

Don't Fall Prey to Generic Marketing Advice – Here's How to Filter It Out and Focus on What Truly Matters

Opinions expressed by Entrepreneur contributors are their own.

Successfully marketing your own business or a client's business means embracing a lifelong journey of learning and staying abreast of the latest trends in marketing communications and public relations. But with this learning comes the challenge of navigating a deluge of expert advice. We've all encountered those anxiety-inducing headlines that grip us with urgency: "Worst Days of the Week to Post on Social Media," "Why You Should NEVER Pick Up the Phone When Pitching," "Top 5 Things Journalists Don't Want in a Pitch," "Follow This Word Count for a Successful Blog."

In today's modern world of social media and online news, everyone seems to be an expert with an opinion. However, it's crucial to recognize that not all advice is valuable, and discerning marketing professionals must carefully evaluate what truly applies to their unique situations.

Take, for instance, the countless articles advising on the best days of the week to post on social media. New articles crop up regularly, each presenting new surveys and research. Yet, these articles often contain conflicting information and are based on data collected from tens of thousands of businesses.

For example, HubSpot released an article on the best days to

post in 2024, based on a survey of 30,000 businesses, suggesting that Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays are ideal. But what if your business thrives on weekends? A restaurant, for instance, might find it advantageous to post early in the day on Saturday when its audience is planning their weekend activities.

Related: Don't Fall for These 3 Marketing Myths – Here's What to Do Instead

Another example comes from an article my team recently encountered, which advised against ever picking up the phone when pitching a journalist. The word “never” is a strong one, and in this case, it isn't sound advice. In our extensive experience in marketing and PR, we've often found that there are compelling reasons to pick up the phone. Media relations are, after all, about building relationships. Over time, we cultivate relationships with journalists who appreciate a phone call or text.

Additionally, in local broadcast pitching, sending a news release via email and following up with a phone call has resulted in successful media pickups. News directors have expressed their gratitude for the reminder, leading to media coverage that might not have occurred otherwise. The lesson here is clear: While not always necessary, picking up the phone can be crucial in certain situations.

These examples highlight a recurring theme: Expert insights are valuable, but discerning marketers must sift through the noise to find advice that genuinely applies to their unique circumstances.

What does it mean to be discerning about marketing advice?

Trust your own data: Don't prioritize third-party data over

your own. Social media platforms and analytics tools can provide insights into when your audience is most active and engaged. Google Analytics can reveal which blog lengths drive clicks and boost search results. Often, you hold the key to what works best for your unique industry, business or client. Your data is a treasure trove of insights that can guide your marketing strategy.

Value your experience and expertise: If you've been working on marketing for your business or client for some time, trust your instincts and experience. You likely already know what drives the best results. Don't discount that knowledge! If calling certain media contacts has proven successful, continue doing so, regardless of what some expert says. Your experience is an invaluable asset that can lead to better outcomes.

Recognize your business's uniqueness: What works for one industry or business model may not work for another. Consider a business insurance company for tech startups; its audience differs significantly from that of a dog toy retailer. The insurance company may find success with longer, in-depth blog posts for its audience of PhDs and MBAs, while the dog toy retailer may achieve better results with shorter, entertaining posts. Tailor your strategies to suit your specific audience and niche.

Evaluate the source of advice: Consider who is providing the advice and whether they are credible. Ask yourself if you trust this person and their sources. Bad advice can lead to damaging outcomes. Ensure the advice you follow is relevant and applicable to your situation. Seek out thought leaders with proven expertise and a track record of success. Question the motives behind the advice, as some experts may have hidden agendas or conflicts of interest that could influence their recommendations. Cross-reference multiple sources to gain a well-rounded perspective and avoid relying on a single viewpoint.

Related: The Worst Advice I Ever Received

A better, data-driven approach to generic advice

We touched on the importance of not prioritizing others' data over your own – but this topic deserves deeper exploration. Data, metrics and measurement are the foundation of effective, results-driven marketing and PR. Data provides clarity and is beyond dispute. All marketing activities should have measurable, data-driven goals.

Data offers excellent insights when making decisions and can be applied to nearly any marketing dilemma. Should your Facebook posts be longer or more concise? A/B test and analyze the data. Are you using the right tactics when pitching media? Review your strategies across pitches to determine which ones yield the most placements. Should your YouTube videos be 10 minutes long or 20? Examine watch time data to see how many users watch the entire 20-minute video. Data is your decision-making ally.

Related: How to Collect Digital Marketing Data in 5 Easy Steps

Advice from others has undeniable value. It's essential for professional growth to stay informed about industry trends and learn from other professionals. However, discernment is key. As you absorb advice, insights and research, filter this knowledge to determine whether it makes sense for your business or client. Use robust measurement tools to assess your own findings. Let your data be your guide, and remember that while advice can be helpful, ultimately, the success of your marketing efforts relies on your ability to tailor strategies to your specific needs.

<https://www.entrepreneur.com/growing-a-business/dont-fall-prey-to-generic-marketing-advice-heres-how/478422>