

6 Ways to Reach Customers

How to Communicate Using Different Methods



Jack is in the market for luggage. Soon after he searched for suitcases online, he got an ad on Facebook for a brand whose website he'd visited. Over the next few weeks, he saw digital advertisements from the same company and heard a commercial while listening to a podcast. The brand managed to stay on his radar for weeks, convincing him to consider their product when making a purchasing decision.

This company deployed an integrated marketing plan, which involves sending messages across various channels that work together to catch a customer's attention. Each of the pieces works together holistically as part of a larger marketing campaign to get the consumer to buy a product.

Hardware Retailing spoke to communications and social media expert Meag Shaffer about which vehicles retailers should be utilizing in their marketing efforts. As executive vice president of social media for public relations and social media firm Kel & Partners, Shaffer has years of experience working with retailers in many industries on various marketing initiatives and has presented on marketing-related topics at retail markets and conferences. Here, Shaffer shares the tactics that she believes are crucial to a marketing campaign, including traditional initiatives, like circulars, radio and TV advertising, along with digital efforts.

For examples of how to test and evaluate your marketing efforts, visit TheRedT.com/marketing-ideas. ➔



Get Active on Social

"Imagine being able to drop your business into a phone call between two friends. That's basically what you're doing on social media. Facebook is where people go to interact with friends and family, and they're spending more time on this platform than any other."

Pro Tip: Social media is a place to converse with customers. Share how-to videos and blogs, ask questions and host giveaways.



Test Ideas With Email

"Email marketing is inexpensive and tracking your efforts is easy. You can try out new visuals, messaging or promotional offers and can track things like opens, link clicks and coupon redemptions to see how your customers react."

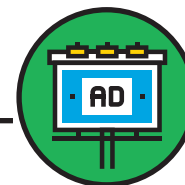
Pro Tip: To make sure you're sending emails at optimal hours, try sending messages at different times to see when your customers are more likely to open emails.



Mail Something New

"Direct mail continues to be an important piece for many retailers. If you have success with circulars, consider trying different types of direct mail marketing, like postcards or coupons, and see what type of response you get."

Pro Tip: Send the same coupon to your customer via mail and email, and see which medium delivers a higher redemption rate.



Get Noticed Online

"Millennials and the generations after them live online. They go there to get news, socialize, do research and more. It's where the sales cycle starts, so you want your brand to be present."

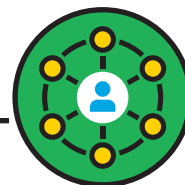
Pro Tip: Impressions are more important than engagement with online ads. When customers see your ads repeatedly, they're more likely to recall your brand.



Polish Your Website

"There's a sense of validity that's imparted to your business just by virtue of having a website. If a customer is searching for information about your company, you want them to find something presentable and representative of your business."

Pro Tip: Look through your website monthly to ensure all information is up-to-date.



Utilize the Media

"Having a presence in local news requires work and a bit of knowledge, but it doesn't cost much to make it happen. The media can be valuable from a storytelling perspective if you're celebrating an anniversary or hosting an event."

Pro Tip: Get to know reporters and journalists so they're more likely to report on your business.