

What You Know about Marketing Training

By [Gordon L. Johnson](#) of www.HowToMarketTraining.com



Does this sound familiar?

“I don’t have time for sales and marketing, especially when I’m doing well and delivering training.”

“I have a hard time breaking through the e-mail clutter that my prospects receive on a daily basis.”

“I can’t stand incompetent customers who fall for sales pitches rather than doing their due diligence.”

In last month’s edition of Training Growth Innovations, we asked about the challenges you deal with in marketing training and what works well for you. Here are the top five things we learned from what you had to say.

1. I can’t find the right decision makers.

A large majority of you said that your biggest challenge was finding the right decision makers who could buy your training services. This seems to be a common challenge in most of the training companies I talk to. They have a hard time getting leads and finding the right decision maker who have the budget AND the need for what they’re selling. Most training companies say that the sales process gets really easy once they find the right prospect that has a need.

So, what’s the solution? 90% of the time, getting leads costs a lot of time and money. Simply put, you have to invest more into sales AND marketing. The most successful training companies that I know spend a very healthy portion of their revenues on sales and marketing. If you’re not spending 25%, then chances are you’re on a sales roller coaster ride.

2. I can’t get through the e-mail clutter.

One thing I noticed from this survey is that you depend a lot on e-mail marketing. The biggest challenge here is coming up with e-mails that prospects open, read, and respond to. Most e-mails barely get a 10% open rate, and a much lower number of click-through’s and responses.

Getting prospects to respond truly is an art form. However, one way to immediately improve your e-mail marketing is to change your mindset a bit. When you write the email, focus hard on one thing: What is going to get your prospect to reply to your email. Not click-through’s. Not opens. Responses! Try it out. It’s like magic.

3. Stuck in a Commodity

Lots of you said that your competitors are inching in on your business and customers don't recognize the value of what you're selling. They don't see any difference between you and the training company down the street who's offering the same classes at a 50% off. Fact is, customers tend to be penny smart and pound foolish. We all are. There's no point in arguing. I've seen training companies argue with their customers until most of their market share has vanished.

This is a positioning problem. What can you do? Create a new playing field. If you don't like apples to apples comparisons, then become an orange. The trick here is you have to identify your prospects real hot buttons and build your services around that. Finding out what's REALLY important to them takes a lot of digging, but after you've done this, you can build your service around their desires. After that, the product almost sells itself and before you know it, you'll occupy a market all your own.

4. Big thirst for marketing knowledge

I asked you what articles you'd like to see written about marketing training. There were three areas where you most needed information: e-Mail Marketing, Getting Referral, and Search Engine Optimization. Fortunately, for two of the three, help is available and there have been some good articles already written:

- **Referral Generation:** Contact Joanne Black at www.NoMoreColdCalling.com. She is the expert in generating referrals. You can e-mail Joanne at joanne@nomorecoldcalling.com. Also, she recently wrote an article on the subject called [There's No Such Thing as a Warm Call](#)
- **Search Engine Optimization (SEO):** The key to maximizing search engine optimization is, 1) Learning what's important and, 2) Investing a lot of time in doing it. There's no shortcut to getting high page rankings in Google and Yahoo!. Read this book: [Search Engine Optimization: An Hour a Day](#). Be careful hiring consultants to help you with this. Almost every web-related company claims they do SEO consulting, but few do a very good job. For outside help, I recommend the following:
 - [Jennifer Grappone](#), at www.yourseoplan.com
 - [Martha Lee](#), at www.getinposition.com
- **e-Mail Marketing:** I haven't seen any good articles written about e-mail marketing for training. I think everyone keeps their secrets close to the vest. Once you find out something works well in e-mail marketing, you guard it like gold. If you want to hear what I've learned about e-mail marketing, [contact me](#) or go to www.howtomarkettraining.com.

5. What you're missing

There are two types of marketing that I know for a fact work, but most of you said they don't work for you: Webinars and Direct Mail.

- **Webinars:** There's almost no better lead generator and awareness builder than webinars. The problem is they're relatively expensive and take a lot of work to do well. One organization I worked with ran an average of one webinar per week for several years and each webinar pulled in about two hundred leads. That's around ten thousand leads per year. The result was lots of sales and a great return on their marketing investment. The beauty of webinars is that most of the attendees walk away with a positive image of you and probably won't forget you. Make sure you include webinars in your next marketing plan.
- **Direct Mail:** When compared to e-mail marketing, direct mail is just plain expensive. As a result, almost every training company I know is doing a lot less direct mail and a lot more e-mail marketing. However, there's an opportunity here. Less and less training catalogs are being mailed and the e-mail waves are getting very cluttered. With less training catalogs being mailed, your prospects will pay more attention to your catalogs. All this being said though, you have to do direct mail right and it takes time and patience to show a real return. Consider it.

It's refreshing to know that we're all pretty much in the same boat and we all have the same marketing challenges. For more details on the survey and the full survey results, [contact me](#) and I'll send you the PDF.

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