



Marketing Tip of the Week

Is the electronic age thwarting some of your goal achievement efforts?

- Are you a visual person?
- Do you like (or even need) visual reminders occasionally, whether for important long-term goals or short-term To Do List items?
- Do you have all the latest gadgets, with everything neatly organized inside them, but still have difficulty getting tasks done - (or done *on time*)?

Don't get me wrong - I love technology! It is a wonderful tool that has helped us become organized more efficiently and quickly than we could ever have done manually. It assists us in setting up regularly scheduled tasks so they occur like clockwork: monthly mailings, organizing and categorizing contact lists, and lead follow-up are now contained in neat orderly electronic systems we can activate with the push of a button.

However, it's taken me quite some time to realize that some of my activities and goals were not getting accomplished simply *BECAUSE* they were electronic. For example:

I have ACT! All my contacts are in ACT! This tool helps my Marketing Director and me keep in contact with people on a regular basis. But I was recently reminded of a call I needed to make, then promptly got distracted and forgot about it. Several days later (after my brain had been rattling "something" around that I couldn't quite remember), I did remember that I had a call to make, finally found the time and looked up the phone number in ACT! and made the call - *late*. Part of the problem is also that often when I do remember a call I need to make, I'm not at my desk, so I don't have the phone number handy that would enable me to do it during a free moment in the car or another remote location.

Is it as frustrating to you as it is to me to have all this technology at your fingertips and still miss a deadline? Or a goal? Or just a "nice-thing-to-do" item?

The problem is this:

1. **The visual reminder is gone:** In the old days, we'd have a written To Do List (or book) that sat on our desks (or came with us everywhere we went) and visually reminded us of the tasks we needed to do that day/week/month. With everything we need to do locked neatly away in our electronic gadgets (and often hidden inside purses, pockets and briefcases), it is too easy to forget that we still have things that should be done today. Unfortunately, no matter how good your memory is, once too many items accumulate on that To Do List, something will get lost in the cracks.
2. **The visual reward is gone:** Not only did the list serve as a reminder of the items to be accomplished, but it also served as its own built-in reward, since visual people love to see those items crossed off, checked off or otherwise visually marked as DONE! The visual reward itself was a motivation to "get that last item off your To Do List!"
3. **Technology is not always as convenient as we'd like to think:** If we're not in the same place as our electronic information, even if we remember that we have something to do (or someone to call), the phone number, address or other important item is not where we are at the time we remember it! Our days are crammed with calls, appointments, paperwork, personal errands - you name it. There are days I can't even sit down in front of my computer until late at night, after I've taken care of all my other tasks during the day! How many times have *you* been in the car and remembered a call you had to make, but the phone number (or quote or other important information you need to properly serve your customer on the call) is "locked" inside your desktop computer, making it impossible to complete the To Do item? And lest we say, "Oh, but we should get a PDA and sync up our lists and carry the PDA everywhere," let us keep in mind that:
 1. Not everyone can afford all the gadgets available, especially at the beginning of a new business
 2. Sometimes gadgets crash and lose information (usually at the most critical moment - a la Murphy) - or have no battery life left because we forgot to charge them
 3. Sometimes they get "misplaced" - or just plain ole lost!
 4. Maybe we haven't had time to sync our PDA database with our desktop database, so the phone number of that new client we need to call is *ONLY* in our desktop - and not in our PDA
 5. Some people just don't want to carry 100 pounds of gadgets (not to mention all their chargers!) with them everywhere they go

Here's a suggested solution that is helping me - a solution I am now recommending to all my "visually-oriented" clients:

1. Even if you have your To Do List in an electronic Task List, print it out and place it on your desk (or on your car seat if you have to leave your office). The list will remind you of the tasks you must accomplish, while rewarding you with visual satisfaction that its items have been completed. Print the list for the entire upcoming week (so you don't have to remember - or make time - to do it every day). Even if not every item is on the printed list, most will be.
2. Even if you have a PDA, print your active client list periodically. This way your information will be handy, whether or not your PDA is updated, sync'd or charged - allowing you to make critical phone calls when you need to do so. I used to carry an alphabetical list with me all the time when I was a REALTOR (and used it ALL THE TIME) to make phone calls between appointments!
3. Keep a small wire-bound notebook or pad with you at all times to write down To Do items as they arise. When someone asks you to send a fax, jot a quick note with the fax number in it. When someone calls you on your cell (or leaves a voice mail message), write the message in the To Do book, since almost every phone call or message I receive results in a To Do - don't yours?

By keeping some simple non-electronic things handy and available at all times (even if they're based on electronic databases and lists to keep them organized), you can increase the chances that your "neatly organized" items will actually get done, rather than simply remaining "neatly organized - but incomplete" in your shiny electronic gadgets!

Have a great week!

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