

The Most Neglected Marketing Principle

By Kristen Luke
November 9, 2010

Advisor Perspectives welcomes guest contributions. The views presented here do not necessarily represent those of Advisor Perspectives.



I recently read the book *Conquer the Chaos: How to Grow a Successful Small Business without Going Crazy*, by Clate Mask and Scott Martineau. In one of the final chapters, the authors discuss the concept of “follow up” and how it is the most neglected marketing principle. Reading this chapter reminded me how true this is across all businesses, not just for independent financial planning and investment advisory firms.

As an advisor responsible for growing your business, you have specific strategies for generating new prospects such as cold calling, networking, hosting workshops or advertising. Often, however, advisors lack a strategy for following up with a prospect if he or she is not immediately interested in hiring your firm. As the authors state, “81% of sales that close, close on or after the fifth contact.” Assuming this statistic is accurate, it is imperative that you integrate a follow-up strategy in your marketing plan.

To create a follow-up strategy, start by asking yourself these five questions:

1. What are the different types of prospects with whom I am following up?
2. What is the message the prospect is interested in hearing?
3. What are the different ways I’m going to follow up?
4. How often am I going to follow up?
5. How can I follow up most efficiently and effectively?

What are the different types of prospects with whom I am following up?

Before you create a follow up strategy, identify the different types of prospects you are targeting. Are they retirees? Are they busy working professionals? Are they widows and widowers? Understanding who your prospects are will help you identify a message to communicate and the platform for delivering that message. If you target a variety of prospects, you may have to develop a different strategy for each group.



What is the message the prospect is interested in hearing?

Once you understand who your prospects are, you will want to deliver a message that resonates with them. Someone who is in the process of a divorce may be concerned about managing cash flow. A prospect in retirement may be concerned about having sufficient income to last throughout retirement. Each type of prospect will have different concerns, so it is critical that you are addressing their particular issues in the follow up process.

What are the different ways I'm going to follow up?

A successful follow-up strategy integrates a variety of touch points including phone calls, emails, traditional mail and possibly social media, text messages or instant messages. Examine your prospects and the ways they communicate to identify the best ways to follow up. Also identify the best mediums for communicating the message that you identified for the prospect. Is it in an e-newsletter format? Is it a personal phone call? Your strategy will be unique to your prospects, but an example strategy could be calling every six months, sending a marketing email monthly, and mailing an event invitation quarterly.

How often am I going to follow up?

There is a fine line between consistently following up and being aggressive. Before you haphazardly begin following up, determine the interval in which you plan to contact each prospect. Less intrusive methods such as mail can be used more often than those demanding the time of the prospect, such as a phone call. Begin with a goal of following up monthly and then make adjustments as necessary for your particular prospects.

How can I follow up most efficiently and effectively?

A successful follow-up strategy requires a systemized and repetitive approach. At the most basic level, schedule periodic reminders in your calendar to follow up with each prospect or create a spreadsheet to track this information. A more sophisticated solution is to track this information in a Customer Relations Management (CRM) system or to create automated campaigns such as email [auto-responders](#). Having a defined and systemized approach will make the follow up process easier and more effective.

Don't let the prospects you worked so hard to meet fall through the cracks. Make "following up" as much of a marketing priority as you do your lead generation strategies.



Kristen Luke is the Principal of Wealth Management Marketing, a firm dedicated to providing marketing strategies and support for Registered Investment Advisory firms. Kristen works with individual advisors and firms to develop effective marketing plans and her firm provides the back office support required to implement the strategies. For more information, visit www.wealthmanagementmarketing.net.

www.advisorperspectives.com

For a free subscription to the Advisor Perspectives newsletter, visit:
<http://www.advisorperspectives.com/subscribers/subscribe.php>