



the progressive business group

the  
Progressive  
Business  
group

## Marketing Communications (promotion methods)

There are a number of ways that you can promote your products / services / company / brands. The choices you make will depend on a variety of factors such as cost, who you are trying to attract, timescales, what others are doing etc.

Below are details of the primary marketing tools used by marketers.

### 1. Advertising

Includes using mass media like TV, radio, press, outdoor hoardings and transport media to reach large numbers of people. Mass advertising is undertaken to get to large numbers, usually with a product / service that has general appeal (car insurance, washing powder). More specialised vehicles such as direct mail, exhibitions, trade publications, point of sale material, sales literature tend to be targeted at specific types of people or groups ie SAGA for the over 50s, Canal Boat for narrow boat enthusiasts. The more specialised the product /service the more specialised the advertising becomes – ie a full page ad in The Mail on Sunday with a new gadget for plumbers rather than in a trade magazine for plumbers / DIY enthusiasts would simply be a waste of money.

The internet is undoubtedly the fastest growing advertising medium even though it is probably still only in the introductory stage of the product life cycle. It has opened up a completely new and revolutionary advertising medium. As sites have become increasingly more secure and more and more companies advertise their products online so demand has risen. The search engine, Google, is another relatively new phenomenon. Seven years ago it was a brand new concept, now the company is worth £66billion! ebay is another huge marketing success and both these advertising media are global but can provide local information. Even newspapers, the radio and TV can be accessed online.

Word of mouth / personal recommendation is the most cost effective form of advertising. Although not directly within your control it does indicate that your marketing is working.



the progressive business group

the  
Progressive  
Business  
group

## 2. Personal Selling

Traditionally this meant face to face selling by a seller to a buyer. This form of promotion is probably one of the most difficult to achieve as the first step involves “cold calling” and the seller has to establish a personal rapport with someone they do not know. The traditional slick door to door salesman with his foot in the door or the dubious double glazing rep who wouldn't leave until you had signed a contract has shifted towards a more impersonal but still direct cold calling approach – telemarketing (via call centres) As you will know the quality of some of these telemarketing operations can be extremely poor, and in some cases, down right dodgy. As a minimum they eat into your time and privacy. It is now a numbers game where an anonymous person tries to “personalise” themselves, but in fact they are reading from a script and all they know about you is your telephone number.

The reason why many companies switched to this method is that they originally could not cope with customer enquiries and it became more efficient and cost effective to outsource their “customer services” to firms with the technology and resources necessary to deal with large numbers of calls within short time periods. These call centres found that they had spare capacity during slack periods so offered to make calls on clients' behalf to add value to the customer relationship. The rise of call centres has been spectacular and a great deal of market research goes into what type of telephone manner to adopt, what accents do people respond to best, when to call etc. A backlash to this impersonal and obtrusive form of personal selling is increasing and you may have noticed that some companies are now talking about their “personal service with one of our own people” and come to us and speak to one of our “experts”.

## 3. Sales Promotion

These are events with short term objectives, held over a specific time period. Price cuts, BOGOFs (buy one get one free), competitions, prize draws are examples of sales promotions.

They can also be offers for a limited number of products, ie collectables such as figurines where only 100 of each type are made. There are hundreds of firms who specialise in sales promotions, finding ideas and then running them for companies.



the progressive business group

the  
Progressive  
Business  
group

Yet again technology has revolutionised sales promotion as a promotional method. Consider interactive TV shows like “Strictly come dancing” and “Big Brother”. Every time a person ‘phones in to vote, a large chunk of that money goes to the show’s producers. There are now dozens of interactive satellite channels, raking in fortunes.

Unsolicited phone calls saying that you have won a prize, just ‘phone 0900 ... to claim it form another new type of sales promotion. These are often scams that net fraudsters large sums of money as callers are usually charged a minimum of £1 per minute and some calls have been preset to last for 10 minutes or more. Unlike the traditional sales promotions (that you see on the back of cereal packets / in store), that are heavily regulated, there are virtually no regulations for the newer forms, partly as it is so difficult to implement them.

The most recent type of sales promotion that retailers are copying from each other is to offer large discounts (usually mid week when sales are slower) for a limited period, usually 48 hours. The purpose is to stimulate demand, move stock and get some money in.

#### 4. PR (Public Relations)

Companies post positive articles about themselves and their products and services in the media. Large companies like Boots, for example will send press releases to all the national media about their annual results. As part of their ongoing PR plan they meet regularly with investment analysts from the City to explain their strategy. Some companies use figureheads as part of their PR plan (ie Richard Branson is Virgin) The overriding aim with every article is to “sweat it” in as many ways as possible. Max Clifford has made a fortune “sweating” information about what people have / have not done.

Another form of PR is relationship building via networking. This can include inviting customers / potential customers to special events (Wimbledon, Football Cup final) to talks relevant to their business (ie employment issues) or attending events to promote the company and its values (regional business awards’ ceremonies). Sponsorship (Vodafone on football strips) is another form of PR.

PR is a drip feed process so that people recognise your company over time and perceive it favourably, hopefully to the detriment of competitors.



the progressive business group

the  
Progressive  
Business  
group

Bad PR can have disastrous effects – remember the infamous remark made by Gerald Ratner, the jeweller, that his products were c\*\*p. His business folded virtually overnight. The effect of PR on a business can be hard to gauge as there is no immediate, direct response to activity undertaken (unlike say a price cut where you would expect volumes to rise almost immediately).

OTHER FACT SHEETS IN THE MARKETING SERIES ARE DETAILED BELOW

PLEASE FEEL FREE TO DOWNLOAD

- The marketing mix
- Marketing audit
- Creating an effective marketing plan
- Database marketing