

Tips for Making Sure Your Product or Service Succeeds

You may think you have the greatest idea, the best product and the ultimate service. But how do you really know if it will fly above your competition, endure finicky customer preferences and survive in an unpredictable marketplace? There is no guarantee but the best place to start is by testing your packaging and pricing strategies.

Whether you provide a service or a physical product, your packaging has a huge impact on a buyer's decision to purchase. Given the choice between a tattered, worn out or dusty package and a bright, shiny, pristine one, which would you choose? When choosing between a spa that offers fixed-price packaged services in a quiet, serene and clean environment versus one that charges separately for each service in a busy, noisy and impersonal environment the choice and value become very clear. People are paying for quality and service so all efforts should be made to convey your dedication to quality and service. When thinking about your packaging, at a minimum you should test:



Storage

How does the packaging stand up under varying temperatures, lighting and humidity? Let's face it, first impressions make a big difference.

Shipping

You want to make sure you put it through the roughest handling possible and see how it holds up.

Point of Purchase

Consider where your customers will find your product. How will the packaging withstand the temperature and lighting conditions? Where on the floor will your product be best placed for maximum visibility and desirability?

Shelf-life

How long should your product stay on the shelves? How long can it stay in optimum condition while sitting on the shelf?

To optimize your packaging strategy, consider involving a few of your target buyers in some initial market research. Conduct a feedback session for these factors:

- n How visually appealing is your packaging to your target buyers?
- n Does your package convey the unique characteristics of the product?
- n Do the chosen colors and design elicit positive emotions in your target buyers?
- n Is your packaging difficult to open?

Once you have tested your packaging, consider your pricing strategy. Be sure you have accurately accounted for distributor and wholesaler pricing, marketing expenses and profits. We do not recommend in engaging in all out pricing warfare. A better strategy would be to test the value of

your product or service.

Look at these elements when assessing the value of your product or service:

- n Is your product a better value than what your competitor's offer? If not, how can you improve it? If so, are you clearly and persistently communicating that to your target buyers?
- n Are you getting as much for your product or service as your competitors? Don't be afraid of over-pricing yourself out of business. It's just as easy to under-price yourself right out of business.
- n Instead consider ways in which you can create a desirability that justifies your prices. The easiest way to do this is to offer superior customer service.
- n Are your customers paying for the extra value you offer or are you under-cutting your profits for fear of being too expensive?
- n Are you adequately conveying the value of your product in your branding and pricing? For example, if your product or service is intended for an upscale clientele, then that should be reflected in the pricing, the advertising and the packaging.

Solutions At A Glance...

In summary, this article deals with these issues:

- Storage
- Shipping
- Point of Purchase
- Shelf-life