Here are the **15 Marketing Mistakes** we talked about in Orlando. Read them one at a time and think about how you can avoid making these errors.

**1. You don't know to whom you are marketing.**

It is too easy to fall into the trap of simply hanging your shingle that reads "Open For Business." Yes. Selling is a numbers game. Yes. There are millions of people who want and/or need your services. Yes. No matter what you do, some mud will stick now and then if you sling enough of it resulting in a few new business transactions.

But if you don't have all the time in the world, then it is far more prudent to focus on a tightly specified area of interest. Quite frankly, I don't care what this focus involves or who it involves. I am simply reminding you that the tighter your focus, the more successful you will be in the long run. Know whom you want to do business with.

Harley bikers? Bus groups for seasoned people? School trips? Golf outings? Sporting events? Small businesses? Large businesses? Trips to Italy? Cruises? Home-based businesses? Owners of one-eyed dogs? There are only four hundred million examples I could use. If you want a lesson in reality as it relates to interest groups, take a field trip to your local Barnes & Noble book emporium and walk the magazine rack.

There is a magazine for virtually every hobby, trend or whim in the universe.... and there are hundreds of them.... and more on the way.

As our planet continues to fill up with people, they tend to hang with people who exhibit similar tastes. These are the groups I am asking you to identify. Once you know who you are going to market to, your life becomes instantly more enjoyable. You will find that this is easier said than done. Most worthwhile things are.
2. You don't know why your customers buy.

Let's use an example to "drive" this point home.

If I asked you what attributes you look for when shopping for an automobile, you would give me your buying criteria on the matter. These are your personal feelings as they relate to you - specifically. If I asked someone else what it is they look for when they shop for a car, chances are they would give me an entirely new set of "needs."

You may say "style." While others might say "speed." Another might be looking for "gas economy." Another - "price.". Another - "the sound system." (Don't laugh at this one. I once sold a car entirely based on the speakers strategically positioned behind the rear seats.)

I think you get the idea. What you think from this day forward does not matter. What your prospects think is the only thing that does matter. Therefore, you must get into the habit of asking them what is on their mind.

Once you get this information, you will be in for lots of new business.

**Mistake #3. You are not client centered.**

Most customers are getting tired of hearing companies chant the "CUSTOMER SERVICE MANTRA." Based on my experiences in the marketplace, chances are pretty good that most companies are full of baloney.

There are a great number of organizations out there who still don't know how to spell customer service, no less how to deliver it on a regular and consistent basis. DAMN FEW!

Allow me to clarify. You might be good at it --- servicing your clients --- now and then --
when you feel like it. But how often is that? Based on my experiences ... not often enough.

Customer service has nothing to do with "smile training" or reminding me to "have a nice day" in a monotone bordering on boredom. It is more than what you say. It is all about knowing which side of the bread the butter goes on and who makes your job possible. It is knowing where the money comes from and whose satisfaction level is key.

It is coming to work living and breathing the fact that without paying customers you could stay in bed all day with nothing to do but worry about your future eating habits.

When a customer says jump, you say "how high?" When a customer wants "2" you deliver "2x2." Get it?

If you wake up in the morning and the first thing out of your mouth does not sound like the noise "customer," then you have some work to do.

I am often asked, "Mike, is the customer always right?" Of course not. The customer is often dead wrong. But, the customer always, always, always is the customer. Until you decide otherwise.

If you don't particularly care about how the economic system works, you can be right. Go ahead. Be right. Otherwise, work with the feelings and thoughts and buying habits of the customer. Until you hear otherwise, customers will continue to make the world spin on its axis.
Mistake # 4. You have no marketing plan.

I don't want you to jump ship on this one. Very few people in business today have a marketing plan. Most well-intentioned folks have a "wing-it" plan. They have a "we try harder" plan. They have an "I'm a nice person so I deserve success" plan, and they all call them Marketing Plans. No such luck!

The reason they don't have a plan is because in order to have a marketing plan, they must know what "marketing" is ... or means ... and how it works. They don't.

This does not make them bad people. It does make them struggling people in need for some degree of direction.

Mistake # 5. You are not persistent.

The Rule of 7 comes to mind whenever I talk about "persistence."

The Rule of 7 states: To make an impact in a strangers mind, you must contact them a minimum of seven times in each 18-month period. Most people quit or give up after the first rejection. A majority of those remaining quit after try #2. Seven contacts) is the secret.

There really is nothing magical about the number seven but you don't want to become a nuisance. By airing out your contacts over time you eliminate much of the chance of "bugging" people. i.e. the 18 month time frame.

As long as you contact them with information they consider to be useful, you have little fear of overdoing your welcome. The secret is to "keep on keeping on." Preferably, with good, solid, meaningful information that is relevant to your prospects.
A popular way of keeping your name in front of your targeted audience is by clipping a meaningful article from a newspaper or magazine and stapling it to your business card. Period. (Oh yeh, and then sending it to somebody.)

You can send a simple, one-page letter that contains a column or two of easy-to-read "news." This is affectionately known as a "newsletter." Mine is different from your graphically correct, four-color beauties. Mine consists of a letter with some news in it. (How clever am I?)

Whatever you decide to do, it is most important that you don't become a hit-and-run artist. This is what becomes of most would-be marketers. They start strong and fade fast. You need to develop a process, or a system, and stay with it week after week, month after month, year after year. That is where we get the reputation for PERSISTENCE.

**Mistake #6. You expect the prospect to do too much work.**

Let's get this clear once and for all. It is your business. It is your life. It is your future. You have yours and I have mine. Others have theirs. And very seldom do the twains meet.

If you want to do or accomplish something, (anything), it is entirely up to you. If you want to speak to me, and you call me and leave a message, it is not my responsibility to call you back. You wanted to talk to me, remember? You must keep on calling until you accomplish your goal.

Don't expect me to care about you or your problems. I have enough of my own thank
you very much. If you want to succeed in this or any other business, decide what it is that YOU must do ......and then do it.

**Mistake #7. You don’t ask for the business.**

“If they wanted to do business with me, they would call me.”

BALONEY!

Think of it this way. You are a professional.

If you don't ask me to do business with you, you are an AMATEUR.

Now the choice is yours. Are you a pro, or are you a wanna-be?

Here are some facts:

- Some people are going to think you are pushy no matter what you do or say.
- Some people are going to tell you to "buzz-off."
- Some people are going to threaten to call the cops.
- Some people are down right lazy slugs and although they are looking at you straight in the face do not have a single clue what you just said to them or asked them to do.
- Some people will be reluctant to do business with you but they will agree just the same.
- Some people will be glad you asked. - Others will take offense.
- Some people won't wait for you to ask and demand that you take their business.

This is what makes the world such a zany yet attractively fun planet to live and work on. It takes all kinds. And believe me, there are all kinds out there.

As long as you are not a crook, thug, or a dishonest ex-con, you have nothing to apologize for. Just stick to your knitting. Keep on asking for the business.
Mistake #8. You are boring people.

You can answer this one yourself. Who do you want to spend time with?
Choice A: A boring, whining, negative slug?
Choice B: A proactive, fun, creative, idea-generating, bundle of energy.
This my friends is what is known in the business as a "no-brainer."
Give me the "action-guy/gal" each and every time.

If you are boring --- stop being boring.
If you are not boring, don't become boring.

Need a slogan to pace your day? Fail Faster.

Failing at anything is never boring. In fact, it often is quite exhilarating. Don't fail "stupid." But do get away from your daily comfort zone and stretch a little.

When asked what I feel is the most common shortcoming of today's salesperson, two answers immediately pop into my head. (1) Visibility. Not enough people know you are alive. (2) You are boring people to tears. It is time that you bring your true personality into the game.

9. You fail to connect with your prospects and customers sufficiently often.

Look ye hear! We are back to the Rule of 7. No harm. Repetition is the key to learning. Contacting your prospects seven times over an 18-month period. That is the key.

Did you know that the average consumer needs to hear a commercial 17 TIMES before making a "buying" decision? Yet, so many marketers miss the boat when it comes to follow-up. At times I have been guilty of not following up with leads or staying
in constant contact with my customers and I know better. It is SO critical that you keep in contact with your customers, and follow up with your leads.

For instance, if you're capturing people's email addresses when they visit your website, what are you planning to do with those emails? Keep in mind, these are people that have raised their hand, and expressed an interest in your service. It is your move. Your system is working and it is up to you to maintain momentum.

For you NOT to follow up on those leads via email would be a CRIME! You could send them weekly or monthly tips about their particular interest. You could have a free recorded message for people who are not on the web, and offer them a free report by snail mail, etc. The bottom line is to always give your customers/leads, EVERY available option to receive a continuous flow of information from you.

Remember, don't think that just because you've emailed or snail mailed them once or twice, that they're not interested in what you have to offer. Keep in mind that people are VERY busy, and they're NOT sitting around the house waiting for something from you! This is why follow-up is SO critical.

10. You let past buyers and customers get away.

Shame on you!

The human response to losing an account is to stay away because you think that the people you were once doing business with don't like you anymore.

Foolish you. In all probability, the reason they stopped doing business with you is because you stopped paying attention to them.

Regardless of your "reasons" why not go back to former business associates and find out what the current status is? I want you to go back as soon as you can. No, that is
I want you to contact all past clients within the next seven days. Now that is a challenge I am directing toward you.

Having made contact, what will you say to them?

Say you are sorry that it has taken so long to contact them again. Tell them that for whatever reason they decided to move on without you, you plan to address their concerns and provide them with a superior service. Apologize if necessary. And then ask them for another opportunity to work with them.

Tell me this: What have you got to lose? They will remain yesterday's news unless you do something about it. I am telling you that you are leaving money on the table at the cost of reviving solid relationships with good people that you already know.

11. You don't seek to "upgrade" your buyers.

Upgrade is in parenthesis because I don't necessarily endorse the concept of "up-selling." I do, however, endorse the practice of "selling right." And if "right' is "up" I say go for it. I also endorse "selling down" if it is the right thing to do.

Bottom line: Sell right. And right does not mean what is right for you. It means what is right for the customer. This does not always translate to instant profitability either.

But over the course of the year, if the account remains profitable, maintain the relationship at all costs. If the account is unprofitable, it may be time to raise your prices or sever relationships with this particular customer.
12. You are not ready to sell when your prospects are ready to buy.

This mistake has to do with "clock watchers." Who ever said that the world had to dance to the beat of your drum? Who said the magic hours are between 9 & 5? Not me.

In fact, other than business travel, 9-5 is probably the worst hours one could ever keep in today's 24/7 world. (I hate that term but that is what it's called) You will have to decide your own hours.

My message to you: Be there when I want to talk to you or be prepared to suffer the consequences. You figure the rest out.

Mistake # 13. You think like an order-taker, not a marketer.

Here is the fastest way to go out of business: Wait for the phone to ring and then answer it. Here is the surest way to maintain a growing business: Make it your mission to make your phone ring ... then answer it like you are happy I called.

"Making things happen" is an old saying that simply will not go out of vogue.

You want mail? Send more mail.
You want more calls? Make more calls. You want more e-mails? Send more e-mails.
You want more action? Create more action.
14. You don't use "What Next?" Thinking

This is the second to last reminder in our mistake avoidance campaign.

You see every piece of the business puzzle as an end to itself.
Nothing could be further from the truth. Here is a simple example and I will leave it at that.

You see a honeymoon package as a honeymoon package. This is shortsighted. You are short-changing yourself big time.

I see the Honeymoon as Step #1 in an 8-Step Selling Sequence.

Step 2 is a vacation package.
Step 3 is a ten-year anniversary package.
Step 4 is another vacation package.
Step 5 is a 20-year anniversary package.
Step 6 is a ............ a vacation package.
Step 7 is a trip back to the homeland.
Step 8 is a 50-year anniversary.
And as long as the couple remains healthy, you may very well be planning for their centennial beer bash. (To do this you must remain healthy yourself.)

Remember the hardest sale is the first sale. The most meaningful sale is the second sale to the same buyer. The most profitable sale begin with #3.
15. You are disappointed when people don't buy from you immediately so you get dispirited and give up.

Everything worthwhile takes longer than first imagined. I didn't make this up. It simply is the way the world spins. And people will not buy when the time is right for you. They will buy when the time is right for them.

When will that be?
Who knows?
If not this month …. next month.
If not this year …..next year.
If not this decade …. next decade.

If you are not planning to go out of business this week, you should not be in any hurry to make the next sale. Enjoy your business relationships and try to learn something along the route.

You have plenty of follow-up to do with the prospects you plugged into your system last year, right?

Your new slogan is to simply keep on keeping on. When your prospects are ready, you will be ready.

Until then, keep building that meaningful database and filling your sales funnel.

15 Marketing Mistakes Worth Avoiding at All Costs.

mike@mikemarchev.com