



Rev Up
Your Results!



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10 Tips to Make Your Marketing More Creative

Same old same old just doesn't sell anymore. To make your marketing stand out, you need to get creative. Below are ten tips designed to get your creative juices flowing. Some are brain-teasers or are what Michael Michalko in Thinkertoys calls Linear Thinkertoys. Others fall under intuition or Intuitive Thinkertoys.

Some tips may appeal to you more than others. My suggestion is to try them all. Even the ones you're not drawn to may still open some doors that wouldn't have opened any other way.

These tips will work whether you sell a product, a service or both.

1. Keep your inner critic quiet. I know this one seems obvious, but many people still find it difficult. When exploring creative possibilities, gag your inner critic. That's right – put a gag over his mouth. There is a time to critique your ideas, but not during the brainstorming sessions. Tell your critic he'll have his turn, but right now he needs to keep quiet. If he still doesn't listen, tell him to go watch a *Seinfeld* rerun.

2. Find the "second right answer." Roger von Oech talks about this in *A Whack on the Side of the Head*. Don't be content with the first good idea you come up with. Take the time to think of a second, or third or 50th idea. Quantity counts – the more ideas you have to choose from, the more likely you'll discover an excellent or even a brilliant one. Remember, Thomas Edison discovered around a thousand ways a light bulb didn't work.

3. Change the question. If you change the question, you're probably going to get a differ-

ent answer. You say you want to sell more products? What if you changed the question to how can you make more money? Well, there are other ways to make more money than to sell more products – maybe you lower the cost of making the product or you raise the price of the product. Now you suddenly have new avenues to explore rather than just going down the same tired path.

4. Reverse the question. So what if you don't want to sell more products. What if you want to sell fewer products? How would that look? Well, you could sell fewer products but with a bigger profit margin. Or maybe sell more products to a more targeted group of people, thus overall you're selling fewer products yet you're making more money. Again, this helps jolt your thinking in different directions.

If you really want to play around with your creativity, try reversing the question so it's really silly, like what if you wanted to lose money? See what ideas you come up with – you may surprise yourself.

5. Look at a different industry. Let's say you're a self-help author. Pick up a computer magazine and look at the ads. How are computers sold? Can you sell your book like a computer? How would you sell your book to this audience? One definition of creativity is taking two dissimilar ideas and combing them so they become something original. You may discover something new by combining the two ideas or it could end up as a way to jump-start your creativity.

6. Ask your product or service how it wants to be sold. Now we move into more intuitive



techniques. Start by getting yourself into a relaxed state. Take a few deep breaths or practice some relaxation techniques. Imagine your product or service in front of you. Now ask it questions. Who do you want to be sold to? How do you want to be sold? What are your strengths? What are your weaknesses? Who do you think you can help? Why do you want to help them? You can also do this technique as a journal exercise. Write down the question and answer. See what bubbles up onto the paper.

7. If you were your product, how would you want to be sold? This variation has you imagining yourself as your product or service. Again, use a few relaxation exercises to quiet your mind, then start pretending you are your product or service. What would you do in your spare time? What Web sites would you visit? Who would your friends be? Who do you want to help? Who do you want to be sold to? How do you want to be sold? Write down or just meditate on your answers.

This tip can be very powerful, but it may take a few tries to get the hang of it. Try not to get discouraged. You can end up with amazing insights about your product and the selling process with this technique.

8. Dream the solution. Remember that old adage about sleeping on it? I have a feeling it came about partly because of dreams. Some experts believe dreams are messages from your subconscious (or your intuition or your gut or your muse). This tip can help you harness that power.

Put a notebook and pen next to your bed. Before you go to sleep, fix the question you want to ask your subconscious in your mind.

Here are a few examples to get you started.
How can I sell more products and services?
How can I build my business? How can I better reach my target market? What marketing techniques would work the best? What products or services would help my target market?

Repeat the question a few times. Then in the morning, before you fully wake up, write down as much as you remember about your dreams in the notebook. Don't remember your dreams? Write down any impressions, images, words, emotions, etc. you have.

You may have an immediate "ah-ha, that's the answer." Chances are you won't. In fact, don't be surprised if you're more puzzled than you were before. That's because your subconscious largely speaks to you using imagery, and it may take a few days before you start seeing a pattern. Or you may find yourself washing dishes or driving to the store and the answer suddenly hits you...and on the surface it appears to have nothing to do with your dreams.

Over the years, I've found my subconscious to be a helpful, albeit sometimes confusing, guide. Whenever I've asked for guidance, I've always received an answer, even if it took me awhile to figure out the meaning. You can also ask your subconscious for help in deciphering its answer. Many times you'll receive additional guidance.

9. Paint a public relations campaign. What would a press release look like if you painted it? Or sculpted it? How about a dance number? A collage? Take any part of your marketing that troubles you and turn it into a piece of art. By combining two dissimilar acts, you may discover your answer. Or you may not come up with



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anything at all, but just the act of "playing" and "creating" could jolt something loose. Hours or days later your idea may suddenly end up in your lap.

10. Walk away from it. If nothing is working, then stop. You can literally walk away by taking a walk, or just quit thinking about it. This is especially important if you find yourself getting frustrated or discouraged. Give your subconscious time to mull things over. The idea may just suddenly appear to you. Or, after a few days, try another exercise or two. That may be the catalyst you need.

The most important tip of all? Make sure you have a blast. Being creative should be fun. Keep it light and fun, don't struggle too hard with it, and see how many ideas you're rewarded with.

Michele PW (Michele Pariza Wacek) owns Creative Concepts and Copywriting LLC, a copywriting, marketing communications and creativity agency. She helps people become more successful at attracting new clients, selling products and services and boosting business. To find out how she can help you take your business to the next level, visit her site at www.michelepw.com. Copyright 2006 Michele Pariza Wacek."