDERWAY**

**DO NOT STOP  
MARKETING**

**NEW IDEAS**



**PERMITTED**

**WARNING**



**SLOW MOVING  
COMPETITION**





## WHAT NOT TO DO THIS SUMMER:

QUIT MARKETING, STOP THE NURTURE CAMPAIGNS  
AND DISAPPOINT THE SALES TEAM

 Cheryl Strege

I think that residing in the Dakotas can give a person a certain appreciation for summer. Winter can be very long, and for the most part, very cold. Summer signifies not only the long anticipated family vacation, but also the end to the Microsoft fiscal year. In terms of your business, sales goals have been met by the end of June (hopefully), and July brings a three-day holiday weekend (at least for those of us in the States) as well as the Microsoft Worldwide Partner Conference.

However, we know that our marketing efforts should NOT take that summer vacation with us. Considering the lead times for marketing (60 to 90 days) and the need for consistent nurturing or “touching” of our target audience, we can’t afford to let our marketing campaigns take a break. Sure, some of our contacts will take a summer vacation, but that doesn’t mean that their organization stops manufacturing, distributing, selling, servicing and so on.

A good example comes from Inc. magazine. Years ago I worked with them on joint marketing initiatives with Great Plains. I was surprised to learn that they executed many of their direct mail campaigns during the December holiday season as well as summer because of the higher response rates they received. In short, every other direct mailer avoided December and summer, so Inc. had the advantage of reaching a relatively “undisturbed” audience at those times.

You can do the same – and should – for a few reasons:

If your competition assumes summer isn’t a productive time for marketing (and sales), you have the advantage of greater visibility for your campaign. Whether you’re mailing, e-mailing or calling, your prospect may be less distracted and more receptive to your offer.

A critical component of marketing success is relationship, or nurture, marketing – the ongoing process of contacting your target audience over a period of time in various

ways (direct mail, e-mail, phone and so on). The nurturing of your prospects must be consistent to be effective, and abandoning the program for three months could quickly undo your previous gains.

Use the summer season to test – and refine – your marketing initiatives. Test creative ideas that you may not normally have time or budget for during busier times of the year. Try smaller campaigns that allow you to test new lists, new offers, different creative approaches

Your sales team expects the lead pipeline to be healthy going into the fall selling season. If marketing halts over the summer, it will be October, at best, before you have generated a new batch of qualified leads to route to sales. If you've been marketing over the summer, think of the welcome change in your annual forecast as you enter September with not only marketing campaigns in progress, but also a lead pipeline that looks better than ever.

**IF YOUR COMPETITION ASSUMES SUMMER ISN'T A PRODUCTIVE TIME FOR MARKETING (AND SALES), YOU HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF GREATER VISIBILITY FOR YOUR CAMPAIGN.**

or new avenues like radio or online. For example, Martin Lindstrom writes on Marketing Profs ([www.marketingprofs.com](http://www.marketingprofs.com)) that "great ideas can be cheap and accessible. Initiatives like [www.Booth.com](http://www.Booth.com) make it possible to seek and buy great ideas – online. The process is simple: post your brief, receive creative ideas from creative professionals and untested amateurs from all over the world. You only need one great idea to crack it."

One last tip for the summer: dedicate just one hour a week to improving your marketing knowledge on the topic you find most interesting. For example, if search engine optimization (SEO) is a key component of your marketing strategy for 2008, you will find excellent related webcasts on the Microsoft ISV site at <http://microsoft.mrmpslc.com/ISVCommunity/seminar.aspx>. You can also search by "Marketing"

as your *Professional Development Subject* on the Microsoft Partner Learning Center at <https://training.partner.microsoft.com/plc/home.aspx> to find a variety of marketing topics.

Lastly, I recommend the Microsoft Dynamics Marketing Professional Community webcasts that take place on the second Tuesday of each month: <https://training.partner.microsoft.com/plc>.

Your pipeline will be healthy this fall if you remember to:

- » Keep your relationship marketing on track
- » Test new ideas
- » Get in front of your prospect while your competition is on "summer vacation"

Now get out there and enjoy your summer! 🌞

*After 17 years with Microsoft Business Solutions, today Cheryl Strege derives her energy from working with Partners on their marketing strategies. Cheryl has been named one of only 12 of Microsoft's Partner Marketing Advisors worldwide and plans to balance her summer schedule of working with Partners with her rock climbing and camping. She can be reached at [Cheryl@thepartnermarketing.com](mailto:Cheryl@thepartnermarketing.com) or 605-574-9432.*



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