

Invest the Time to Target Your Market

Webster defines a target as “marked by shots fired at it; something or someone fired at or marked for attack; a goal to be achieved; something or someone to be affected by an action or development”. To *target* a market for your business marketing is to mark it for your campaign messages. The market that you select should heavily influence and ultimately determine your marketing strategy and communication.

You’ve heard the terms “target market” and “niche” used interchangeably in many marketing conversations. “Target market” and “niche” are not the same. A “target market” is the select group of people whom you wish to serve. For example, a target market could be working professionals who are looking for someone to prepare and package healthy, home-cooked meals for them or owner(s) of a new puppy who need a veterinarian or puppy training. You get the idea! Pinpointing your target market is critical to your marketing plan and your marketing messages.

Your “niche” is the special service that you provide to your target market. Using our previous example of the target market of working professionals who are open to hire someone to prepare healthy, home-cooked meals, the niche could be one or a combination of the following:

- ¶ Provide a menu of healthy meals from which to choose.
- ¶ Shopping for all ingredients.
- ¶ Meal preparation and delivery with cooking instructions on a weekly basis.
- ¶ “Special” dietary needs accommodated easily.
- ¶ Party menus available for home entertaining.

Making sure that you’ve identified your target market as specifically as you can is critical for offering your services in optimal ways. Marketing is *not* about trying to convince or force people to buy your services or products.

If you are going to reach the people you want to serve, correctly identifying your target market will tell you where to find them, what motivates them to buy and what messages you wish to communicate to them through your marketing activities.

While you might want to be everything to everyone, you just can’t manage or afford that expectation. This supposition evolves from the assumption that the more people you market to, the more clients you’ll get. That thinking is in error and is doomed to failure because it does not promote reaching out effectively to an intended market. It is the business owner who must differentiate the selected market. It is not the client who will self-select from the untargeted marketing messages.

If your marketing is planned and implemented effectively, you will never need to make another sales call. When I first heard this promise, I, too, was skeptical. However, I have since discovered that good marketing does make the selling unnecessary. Good marketing is working smart. Targeted marketing will make you rich!