

Advertising Vs. Marketing: How To Reach Customers

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By Jim Peduto



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Business owners consider spending time and money on advertising and marketing for a variety of reasons. Maybe your business is new or maybe you've been around awhile but want to reach some new customers. Or maybe you're noticing that your competitors are advertising and it seems to be working for them. These are all good reasons to consider investing some time and money to increase visibility and attract new clients. But what's the difference and what's better — an advertising campaign or a marketing plan?

Consider the difference between advertising and marketing. Advertising is a paid, non-personal, public announcement to promote a company, product, or service. Marketing is the planning and implementation of strategic business activities that bring together buyers and sellers for the exchange of products and services. One example of these strategic business activities is, in fact, advertising.

That's why the definitions of advertising and marketing are somewhat similar. Advertising is actually part of the marketing plan. A business owner might choose to advertise their product or service, but without a full marketing plan, he or she is missing out on many other opportunities to connect with customers.

Some of the other key pieces of the pie are market research, competitive analysis, public and media relations, promotions, community involvement, and customer support. The following basic marketing tips will help you start to fill out your marketing pie:

- **Survey the market by starting with your customers.** They are why you're in business. What are their issues and challenges and how does your business and cleaning service meet them? This will be the focus of all of your marketing efforts.
- **Study competitors.** What are their strengths and weaknesses? How are they positioned in the market? Industry associations and publications, media coverage, information from the financial community and competitors' own marketing materials and Web sites may be good resources.
- **Work on media and public relations.** Highlight your business in free trade magazine guides and post your best customer testimonials to your Web site.
- **Get involved in the community and promotions.** Make your business visible within the community by getting involved in events and sponsorships. You'll be able to capture contact information for potential customers with giveaways and other promotions.
- **Build and maintain relationships.** Create an editorial calendar of topics to stay in touch with customers about whether it's through phone calls or a newsletter.

Marketing can also include a variety of business activities. In addition to advertising, other marketing initiatives help to further grab customers' attention, motivate them to buy your service, get them to actually buy and make them want to continue to work with you. 