



Strategies to Expand Your Market Share

By Ron R. Browning

I recently was having lunch with a colleague at our favorite Chinese restaurant. I was consulting with him about how to expand his market share, and addressing the ever present goal of all my clients, “how do I expand my business?” I am hoping my job won’t be replaced by a simple fortune cookie fortune, but I found it ironic that on this particular lunch meeting the Chinese proverb read: “A dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline.” The cookie was right — everything starts with a plan. However, great plans start with targets and measurements so you will know where to prioritize and focus. In relation to the deadline, how about getting started today? Here’s how...

Measure your market size with Google

Besides referrals, the Internet is the #1 source of business for our industry, so knowing how to measure how many people are searching for “at need” or “pre need” services is essential. Google lets you measure how many searches are being done monthly for any key word you can think of, and it’s free. Go to Google and do a search for “Google Key Word Tool” (See address below). The tool is easy to use. Go ahead and type in some words that in your mind your potential customers might be typing in to a search engine. For instance, “funeral home” regularly gets 11 million searches per month — but your customers search locally. “Bronx funeral home” gets 5400, while “Astoria funeral home” gets 880 searches per month. People searching for your services are only going in one direction, up. Measure this potential, and if your local search volume exceeds the number of families you did last month, there’s likely a strong case to invest in finding these customers.

The 15% Rule

All homes know their current market share. Every owner or Director can rattle off how many families their home handled last month or last fiscal year. But do you know how many your competition did? If you don’t know, try to estimate. Why? In today’s consumer market brand loyalty just isn’t what it used to be. Today’s information hungry consumer shops around — and in my experience — at least 15% is always open to making a switch. This isn’t about “stealing” customers from other homes; it is just the fact that the market that was loyal yesterday can be influenced to change locations tomorrow. If you are able to differentiate yourself from the competition, know that at least 15% of the market will be willing to listen and that is the upside market share potential.

Expand Product Offering

Many of my clients operate in areas where there is almost zero competition. The only way to expand market share in this case is to actually expand offerings on your general price list. When was the last time you updated your GPL? Families are eager to memorialize their loved ones. One great product homes can offer is an “on-line web site memorial.” Being able to offer an electronic memorial is a wow factor that brings in revenue from families (\$150-\$300 each), creates a forever legacy for the deceased, and actually takes away market share from newspaper obituaries. Other GPL ideas: videographer service, speech transcription, and memorial service Webcasting.

Invest Wisely

Expanding your business sometimes means expanding your bottom line through spending wisely. Everyone knows that it “takes money to make money.” But, how can you effectively measure an increase profits? Make sure that when you put money into your business you can measure the effective dollar return. This is known as return on investment (ROI). Most homes know their profit per family numbers and doing a quick back of the envelope calculation based on this profit number should always be done before making an investment purchase. If you are considering updating your Web site, advertising, make sure you know how many families you will need to gain in order to pay for the planned investment to break even, and how many families you need to make a nice return on the investment spent. If you think an expense can make 20% in return, it is a wise investment. As long as the target number of families to break even is reasonable, it is usually a wise investment.

If you follow the advice above and most importantly the fortune cookie’s words of wisdom, (a dream is just a dream. A goal is a dream with a plan and a deadline); you will be on your way to expanding your business and hopefully your goals too.

To Find the Google Ad Words tool go to:

<https://adwords.google.com/select/KeywordToolExternal>

OR Google “Adwords Keyword Tool”

About Ron Browning

Ron Browning is the Founder and CEO of Funeral Home Resource. FHR is dedicated to helping the Funeral Home Industry meet the challenges of today’s ever changing on-line marketplace. To email Ron: ron@funeralhomeresource.com