

[High Tech Product Promotion Part II](#)

In Part I of this article we covered an introduction to High Tech Product Promotion. Now we'll move on to a detailed look, including five key factors for success.

FORMULATE, TEST & MEASURE

So the formula uses some judgment to place your initial bets. Always make sure that you objectively test different key elements (such as price) of your offer with several controlled options, and measure the results. Good marketing programs are always testing and measuring new versions of each key element, which allows you to continuously improve, and refresh, a campaign. Also remember, measurability doesn't just happen--it needs to be "designed in" upfront. If you don't think about measurability for a specific program until after the fact, you'll likely have lost the opportunity to measure it at all--or at least as well as you could have, with some simple planning prior to program execution.

TOP 5 BETS

As I stated above, every promotional marketing program needs to be individualized for the current time, market, product line and budget. You've got to start placing your bets somewhere (the "art" segment of finding great promo programs, as discussed above). For someone out there just getting started, or trying to evaluate where to go next, here are some great programs to consider first:

PRESS RELATIONS (PR)--generally my favorite marketing program for most high tech companies. This activity is intended to provide your products and company with reviews and publicity in high tech trade journals, and depending upon the product, possibly general circulation newspapers and magazines, as well. If you have a good product that fills a need, getting positive reviews will provide your company with tremendous leverage and credibility, filling the prospect pipeline with eager potential customers. Depending upon your particular market, hiring a PR firm or a "do it yourself" approach might be most appropriate. But nearly every company with a real solution for a particular market needs to have an active PR program of some sort.

SEARCH ENGINE OPTIMIZATION (SEO)--unless you're selling a \$1,000,000 product with a potential customer universe numbering less than 100, this is something almost every company should be doing. SEO is the activity which helps your website be found "higher up" in the results of a search conducted by someone using a search engine such as Google, Yahoo or MSN. No time to go into the details here, but it is a high return activity. A little investment of time or money upfront can yield a strong return in revenue and profit gains. Much like PR above, even with no budget to outsource this to an expert, you can conduct an SEO review and make improvements to your website on your own.

DIRECT MAIL TO IN HOUSE LISTS--if you're not doing a good job of capturing contact information on your customers and prospects, shame on you! Lack of doing a good job in this area is one of the more striking deficits that I see in the marketing efforts of high tech companies, particularly the early stage variety. It's especially critical to capture email addresses, and do it in such a manner that the customer or prospect grants you explicit permission to contact them by email. You've spent a lot of money making contact with each of these prospects or customers, and a well-executed direct email campaign to sell them additional products and services can bring a quick boost to your revenue, with nearly zero incremental costs. Every High Tech company should strive to have an active direct email campaign of some sort, to allow your brand to maintain mindshare within your target audience.

PAY-PER-CLICK ADVERTISING--while this area has gotten quite a bit more competitive over the last year or so, I still highly recommend it as a preferred marketing program, for a great majority of high tech companies. These are the small "text ads" that appear next to organic Search Engine results and are labeled typically as "Sponsored Links". Pay-Per-Click programs are the internet advertising analogy to print ads in the printed media world, much like organic search engine results are the online analogy to editorial placements in the print world. The two best known Pay per Click services are Google Adwords and Yahoo Search Marketing (formerly Overture). Particularly for companies with highly target-able or niche markets, this can be a very cost-effective and rewarding activity.

DIRECT EMAIL TO RENTED OPT-IN LISTS--this is also an activity that has taken a hit in popularity over the last couple of years, due to the problem of SPAM, and over-saturation of email in general. But if you've done a good job in target marketing overall, and you have been successful with emailing to house lists and Pay-Per-Click advertising programs, focused direct email programs to targeted lists may still be quite successful. Shot-gunning almost never works, and can harm your brand if poorly done. B2B is much more viable than B2C email marketing. Just remember, direct marketing in every medium is all about the offer and the list. So if you have a strong offer, and are able to rent a list that fits closely with your target audience, email to outside lists can be a strong contributor within your overall promotional plan.

I hope that this is has been a useful outline of the basics of high tech promotion. As always, I'm very interested in your feedback. --

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