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TIPS TO KEEP YOUR MARKETING ON TRACK

 Jennifer Culbertson

At the start of a new year, many of us make a list of resolutions and new goals we'd like to accomplish. I like to think of it as a "do over" for things that just didn't work well the year before; sort of a "what we need to do to make this year better than the last" list. I know that for many of my clients, these lists include making adjustments to business strategies and goals as well as looking at ways to improve marketing.

So with a few months into 2011, where do you stand today from a marketing perspective? In this crazy business climate, we all know that things change, sometimes dramatically, in the space of just a few weeks or months. It's easy to get off-course from your well-intended path.

If you find yourself struggling to stay on track and meet your marketing goals, here are some tips to help keep you focused and headed in the right direction:

- » **Set Goals That are Realistic and Achievable, and Then Re-evaluate** – Nothing is worse than setting goals that you'll never be able to attain. Talk about a de-motivator! Take a few minutes and reassess the goals that you've set this year, re-prioritize, and make adjustments if needed. It's okay to make changes!
- » **Don't Procrastinate; Make Marketing a Priority** – Marketing and growing your business needs to be part of your daily routine. We all know it's easy to put marketing aside when things are busy and billable work is mounting. But in today's market, you can't afford to just sit back and wait for the phone to ring. There's too much competition, and to stay ahead you need to proactively feed your business with new leads. Neglect this for too long, and your business will eventually grow weak.

- » **Translate Your Goals into a Marketing Calendar** – Like with many things in life, there are always small steps you can make to reach the final goal. Achieving your marketing goals isn't much different. Once you have outlined your marketing goals and your marketing tactics, start outlining each in a marketing calendar. The calendar or schedule should cover a 12-month timeframe, breaking down initiatives month by month or by quarter. The calendar should also include what each activity will cost and who in your organization is responsible for executing the tactic(s). The calendar will not only give you the big picture for the year, but it also will help keep you on track along the way.
- » **Keep Your Team Informed and Update Them on Your Progress** – For many businesses small and large, marketing is a team effort. Marketing your business touches almost everyone in the organization, and the more you can communicate your marketing goals and efforts with your internal team, the more support you will receive and better success you will have.
- » **Track and Measure Your Progress** – Every campaign takes time to mature and begin to show results in the market. Be patient, keep focused, and remember it takes time (typically three to nine impressions) for prospects to begin to pay attention and take action. Whether you're using traditional tactics, digital media, social media, or a combination, tracking the progress of your marketing efforts and building benchmarks are key to understanding what's working and what might need to be adjusted. After each campaign has been executed, record the responses to gauge their effectiveness.
- » **Don't be Afraid to Ask for Help** – Not everyone has the staff and/or marketing expertise to take it on full time; it's okay to ask for help. Some of the best companies outsource part of their marketing efforts to consultants or specialists who work in conjunction with their team to optimize marketing efforts. By utilizing outside resources, you are able to better balance your

day-to-day business activities while keeping the marketing machine running. For many of my clients, this is a win-win approach to their marketing success.

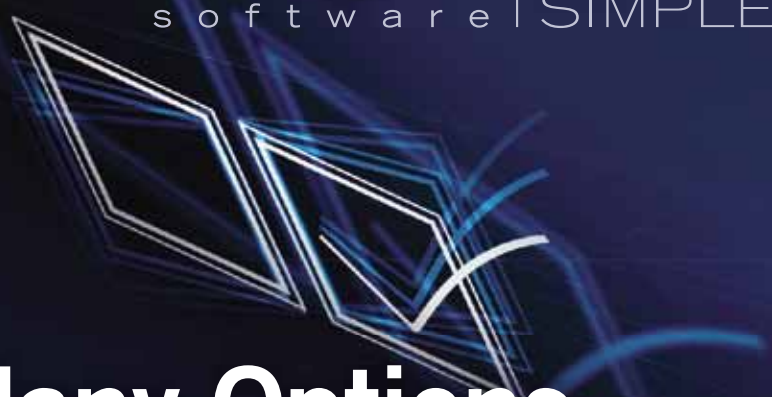
We all know it's easy to get distracted from what we've set out to do, but implementing these key tips should help keep you focused and on the right track to making 2011 a great year! 🌐

Jennifer Culbertson is owner of Looking Glass Marketing and specializes in working with Microsoft VARs and ISVs to build and execute marketing strategies that drive results. With her 18 years of marketing experience within the channel, coupled with her understanding of Microsoft Partner needs, she can help take your marketing to the next level. For more information, contact Jennifer at Jennifer@lookingglassmarketing.com or 614-453-5927.

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