

The **ART** & **SCIENCE** of **PROSPECTING**

Hair-on-Fire

Marketing



*simply***DIRECT**

The “new normal” doesn’t leave time for consuming marketing materials. Your audience is just trying to get through their day... addressing only the most pressing items on the to-do list. Clearing off their desk.

And where did this phrase, “crazy busy,” come from?

Was there ever a “sane busy”?

My first job out of college, admittedly last century, I had an electric typewriter. Our ad agency’s designer used a drafting board. You always went to work without your cellphone. We were busy but not crazy. You had time to flip through magazines. At work. Go out to eat lunch. Go home at a reasonable hour.

B2B marketing today often assumes that the buyer or decision maker targeted has the time to read long technical briefs (ironically named, yes) or explore websites jammed with diagrams and samples and testimonials. This is not a flawed approach, however. In the 2015 B2B Technology Content Survey Report, Volume Two, from Eccolo Media Inc., respondents were asked to rank the top five assets they found most influential. Product data sheets/brochures topped the list, followed by white papers, case studies/success stories, detailed technology guides/implementation scenarios, and competitive vendors’ worksheets.

You don’t win by denying the over-busy critical information, but you should be crazy mindful of your target’s distractions and time limits.

Some would react to this new normal by producing marketing materials that are over-the-top attention-grabbers, shock graphics or in-your-face claims and warnings. Have you read this phrase, “Top 20

reasons to blah, blah blah”... And then the added tease, “Number 7 will surprise you!” Or the constant claims of extreme, “Ten Foods You Should Never Eat!” After too many of those loud blasts your audience feels tricked. Claims prefaced by such over-promise lack credibility.

So what works?

When you’re so busy your hair is on fire you STILL react to something that is factual, clear and aimed right at you. Remember, too, the concept that we’ve been preaching since way back at ad agencies: impressions are made, and remembered, through repetition, otherwise known as effective frequency. Ad man Herbert Krugman in the 1960s determined that number was three, but certainly there are other models and theories that propose a different frequency. Some marketers follow the Rule of 7 formulated by marketing expert Dr. Jeffrey Lant. And Erwin Ephron, an influential media consultant in the 1980s through the early 2000s who began his career at Nielsen, stressed “recency” over “frequency,” a concept of broad and continuous reach to consumers who are likely ready to buy.

What’s clear is that the answer often varies, depending on the market and target. And, of course, the Internet and smartphones have potentially changed everything. According to PriceWaterhouseCoopers,

“ Advertisers and publishers are now much better equipped to capture, store and process data that allows them to build a fuller picture of how consumers interact with Internet advertising across devices. Metrics are now being adopted by publishers and advertisers that better reflect the quality of impressions rather than their quantity. Yet despite this progress, effective measurement of media consumption, especially across multiple devices and platforms, will remain a significant challenge for the industry. ”

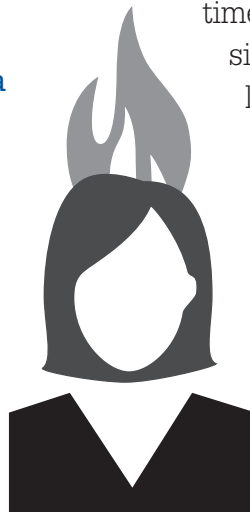
No matter what model you subscribe to, repeating bombastic claims is self-limiting. Your audience, overworked and distracted, won't be listening the second time they hear the carnival barker yell in their face. But they WILL listen if something speaks directly to them and their pain du jour. In an article from the Content Marketing Institute on effective white papers, author Roanne Neuwirth writes, “With so many voices in the marketplace, it is more vital than ever to ensure your perspective is relevant to your audience and tackles the challenges and issues your clients care about.”

Relevance. Getting it right. Knowing your audience. Even if their hair IS on fire, they will take the time to listen to the pitch about fireproof shampoo, or the hat with the built-in cooling fan. “How did they know that's exactly what I needed?!”

“Crazy busy” does not have to translate into “irrational” as long as your target is presented with a rational message, not hair-on-fire marketing. More than ever your message has to resonate and embrace the target's unique pain.

This approach, this reaction to the realities of the unbelievably stressed American workplace, is timeless. “Know your audience” puts the emphasis back on tried-and-true marketing practices like focus groups, market research, surveys, and insider knowledge. Sure, that research will tell you that a ubiquitous “pain” for your target is, indeed, the hair-on-fire reality of the workplace. But you'll also learn what the individual needs to be successful at his or her job. The unique problems they're trying to solve. The long-term issues that they peck away at everyday, between meetings and fires.

Marketers need to relearn the value of understanding their market, and that their market is, well, the individual buyers and their needs. Their pain, in the context of information technology, might be how to prevent an intruder from hacking in, or how to give international divisions access to their ERP system, or any number of critical, big-impact mis-sions. Your target's pain that there are too many fires to fight is real, but that doesn't mean the marketer has to fan those flames by using scare tactics and shouting to get attention.



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In fact, according to a 2015 survey, “The more content we produce, the more likely it is to fail. Marketers have been good at producing large

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volumes of content, but not quality content and not the right types of content.” The survey found that most buyers consume just 2 to 5 collateral assets before they are ready to buy, while only 4% consumed more than 10.

For today’s hair-on-fire technology buyer or influencer, less is indeed more if it solves a real problem.

SimplyDIRECT helps you identify, engage and qualify prospects with maximum precision through custom database building into your target accounts.

We focus on:

▶ **Key account marketing:**

Our account-based approach focuses on the right contacts with the roles you need to target, in the accounts you’d like to win. We phone verify our contacts to ensure accuracy.

▶ **Survey based demand generation:**

Identifying not only prospects but also details about their need for your product or service. Those with appropriate needs are invited to opt-in to be contacted by your sales force.

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