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This Month's MSPW Campaign

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This month's focus:

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The 7 Marketing Functions: Key Steps to Business Success



Have you been frustrated by your marketing, either because you feel it lacks direction or simply isn't worth the investment? This isn't uncommon, as many people tend to see marketing as a series of individual efforts and actions (like posting on social media or running an ad) rather than the interconnected system it must be to support your success.

If done correctly, this system has seven steps to follow whenever you're promoting your business and its services. Let's explore what they look like, why things often fall apart, and how to fix that tendency.

What are the 7 Functions of Marketing?

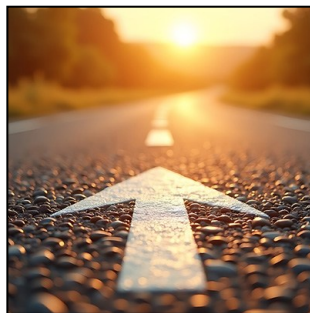
We need to reiterate just one more time: **marketing is a process**. It is the process of packaging a product or service you have to offer and delivering it to your audience in a way that generates a profit... enabling your business not just to sustain itself, but to *grow* and *grow reliably*.

The seven functions that enable you to do so are as follows:

1. Marketing Information Management (MIM)
2. Product/Service Management

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MSP Marketing Has No Finish Line



IT services are a tough racket. It's easy to alternate between lots of work and opportunities, and drought. A lot of businesses approach this issue by going all in on their marketing efforts during low points and stopping completely when prospects start converting into clients.

This approach is flawed in many ways. First of all, it's a lot of work crammed into a little bit of time, and second, it feels like you don't get the return you should for the money you invest. The secret to properly promoting your managed services isn't throwing money at the problem, it's consciously going about it with strategy and forethought.

The Problem with Most MSP Marketing is a Perceived Finish Line

While individual marketing efforts and campaigns may have start and end dates, your marketing itself, as a whole, can and should not. Much like most other things in life and business, consistency matters most... and this consistency cannot stop, ever. If you can accomplish this, you're already one step ahead of any competition that isn't sharing information about their services just as consistently.

Why is Consistency So Important?

Look at it this way: how often do you see something—especially a service—and immediately pull out your checkbook to purchase it? Almost never, right?

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Marketing Tidbits

"Content is king, but distribution is queen, and she wears the pants."
- Jonathan Perelman



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Target the Unaware and Bring Them Into Your Pipeline

How many businesses in your service area match your ideal customer profile—but have no idea you exist? How many have heard of you, but don't fully understand what managed services are or how outsourcing IT could make their operations safer, more efficient, and more predictable?

The answer is almost always: **more than you think.**

Fortunately, reaching these "unaware prospects" is completely achievable with a well-structured awareness campaign that introduces your brand, educates them on managed services, and positions you as the local technology partner they can trust.

Step 1: Build the Right Target List

An effective awareness campaign starts with a clean, purposeful list of companies. These should be organizations that both fit your ideal customer profile and are realistically able to work with your MSP.

Step 2: Choose the Right Channels to Reach Them

Once your list is built, it's time to start marketing. You have two main categories to work with: digital tactics and direct mail...



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The 7 Marketing Functions: Key Steps to Business Success

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3. Pricing
4. Promotion
5. Channel/Distribution Management
6. Selling
7. Financing

Let's break down what each of these processes involves.

Marketing Information Management (MIM)

MIM is simply the research that gives you the data you need to know about your market and its specific characteristics—who your target market is, who you're competing with, and what trends the overall industry you operate in has followed.

This information is powerful, as it replaces any assumptions or guesses you may have used to inform your decisions with cold, hard facts. Use it to

find out who your ideal client is, what your clientele are apt to be experiencing, and who your business is up against. The answers to these questions will determine how you proceed with the following steps.

Product/Service Management

Using the data you collected through MIM, you would then adjust your products or services to best align with your target market's priorities. You wouldn't try to sell someone a space heater in the desert any more than you'd sell bottled water to a fish. Use the data you gathered to ensure you're selling something that people will be willing to pay for.

Pricing

Speaking of, you need to set a price...



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Beyond the QBR: 7 Strategies to Turn Happy Clients into Raving Fans



Your best clients aren't dependents—they are partners. If you play your cards right, they become

something even more powerful: advocates.

With 84% of B2B decision-makers starting their buying process with a referral, turning that silent satisfaction into vocal advocacy isn't just "nice to have"—it's the most efficient code you can write for your revenue growth.

The Difference Between "Happy" and "Successful"

Before we execute any marketing protocols, we must debug a common misconception. There is a distinct difference between a happy client and a successful one.

Happiness is *subjective*—it often just means they haven't complained lately.

Success, however, is *objective*. A successful client can demonstrate the ROI you provide. They are the ones who have survived a cyberattack because of your backups, or who have saved 20% on hardware procurement because of your advice.

Happy clients renew their contracts, but successful clients actively sell your services for you. They choose to become advocates for you and your services.

Of course, to upgrade a client from "happy" to "advocate," you need a reliable strategy. Here's how to build it.



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Many industries are built on some level of trust, and managed IT services are no exception. You need to establish a rapport with a prospect and develop a relationship if you want to have a chance of closing a deal with them. Communicating with them consistently is key for a few reasons:

Consistency Helps You Build Trust

Consider this: if your office mail is delivered promptly at 11:15 every day, wouldn't you begin to anticipate it arriving at 11:15 tomorrow, and the next day, and so on? Of course you would. In the same vein, regularly sharing resources and making your presence known through blogs, social media, and other channels helps show prospects that you deliver high-quality, consistently reliable information. As a result, a critical sense of trust can be fostered. Failing to do so, predictably, will have the opposite effect.

Consistency Helps You Attract Compounding Attention

In addition to impressing a prospect, consistently sharing valuable information through your website in the form of blogs, service pages, newsletters, and downloadable deliverables (while also using social media to spread attention on various platforms) also helps you impress the

search engines. One blog post won't make many waves, but two posts each week over a year will.

Consistency Helps You Establish a Baseline for Success

As you work to market your business, the more you actively do, the more you'll have to compare and contrast to determine what works and what doesn't. You can also run A/B tests to determine why certain efforts didn't work and what the optimal approach is so you can make better decisions with data backing you up.

3 Steps to Planning a Consistent Marketing Strategy

Step 1: Identify Your Ideal Customer (No, "Everyone" Doesn't Count)

Trying to please everyone will ultimately lead you to fall short of everyone's expectations. Think about the kind of things your competitors offer. Chances are, their services will look a lot like yours... so what can you do to stand out?

Simple: find something specific to focus on.

Take some time to identify your ideal target audience, the industry that they operate in, the size of business you can most effectively serve, and what services you specialize in. What

industries are well-represented in your service area? Which verticals have compliance needs that you can fulfil? Are you willing to step in and augment an internal IT department through co-managed services, or are you prepared to completely take responsibility for your clients' IT infrastructure?

While you're at it, take some time to identify the pain points your candidates typically suffer through. Knowing these data points can help make your messaging more effective by addressing the emotions that a problem brings as well as the problem itself. A security breach isn't just bad for the business; it's stressful on the people who work there. You need to communicate that you aren't just selling cybersecurity tools and platforms; you're selling the sense of security and peace of mind that these protections bring.

Step 2: Pick Your Platforms

Let's face it: as valuable as it is to be on as many platforms as possible, it's only worthwhile if all of those platforms get enough of your attention and effort. To that end, you need to pick a few to establish good habits on before you expand into others. It is also...



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