



principle 2

Multiple Channels Of Distribution

Be creative...

use multiple methods of marketing

A stool needs a minimum of three legs to stand on its own. Four would be nicer sometimes, but three will do. However, less than three won't do. Lose a leg on a three-legged stool and it can no longer function properly at what is supposed to be - a solid base for a person to rest upon.

A well-known and respected marketer explains it by using the Parthenon in Athens as an analogy... Think of the roof as income or revenue, and the pillars as channels of distribution. If you only have one channel of distribution then the roof is not only unstable but positively tottering. He calls this the 'diving board' philosophy. Think about it, a few chips off the only pillar - your sole distribution method - could bring the whole lot down. Better to have multiple distribution channels - and therefore more pillars to hold the roof up - giving you more support, security and exponentially more revenue.

Do not put all your eggs in the one basket

Your business may also be resting on shaky support if you are relying on just one or two marketing methods to keep things running in stable fashion. Too many businesses rely on print ads alone, for example. Even if they have print ads in multiple and diverse publications, the marketing effort is still one-dimensional. If, for some reason, the ads stop pulling, the business will crash and topple. Another example is companies that rely solely on direct salespeople or representatives. If they fail to perform, or as often happens, defect and get bought off by a competitor, a business can face very difficult times indeed.

But even if your business doing well with a single marketing vehicle, it only makes sense to establish more avenues of marketing income - why not add direct sales letters, prints ads, form joint ventures or implement a strategy to

get free publicity using press releases and other promotional methods. You could also start following up sales letter mailings with phone calls.

You're simply not letting your business be all it can be by limiting yourself to just one or two methods of bringing in new customers. Furthermore, you are exposing yourself to insecurity and danger. Take a lesson from farmers - the smart ones diversify their operations. They plant a variety of crops and sometimes also maintain livestock. If the corn fails, the wheat may do okay and make up for lost revenue. If all the crops fail, sales of beef cattle may keep the operation afloat until the next growing season. Because it has a multiple of resources to fall back on, the farm need never fail, at least not for that reason.

It's important to test and measure marketing activity



When you develop multiple methods of marketing, you not only stand to make more money and more sales, but you inoculate your business against unforeseen failure.

This does not mean you must or even should

start using two, three or four different selling channel right away. It's better to start with just one additional method, test it, and once you get it working and have worked the bugs worked out, then go on to yet another, and another, and another.

Yes, there probably is a point of diminishing returns in terms of how many kinds of marketing tools and strategies you put into play. Becoming overwhelmed and too scattered is not a good thing either. But it just isn't a good idea not to have all your eggs in one basket. However, when you create a multi-channel marketing effort, you put yourself on a firm foundation for greater success, security and gain some insurance against potential loss to boot.