

# Association Sales & Marketing

## IDEAS FOR ASSOCIATION EXECUTIVES

### Segmenting Your Market to Increase Sales

Most of us today are accustomed to receiving advertising from companies that are based on our behaviors in the marketplace. For example, when we search for a product on Amazon, we are offered similar or complementary items based on our previous purchases and searches. This is the result of sophisticated database marketing tools that are widely used throughout the e-commerce and traditional retail industries. Each of us, as consumers, are segmented by many factors including such things as where we live, our age, gender, marital status, family size, household income, and other influences that drive our purchasing behaviors. Marketers break us down into specific groups based on these demographic and psychographic factors and develop targeted marketing messages uniquely directed at each of us depending on what group or groups we are part of. The capture and use of customer data is the single largest factor that drives successful sales today because it allows sellers to offer consumers products and services that they are more likely to purchase while also offering sales incentives that would be most attractive to members of each group.

Associations, too, have a variety of customers for each of the products they offer to their members and supplier communities. Most associations today offer the suppliers to their industry or profession the

opportunity to purchase such things as advertising in both print and on-line products, exhibit at a trade show, corporate membership, or a sponsorship of an event. Companies purchase one or more of these items to increase their visibility to members while generating sales leads and showing support for their industry's trade association or professional society. But, there is a different type of customer for each product (or combination of products) being sold. The chart on the next page illustrates an examples of this.



As the chart shows, each of the five example industry suppliers executes their own marketing strategies using different combinations of our association's offerings and those offered by others.

In other words, like individual consumers, each of these companies is behaving differently in the marketplace by using their marketing budgets in different ways.

As shown in the chart, Company A is a strong supporter of our association's products by being a regular advertiser in our magazine and exhibitor at our convention. But, they have never been the sponsor of one of our events. Although Company B has been a regular advertiser in both our print and on-line products, they no longer exhibit at our tradeshow. Company C has never supported our products though they are actively advertising and exhibiting to the industry

**Segmentation** *continued on next page*

## Segmentation *Continued from previous page*

Industry Supplier	Ads in our magazine	Ads on our website	Exhibits at our convention		Sponsor	Ads in competing magazines	Exhibits at competing tradeshows
			2019	2018			
Company A	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
Company B	Yes	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Company C	No	No	No	No	No	Yes	Yes
Company D	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No
Company E	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No

through competitor's products. Company D is a first-time exhibitor with us and supported that investment with additional ads run on our association's website and by sponsoring an event at our convention. Company E has been a regular advertiser in our products but has dropped its exhibit from our tradeshow.

The goal for any sales program is to maintain and grow revenue, but the individual behaviors of each of the companies in this example imply that each one is looking for something different from each of the media companies with which they participate. As an association executive, the best way to achieve your organization's goals is to develop a customized program for each of the company prospects and create offerings that match their buying patterns and behavior in the media marketplace. Here are some suggestions:

- Company A—as a regular advertiser and exhibitor, this company is familiar with your organization's products and the audience it delivers, but needs some incentives to increase its participation as a web advertiser and event sponsor. Perhaps, bundling a sponsorship with web ads at a package price to increase the company's exposure at the convention would provide the added value this client needs.
- Company B—As a previous exhibitor who stopped supporting your event, it seems that, perhaps, this is a budget issue. Look at this company's purchasing record and see if there is anything that can be done to lower his costs to exhibit. What size booth did he previously purchase and see if costs can be reduced by offering a smaller booth. Offer some web advertising options (bundled into his booth price) for this company to use to promote its presence at your show and to drive traffic to his booth.

This might result in an increase in the return on investment (ROI) this company gets from exhibiting with you once again.

- Company C—This is a company that is not now and has never been a customer of one or more of your products but continues to support those of your competitors. The strategy to use here is to determine what this company's marketing goals are (possibly in a face-to-face meeting) and develop an integrated marketing plan across several of your products to assure that this company achieves its marketing and budgetary goals in a clearly measurable way.
- Company D—Although an active advertiser with your competitors, this company has never purchased an ad in your magazine. Create incentives for this company to run several ads in your magazine by offering guaranteed up-front positions, or price considerations (purchase three ads at the 6x rate) or include coverage in an upcoming sponsored content (advertorial section) if you offer such a product.
- Company E—This company is a strong supporter of our products but has never increased its exposure by becoming a sponsor of a convention event. Explain the value that increased exposure provides and the way that your association acknowledges its sponsors. Offer something small such as the sponsorship of a coffee break so that this company can see the benefits it will derive from the increased exposure as a leading supporter of your organization.

The bottom line is that each of these companies, and others with similar characteristics, need a unique

targeted marketing message from you on a regular basis and a tool to use to deliver those messages and track the results through the sales pipeline. Fortunately, that tool already exists and should become an important part of your sales operation.

## CRM: Customer Relationship Management

CRM is one of the most effective ways to manage sales prospects and then segment them into any number of categories. It is a database driven technology that allows your sales staff to track prospects through the sales process and develop promotional campaigns specifically targeted to companies within each segment you manage. Using a CRM system, your staff can identify those prospects by their previous purchasing history with your products and those of your competitors, their geographic location, by the products or services they offer and any other attributes you want to track. It is a powerful tool that increases the efficiency and effectiveness of your sales outreach efforts while also providing a number of management tools that allow for the assessment of your organization's sales program.

There are a number of CRM systems available, at a variety of prices and functions. Most can be installed on a computer network or are internet or cloud-based for use by sales staff that is geographically scattered. They also include reporting functions and managing the flow of customers through the sales pipeline for better financial projections. Some of the top brands available are Salesforce, a completely customizable cloud-based system ([www.salesforce.com](http://www.salesforce.com)). The company offers a number of pricing options and a full program of customer support. Other companies offering CRM products include ACT! ([www.act.com](http://www.act.com)) and Goldmine ([www.goldmine.com](http://www.goldmine.com)) which offers both cloud-based and a version that can be installed on your organization's network or PCs. This is not a complete list and there are other companies offering a full range of products at varying prices.

The screenshot displays a Microsoft Access form for a CRM database. It features several input fields for contact details: Company, First Name, Last Name, Address, City, State, Zip, Phone, Fax, and E-mail. Below these are dropdown menus for Product Category and Advertiser, with checkboxes for roles like 2018 Exhibitor, 2018 Advertiser, Sponsor, 2017 Exhibitor, 2017 Advertiser, and Web Advertiser. A large text area is labeled 'Notes'. On the right side, there is a vertical toolbar with icons for adding, deleting, and editing records, along with a button labeled 'Add New Record'. At the bottom, there are navigation buttons for first, previous, next, and last record, and a 'Rep' dropdown menu.

*Database built in Microsoft Access showing key elements of an association's CRM tool.*

Another solution that is very low cost and effective is to build a CRM-type database using Microsoft Access which is part of the Microsoft Office Suite. Although this solution does not offer all of the features that are available with most of the other programs, it does serve many of the same functions. It can be linked to an online calendar, as well as email marketing programs.

No matter which program you use, a CRM program provides you with the names and contact information of companies that meet the specific criteria you ask of it. Here are some examples:

*“Give me the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of everyone who advertised in our association magazine in 2018, but have never exhibited at our convention.”*

*“...the names, phone numbers and email addresses of companies that exhibit at our convention*

*but have never been a sponsor.”*

*“...the names, phone numbers, and email addresses of companies that purchase advertising from our competitors, but not from us.”*

*“...the names, phone numbers and email addresses of companies that manufacture widgets.”*

*“...the names, phone numbers and email addresses of companies that are headquartered in the city in which our annual convention will be held in 2020.”*

Each of these queries will then provide you with the names and contact information of those prospects that meet the specific criteria you requested and you can then develop a marketing message specifi-

cally targeted to just those customers which contains a unique value-driven message.

A well-designed CRM system used to support your sales team’s efforts will result in more efficient use of our staff’s time, provide valuable information and intelligence to the sales management about the environment in which your products compete, and help to generate more revenue. And in today’s highly competitive environments and changing media landscape, segmenting your customers and prospects and customizing your communications with them will assure your success in the year ahead.

## **Content Marketing: The Association’s Competitive Edge**

**T**here is a rapidly growing trend in the publishing community to create content that recognizes the important role that industry suppliers play in the industry or profession they serve. But, this is balanced by a concern among publishers about how this content is created and presented and the effect it may have on the editorial integrity of media products. This is especially true for association publishers.

Associations are in the unique position of having to create highly credible content that delivers valuable information to their members. Also, associations are unique in that they have multi-faceted relationships with their industry’s suppliers—not only as advertisers, but also as members, exhibitors, sponsors, and, in some cases, committee and board members.

So, how does an association balance the increasing demands from advertisers for more coverage than just the ad space they are purchasing against the needs of the members to read timely and credible content about the association and its activities? With a unique balanced approach to the creation of content that supports the needs of advertisers without it appearing to be free advertising.

We have developed an editorial model that perfectly meets this need. We take an editorial approach that is viewed from the perspective of the member rather than the supplier. Our approach de-

scribes an issue or problem from the members’ point-of-view and then seeks suppliers who can provide solutions to this problem and ends with a description of how the implementation of the solution worked.

We also recognize that there should be some rules that define how content marketing editorial should be created and presented. These rules are as follows:

- The content should not be written by the association’s editorial staff
- The article should be clearly identified as “advertising content”
- The article’s title should not be included in the table of contents
- The article should be designed with a typeface and page style that is different than the editorial content of the publication and should appear in the second half of the publication

With experience producing this type of content for association publications, we work with your ad sales staff to identify key advertisers and suppliers who should be contacted for inclusion in the article. We contact each and ask them to take the “case study” approach to how one of the association’s members utilized a solution offered by this company and then how the problem was successfully resolved.

We also recognize that a company that is a large supporter of the association as an exhibitor or sponsor may not want to participate in this product. With each association's guidance, we will still include this company's information in the article. That is what makes our program different than most such editorial solutions. Just because a company elects to not advertise doesn't automatically mean that they should be excluded from the project. We recognize and respect the unique relationships that associations have with the supplier community and work to assure that those

relationships are enhanced.

To learn more about how our unique approach to the development of content-based special advertising sections can work for your organization, contact us today for a no obligation discussion about how content marketing can become a major tool to increase ad revenues.

To see a sample of our approach to content marketing visit our website at: [www.adsalesexperts.net/contentmarketing.html](http://www.adsalesexperts.net/contentmarketing.html).

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## Sales Training and Evaluation

As with most professions, ongoing education is essential for continuous success. We are pleased to offer a full-day seminar on the latest trends, techniques and methods to increase your organization's advertising sales.

Each session is custom developed for your association's products and the market in which it is operating. Topics covered include:

- How to compete successfully against commercial publishers
- Integrating web and print advertising sales
- Selling the association advantage
- Establishing ad rates that work for you, not against you
- Understanding the advertising agency/client relationship
- Cross-selling opportunities
- Branding of your publications and website to maximize customer awareness
- The tools of the trade: media kits, research, circulation audits, tactical marketing tools, prospect management, building communities of customers with social media, and more
- Relationship selling and key account management

Included with each class is an evaluation of your organization's media kit and other collateral material as well as plenty of time for your staff to ask specific questions about the unique challenges they are facing.

For one flat fee of \$1200, you may include as many members of your staff as you feel would benefit and the session is held in your office, so there are no staff travel costs.

Call to schedule your session now, so your ad staff is fully prepared to reach new levels of success.

### Who We Are

Robert Silverstein, Principal. Robert has over 30 years of experience in all aspects of publications and tradeshow sales and management. He has worked for both commercial and association publishing organizations and has led national sales teams which have consistently exceeded their sales goals. He has also been an active member of the association community including serving as Chair of the ASAE Communications Section Council and has been a frequent speaker at ASAE and other industry events. In addition, Robert is an adjunct member of the faculty at the University of Maryland where he teaches courses on marketing and sales management. Robert can be reached at: [rsilverstein@adsalesexperts.net](mailto:rsilverstein@adsalesexperts.net), by visiting [www.adsalesexperts.net](http://www.adsalesexperts.net), or calling 240-498-9674.