

Secrets of better marketing

Aesthetic surgery is a marketer's dream, writes **Drayton Bird**. Yet few practitioners truly understand marketing. Drayton shares a few thoughts

I've had to sell almost everything you can think of in my career—and what a hard slog!

American Express? We competed with Visa and Mastercard. Mercedes? We had to battle with BMW, Audi and Lexus. Everest? Every local installer competes—plus big ones like Anglian.

Besides lots of competition, what you sell is often *boring*. Credit cards are plastic. People run a mile at the mere thought of a double-glazing salesman. And how *do* you explain your car is better?

Frankly, give me something people get really excited about. Something they dream about night and day. Something they deeply cherish. *Themselves*.

That's why aesthetic surgery is a marketer's dream. Look at any magazine rack. Turn on the TV. Open the paper. Never since ancient Greece have people been so obsessed with their looks.

But what is the secret of marketing this or any other product?

Well, an early advertising genius, Claude Hopkins, wrote two-and-a-half immensely wise pages about marketing



Drayton Bird expounds on the secrets anyone can use to market a product

back in 1926—the shortest chapter in a very short book. The chapter title was, “Just salesmanship”.

Sales weapon

In *Scientific Advertising* Hopkins pointed out something that's obvious when you think

Marketing is very simple indeed.
Good selling communications are just
a substitute for salesmanship

I SHOULD PAY LESS FOR MY HEALTH INSURANCE

Get up to 100% of your premium back

PruHealth is the revolutionary private medical insurance that provides outstanding quality of cover and rewards you for actively managing your health. By staying healthy you can get up to 100% of your premium back towards the cost of next year's cover. Just don't claim and you'll automatically get 25% back. You could also qualify for an instant 30% discount when you join.

CALL FOR A QUOTE ON 0800 092 6666

PRU HEALTH
It's all part of The Plan from the Pru.

This new health insurance pays off when you need it

And repays you when you don't

INSTANTLY up to 30% off – just answer a few simple questions
GUARANTEED 25% no claims bonus towards renewal
AND up to 50% ... 75% ... even 100% for looking after yourself

Do you already have health insurance – or are you considering it? Then this could be the best news you get this year.

Because now there's a new plan from PruHealth that's simply a much better deal. It starts with a very competitive price, gives you up to 30% off and then you get better and better.

25% no claims bonus
If you don't need to claim this year, when you renew next year you'll get a 25% no claims bonus – guaranteed.

Be rewarded for staying healthy
And there's more. We recognise and reward the things you do to stay healthy – nobody else does that.

You can receive as much as 50% ... 75% ... even 100% towards next year's cover. Yes, you read that correctly: all your annual premium back.

How do we do it?
Simple. If you look after yourself – say by being well, or exercising – you're less likely to make a claim. So we can charge you less.

Get something back every year
These savings are not just for new customers. Instead of paying more and more, you CAN get something back – every year, for as long as you stay with us.

Make that call now and see how you CAN save up to 30% instantly.

It's all part of The Plan from the Pru.

FREE: this first aid kit when you call for a quote

Call now quoting 0800 092 6666
PRU HEALTH
www.pruhealth.co.uk

buildings? Is it about the staff? Is it about the products or services offered? These things may have some importance, but they are secondary.

It is really about the customers. And where are they? On a database.

So your first task is to build a database. Your second is to exploit it. And as you go along you do what a salesman would do. You try different messages and tactics, assess the results, and learn from them so you do better next time.

This is called testing. It is so important that an American expert, Richard V Benson, observed: "There are only two rules in direct marketing. Rule one, test everything. Rule two, refer to rule one."

The second thing is *improving* what you do—which you do as a result of what you learn in your tests

Just to give you something to think about, I've illustrated two ads (see top left). One got 10 times more replies than the other. Can you guess which?

Go to <http://www.draytonbird.com/node/371> and you'll see which one did better. Ten times better, actually.

Surprised? Well, if they'd kept running the losing ad, they would have had to close that business down. That's how important testing is.

Here's something else important—well put by an American friend of mine, who said, "Search the world and steal the best."

Study <http://www.transforminglives.co.uk>. It's not perfect (the opening message is too boastful) but it's pretty excellent. The good things don't need the clever technical tricks.

What you can see and learn from the site is how to talk to people about the things that matter to them—and link them to what they sell. Linking what you offer to your prospect is what marketing's all about.

Commenting on Drayton Bird, advertising guru David Ogilvy, founder of Ogilvy & Mather, said: Drayton "knows more about direct marketing than anyone else in the world". Emails to drayton@draytonbird.com

about it.

If you could afford to, you would send your best, most persuasive, reassuring, helpful consultant to talk with every prospect, wouldn't you? What could be more powerful?

The trouble is, you can't afford to. Top salespeople are very expensive. But marketing simply replicates, as far as possible, what they do, through other, cheaper media.

So forget all the high-sounding jargon you read in business textbooks. Marketing is very simple indeed. *Good selling communications are just a substitute for salesmanship.*

Always bear that in mind. Every time you read anything you're thinking of running, ask yourself, would a great salesperson say that?

But suppose you *are* brilliant at selling. How would you make the highest possible commission?

First you need prospects, don't you? But you don't want to waste time on bad ones. You want to get the very best.

That's the first task. In marketing it means you advertise to get replies or reach people directly, on-line or off, through the mail—anywhere.

You note their names and addresses. Next, you talk to them to see how interested they are. As you go along you make notes on each prospect.

You see the really "hot" ones first. The ones who are not quite so hot you call after you've seen the hot ones. The weaker ones you call every now and then to see whether they're ready to buy.

Do you know what I've just described? You have just built and are using a *database*. As time goes by you will keep refining it. Eventually you may discard the really weak leads, because they will clearly never buy. But anyone who looks like a good prospect will be followed up, politely but remorselessly, until you're sure they won't.

Database

When, many years ago, my agency launched a division of IBM called IBM Direct, we had one big problem: the salesmen were unwilling to divulge the names, addresses and details of their prospects and customers. They were worth money!

When one bank or insurance firm buys another, or two legal practices merge, what is the deal about? Is it about buying

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