



(Getting and Staying) Top Of Mind

By Angelo Biasi, General Manager of
SMART Marketing Solutions, LLC
(@smartmarketingllc.com, 239.963.9396)

Cruisin' for Sales

I took a Carnival cruise four years ago. Following that vacation, I entered their database as an *existing customer*. Attractive offers and discounts followed ever since (did I say four years ago?) coupled by personal calls from my assigned sales rep, Andrew. Andrew is a good guy and we've had several conversations over the years. He knew when my wife and I were having our twins, "Andrew, I don't think we'll be taking a vacation for a little while. Twins are on the way." And, he kept in touch throughout other various events over the years, patiently waiting for the day that I would reserve another Carnival cruise vacation through him; the order. Andrew always seems to know exactly when to call as it comes across as non-solicitous and personal. It's almost like we're old friends keeping in touch regularly but not often. Yesterday, Andrew called to wish me a happy birthday for next week (notice he didn't call on my actual birthday) and inform me of some specials going on at the moment for their customers. The phone message was followed up by a promotional email from him and Carnival that stated:

Are you looking forward to FUN?

Pack your bags and get ready for a well deserved weekend getaway!

Hop aboard The Carnival Imagination for 3 day cruise departing from Miami, FL on 10/29/2010 to the beautiful Bahamas.

I can offer you this last minute discount starting from ONLY \$169 per person plus tax.*

For more information and to make your reservation, please call me NOW. This special is capacity controlled and on a first come first serve basis.

If this date does not work for you, ask me about other dates and itineraries with similar pricing.

I look forward to hearing from you soon!

For some reason I am not offended by Andrew's persistence and frequency of communications. I even tolerate the auto-generated solicitations from Carnival as they're "coming from him" with his name in the subject line. The marketing folks at Carnival are getting this right. Not too much yet not too little. They're keeping it consistent and developing a relationship. Most of all, they're staying "Top Of Mind."

Top Of Mind

Top of mind awareness, as it's referred to and defined on Wikipedia, "has traditionally been defined as 'the percent of respondents who, without prompting, name a specific brand or product first when asked to list all the advertisements they recall seeing in a general product category over the past 30 days.' *Companies that are well known advertise heavily and have attention-getting ads that tend to receive the highest top of mind awareness scores in ad tracking studies.*

Another definition included is, "Owning the space that your product or service occupies between your prospects' ears. That way, when they're ready to buy they think of you first."



Another way to explain TOMA is to ask, "Whom do you think of first when you think of [product/service]?" The answer to that question is the company that has achieved Top of Mind Awareness with you. TOMA varies from consumer to consumer.

"Top of Mind Awareness" is a way to measure how well brands rank in the minds of consumers. Companies that build brand awareness tend to also rank highly in "Top of Mind Awareness." Thus, TOMA correlates strongly with market share of a product. For companies that conduct high-dollar transactions, Top of Mind Awareness is particularly important. Mortgage Brokers, Real Estate Agents, and Auto Dealerships are particularly reliant on Top of Mind Awareness. However, TOMA holds value for companies offering products and services of all transaction levels.

With varying sales cycles, times of decision making and emotional buys, to name a few purchase evoking variables, it's important to stay Top of Mind with your customers. The objective—when they're ready to buy, your company, business, products, services and you are the first person they think of. The sales cycle is reduced and you earn the sale. Sound simple? It isn't always.

Tips for Getting and Staying Top Of Mind with Your Customers

Getting and staying Top Of Mind with your customers is not easy and can be expensive. It requires resources, energy and persistence. Even with sophisticated, more automated Customer Relationship Management technology systems, it's difficult to support Top Of Mind Awareness among all of your customers. Here are a few tips to help you get and stay Top Of Mind with your customers:

- 1. Use multiple marketing touch points:** Hitting customers with various forms of marketing such as personal phone calls, email, letters, postcards, mobile marketing, and other integrated tactics, (like Carnival did with a phone call and email), supports awareness frequency without coming across as being too overbearing.
- 2. Leverage important customer information:** Using birthdays and other key events as an excuse for outreach and communications adds a personal flavor and a reason for customers to take heed to your marketing message. Carnival's use of wishing me a happy birthday was welcomed.
- 3. Be consistent and persistent yet not pushy:** Understand the threshold of your customers' communications; how often do they want to be contacted? What are their preferred means of communications?
- 4. Always Be Closing (ABC):** Be sure to always have an offer with your marketing communication touch point as that one could be "the one."

Getting and staying Top Of Mind with your customers is an essential marketing objective. Accomplish it efficiently and your customers and your business will thank you for it.

About the Author

Angelo Biasi is General Manager of SMART Marketing Solutions, LLC, a leading full-service integrated marketing company in Naples, FL since 2001. He has helped create and execute marketing plans and integrated marketing solutions for companies such as Playtex, Bic, Rogaine, Tauck, and over 35 colleges and universities, to name a few. Angelo has an MBA in Marketing from the University of Connecticut and has taught Marketing at New York University for over five years. For more information or to learn

connecting you to a world of good business