

OVERCOMING START-UP BLUES

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OVERCOMING START-UP BLUES

Most small business owners who have managed to survive the proverbial first 2 years in business probably started out thinking mail order was an easy business to get into.

Chances are the experience would have been a fun-filled nightmare they may not want to experience again. Sure, it was full of fantasy and hope. But it also means a lot of hard work and long hours.

When trying to figure out where you want to take your business financially, it is common for entrepreneurs to extrapolate numbers based on their advertising budget.

This style is perrineal among mail order people who equate advertising as the foundation of their operations.

This approach sounds very logical and statistical, but it doesn't happen like that in the "real world" of mail order! Well... maybe once in a blue moon, but most of the time _ it just don't happen. It's not always because your offer is bad or the price is too high. And it's not always because your mailing list was bad. Often times, the reason lies in the fact that you and your company are unknown.

But one of the most important reasons this statistical data only works well on paper is that most beginners are not skilled in the area of TARGET MARKETING. Yes _ that word is vital to the money your business will make.

Target marketing is the process of focusing on a select and specific group of people you are advertising to. And it has everything to do with the product you are selling.

For example, if you are marketing infant products, it would be very unwise to stage a direct mail campaign on a random list.

How many times have you got a mailing that went in the trash just because it was selling a product or service you have no interest in? See what I mean. If the company mailing these catalogs and advertisements would have pre-qualified you or I and target-marketed their items correctly _ we would have never received them. It is wasted money for the company!

But how can you pre-quality or target market your audience before placing an ad? If you are a beginner, it will take some time before you are experienced enough to do so. However, you can always get a sample copy of the publication first and see what items other people are advertising. Then, test your ads in the smaller mail order publication that offer low-cost advertising until you refine your ad and hit the right market. As soon as you begin generating responses to your ads, keep in contact

with these customers and grow from there. They will bring you more customers like themselves because "birds of a feather flock together."

Therefore _ take my advice and SLOW DOWN a little. I know this is easier said than done _ but if you don't slow down, you could easily get ripped-off and lose a lot of money. Just like attending college _ you won't get a Master's Degree the same day you begin classes. It takes 3-4 years!

Take your time to get to know some of the pros and read what they have to say. Survey and study the market. Read and educate yourself by investing time into study. Start out in mail order like you would start working for any company _ at the bottom. Learn the tricks of the trade. Make friends and associates with "good" dealers and stick with them. Honor your word and work dealerships to the advantage of yourself as well as others.

Mail order is only a process by which products are advertised and delivered to consumers. It works for any product and works for anybody. You don't have to be rich, educated or a certain age, color or heritage. You don't have to wear certain kinds of clothes or have your hair styled in the latest craze. The only limitations are your own abilities and confidence in yourself. I know because I started out really poor and brought my business up to a thriving, self-supporting home business!