

# THE IDEAL ALMANAC

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## Our Solution

Hello and Welcome to the July Edition of the Ideal Almanac. When I first came into our family's printing business I literally knew nothing about printing, marketing, sales or how a company runs. Fast forward more than forty years and while many things are now clear there are a few areas that never seemed to have solid answers. I am specifically talking about marketing and sales. Let's take sales first. It would seem obvious that if you tried to sell a product to companies that have a need for them; then the odds would be good, depending on your competency, that a certain amount would become customers. You could then take that approximation and extrapolate it to cover a wider territory, more products and get a general idea of how many sales you could expect from a certain product in a specific area. It has been my experience however that whenever the words "approximate" "extrapolate" and "what you could expect" enter the discussion then you have entered into a nebulous territory ripe for disaster. Let me tell you the reality of the world. If you try and sell 100 companies, you are competent, your product is useful and is correctly priced then you could expect to get 10-20 customers. What people don't tell you is that it could take repeated attempts at those 100 companies that could mean anywhere from one call to decades before you actually do business with them and then there is no guarantee of how much they will buy. Therefore if you are taking sales advice from people who don't sell for a living, like accountants, engineers and



systems people then the odds of your surviving are quite low. The same goes for marketing. Making the assumption you are not working for a huge company with millions of dollars for branding. The odds are good that you have a minimal budget and in the event of an economic slowdown those funds are the first to vanish. Figuring out a rate of return for a reasonably small budget is almost impossible and again since there is often no direct line between the people your are marketing towards and the ones doing the actual purchasing then you have a conundrum of huge proportions. So what do you do? Our solution has been to split the resources in an all out effort to constantly remind our customers that we are available. In order to do that you have to give them something of use that will preferably see every day. In our case we send out

a calendar every year which people keep on their desks which means they see our logo continually. We also send our copies of my latest book, usually 4-5,000 copies every year, signed by me. It has been our experience that no-one throws out a signed book because it might be worth something if I ever become famous. The exception is that people do sell them on the Internet, yes books I give away people sell, therefore I guess even they are very glad to get the newest version. The point of advertising and branding is to be remembered. If your funds are limited then my suggestion is to focus on both what would be of use to your customers and also remind them of you. It is a delicate balance but if you can get the right formula it is much easier to get and keep the customers you try so hard to find.

See our CEO's blogs at:

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