The Little Book of Marketing Do’s and Don’ts.

Volume 1
There’s nothing like a good checklist to get marketing initiatives off to a great start. No one does checklists better than the creators of *Print Strategist* and *MondoBeat: Ideas to Improve Your Marketing Rhythm*. Their “Do’s & Don’ts” blog posts have a knack for delivering sound nuggets of advice that get right to the point.

Ripon Printers proudly presents a collection of the eight most viewed “Do’s and Don’ts” published to date. They’re both timely and timeless while providing value to marketers of every experience level. In fact, we could think of only one addition to these valuable lists: When you’re ready to plan your marketing programs, please “do” contact Ripon Printers.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tagline Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>4–5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Print Advertising Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>6–7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Referral Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>8–9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade Show Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>10–11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corporate Brochure Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>12–13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Mail Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>14–15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Thought Leadership Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>16–17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Paper Do’s &amp; Don’ts</td>
<td>18–19</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Tagline Do’s & Don’ts.

We love giving you the confidence that lets you sleep well at night. To avoid tossing and turning during your next tagline change, use this valuable tagline do’s and don’ts checklist.

**Do**
- Strive to be memorable in a positive way.
- Collect and critique other companies’ taglines.
- Keep it short—3–6 believable words are ideal.
- Make the words match your core services.
- Create a customer persona and write to that.
- Be clear, not cryptic.
- Choose clear over clever if you must make a choice.
- Be as specific as possible about what you do, whom you serve, etc.—especially if you are a smaller company.
  - Be bold, provocative, engender trust, build confidence.
  - Test your tagline.

**Don’t**
- Be too generic.
- Elicit a negative or sarcastic reaction—it must be believable.
- State a benefit that might be questionable for your company.
- Use corporate-speak or jargon.
- Merely describe what you do—“Serving all your printing needs,” etc.
- Sound pompous.
- Forget to summarize and sell—it’s a pure marketing message you’re creating.
- Use overused words in your industry—“solutions” in the tech sector, etc.
- Open with clichéd benefits—saves time, etc.
- Argue with critics if they’re not getting the message—strongly consider reworking it.
Do’s and Don’ts for Effective Print Advertising.

You’d think we’d know a lot about print advertising at this point. It’s not exactly a new medium after all. But there seems to be a strong tendency to make the same mistakes over and over, and then wonder why the campaign didn’t work. Here’s a list of do’s and don’ts to help make your print ads more successful.

- Clarify your audience—knowing whom you’re trying to reach is the ultra-crucial first step.
- Hire a professional to develop a media plan—wrong publications, wrong timing, wrong frequency, wrong mix can easily doom the best ad campaign.
- Decide what you’re selling before creating an ad.
- Sell benefits, not features in a product or service ad—focus on the top two or three.
- Show your product or service in action—incorporate people.
- Consider premium positions to increase readership and recall.
- Learn from other advertising campaigns—including your competitors.
- Write killer headlines that speak to benefits—five times more people read a headline than body copy.
- Communicate the brand and a positive message.
- Incorporate high-impact visuals and easy-to-read typefaces.
- Remember that you are not the buyer—what matters is whether your campaign works, not whether you like it.
- Include URLs to drive website traffic—a study shows the biggest lifts in women’s service (198%), home (203%), and travel (286%) categories vs. ads with no URL.
- Track and test, track and test—improve tracking with coupons, new VOIP services, special pricing, landing pages, subscriber surveys, tip-ins, etc.
• Underestimate the power of frequency—it’s a critical campaign success factor.
• Forget to include a strong direct response component to generate leads.
• Fail to hook readers quickly—the average reader glances at a print ad for two seconds with 1.5 devoted to the visual.
• Sacrifice brand visibility for “creativity”—ideally integrate the brand with the visual.
• Choose visuals that generate negative, unintended associations.
• Make people work hard to connect your visuals with your product and brand.
• Wander from your key points.
• Load your ad with meaningless platitudes—“we provide quality service,” etc.
• Forget that a direct response ad needs more copy to explain a product or service.
• Choose an inappropriate format for your message—consider spreads, inserts and advertorials if you need more space.
• Neglect to advance the reader to the next step.
• Limit your advertising to just print or any other single medium—it’s very much a multi-channel world.
Referral Do’s & Don’ts.
Referrals are too valuable to waste. Follow these rules to avoid costly mistakes.

Do

• Provide excellence in products and services.
• Constantly seek better ways to serve your customers.
• Be energetic, enthusiastic and sincere in your business dealings.
• Offer ongoing training and coaching to your customer-contact staff.
• Keep in touch with friends and business colleagues every 30 days.
• Provide referrals to others who deserve them.
• Offer something of value for good customers to offer their contacts.
• Make you and your company a low-risk referral.
• Use business social media to build contacts and referrals.
• Be a good person—it works!

“To get referrals, you need to ask for them. Most people would rather invite a neighbor to attend church with them than ask for a referral.”
• Think you can buy referrals—but be sure to promptly offer your heartfelt thanks and inform the referrer of the outcome.
• Offer an incentive for prospects that you generally make available to the marketplace.
• Underestimate the discomfort many people feel in asking for referrals—find ways to make it easier!
• Snub people in lower positions—they move on to bigger and better things.
• Give referrals solely with the intention of getting them in return.
• Be nice only when you need to be—make it a habit.
• Fail to work at gaining referrals everyday.
• Forget about people who are important to you.
• Lose sight of the customer’s perspective—make referrals beneficial to them and easy to do.
• Think referral programs are built in a day.
Trade Show Do’s & Don’ts.

Trade shows aren’t obligatory events like visiting your in-laws. Show up. Be polite. Try not to check your watch too many times. Nope, with trade shows, you need passion to make them work as well as a good plan and some skills. Here’s how to exceed expectations at your next trade show exhibition.

Do

- Have goals for the show.
- Get buy-in from management.
- Develop a schedule and stick to it.
- Research who will be attending.
- Appoint a booth captain—someone needs to be in charge.
- Pay for better locations—draw an inverted triangle beginning at the entrance and set your priorities accordingly.
- Watch out for columns, they are always bigger than shown.
- Carefully choose the booth staff.
- Select your featured products and services wisely.
- Consider renting a larger space—especially 20' instead of 10'.
- Build a custom and modular booth if you can afford it.
- Train booth staff—then train them some more.
- Develop a lead distribution and follow-up plan.
- Create professional, compelling booth graphics.
- Send a pre-show promotion—include customers and key prospects, not just show registrants.
- Plan meetings with existing customers.
- Offer something for which you would normally charge—survey, assessment, product trial, etc.
- Stage PR events—new product announcements, media briefings, etc.
- Bargain for an even better location next year—start now.
• Exhibit with a half-hearted approach—failure will be self-fulfilled.
• Go in and out of shows based on the economy—if it’s a good show, you’ll benefit from consistent participation.
• Think Rome was built in a day—the exposure you gain may not produce tangible benefits (sales) until long after the show.
• Clutter your booth with excessive numbers of people or products.
• Turn your exhibit into a phone booth—turn off the digital devices and concentrate on the people in front of you.
• Eat lunch, read a book or sit down in your booth—you end up not looking engaged and ready.
• Compete with major show-sponsored events—check schedules before booking customer parties, etc.
• Dress ultra casually just because registrants do—be professional.
• Neglect existing clients for prospects—the best source of new business is always current customers.
• Assume that registrants don’t want to have fun—even if you’re in a “serious” business segment.
• Underestimate the power of show networking.
• Decide that everything you feature has to be the latest and greatest—lots of people new to an industry are still learning.
• Forget to do a post-show analysis.

• Hand out useless junk—make giveaways useful items that represent your business well.
• Try to “capture” people who stop by your booth—it’s not a used car lot.
• Underspend on the premise of saving money—you may be minimizing your returns.
• Display your expensive literature near the front of your booth where folks can snatch and run—set it back further and allow staff to qualify the lead by using the literature as a tool.
• Use the high school science fair look in your booth—a seamless image trumps a zillion little bits of paper velcroed to a fabric wall.
Corporate Brochure Do’s & Don’ts.
Start collecting corporate brochures. Most of them will come in handy when you can’t sleep at night. Here are two-dozen tips for making your brochure reader-friendly, inspiring and persuasive.

- Have an objective for the brochure.
- Develop a creative brief—use it for buy-in as well as a roadmap.
- Integrate your brochure within a larger communications strategy.
- Demonstrate that you understand your audience.
- Consider versioning for major markets—a brochure can’t be everything to everyone.
- Position, position, position.
- Talk about markets, products, services and solutions—show them in use whenever possible.
- Be conversational—you’re building a relationship.
- Say something specific—a 99% customer satisfaction rating means more than a corporate commitment to customer service.
- Develop good captions—one of the most read and recalled copy elements.
- Include contact information on the brochure—ditto for everything that accompanies it.
- Hire a professional proofreader—they’re cheap and can save your butt.
• Assume that no one reads today—people don’t read lousy copy.
• Use corporate-speak, jargon and over-used phrases.
• Make third-person references to your company—this isn’t a term paper; be personal.
• Write in the passive voice or use other complicated verb tenses (hint: helping verbs + past tense of action verb).
• Bore readers with technical content—use charts, graphs and diagrams.
• Assume readers will automatically turn the page—you have to earn their interest at every point in the brochure.
• Overlook the cover as your first opportunity to creatively position your organization.
• Write or design by committee—they’ll suck the life out of the brochure.
• End with a table of contents or corporate overview—there are better uses for your closing page, like suggesting an action step.
• Try to speak to everyone—focus on your key targets.
• Use creative sources that know nothing about your market—you’ll spend all your time getting them up to speed.
• Fail to develop a distribution plan—not everyone who makes an inquiry is a qualified candidate.

One final bit of advice. Develop a schedule and stick to it. Corporate brochures have a tendency to become never-ending projects. If you thought the brochure was important enough to do in the first place, then it’s important enough to do on time.
**A Dozen Direct Mail Do’s & Don’ts.**

*It pays to learn the basics of direct mail, because mistakes are expensive. When you’re investing in lists, copy, creative, printing and postage, you don’t want to blow it. Run your next direct mail campaign against this checklist for better results.*

---

**Do**

- Invest in targeting and learn how different levels of personalization and customization can impact your ROI.
- Consider unique format sizes that conform to postal regulations.
- Use postage stamps as opposed to a printed indicia whenever possible.
- Consider an off-color envelope unless white makes a graphic explode from the paper.
- Emphasize key elements like testimonials, guarantees and order forms.
- Test lists, offers, price points, copy, creative and formats as opposed to trusting your intuition.
- Create a sense of urgency with deadlines, extra incentives, etc.
- Communicate benefits—early, often and clearly.
- Take advantage of the space direct mail gives you to provide vital information—but do it tastefully.
- Commit to a regular mailing schedule—every six weeks for current customers is a good starting point.
- Write copy from a peer-to-peer perspective—especially when approaching top executives.
- Have objectives and calculate return on investment.
• Design the piece and then have the writer fill in the “Greek” copy blocks—strategy, writing and design are most effective when done as a team.
• Think that envelope teaser copy is appropriate for every mailing—you might never get out of the mailroom on B2B mailings.
• Shortchange the amount of time you spend on a cover letter—it’s still the most important component of a direct mail package.
• Buy cheap creative or, worse still, buy creative from any source that does not know direct mail—and we mean really know direct mail.
• Hesitate to pull out all the stops—dimensional mail, express mail, high-value information incentives (white papers, survey results, etc.)—if your audience is senior managers.
• Forget that a good list and a good offer account for 80 percent of your campaign’s success.
• Neglect to create a strong, clear and visually obvious call to action.
• Fail to break up long copy with bullets, graphics, call-outs or plain old white space.
• Make it hard for recipients to purchase or respond—give lots of options.
• Forget to put yourself and several “seeds” on the mailing list.
• Fail to publicize your direct mail campaign—take extras to trade shows, include PR contacts on your mailing list, etc.
• Try to do things internally if you don’t have the skill set.
Do’s and Don’ts of Thought Leadership Building.

Being known as an authoritative resource is powerful in today’s marketplace. The more recognition your company gets, the more powerful it becomes. With so much at stake, it pays not to make missteps in the thought leadership arena. Here’s how to get your strategy off on the right foot.

- Establish goals you can reach—then move on to bigger things.
- Immerse yourself in your professional domain.
- Look for topics that your competition misses.
- Encourage thought leadership development among your staff—thought leadership isn’t a one-person show.
- Search for new things to say and add value through what you offer.
- Be willing to risk rejection in the interests of finding better ways to do things—admit if you’re wrong.
- Keep customer needs at heart—thought leadership shares the selfless characteristics of servant leadership.
- Employ leadership vision—point toward a new future or a change in direction.
- Deliver thought-leadership messaging that is actionable.
- Ensure that ideas are relevant to your peer base—know your audience.
  - Present solutions grounded in experience.
  - Invest in good research.
  - Be fair and balanced in your presentations.
• Confuse being a thought leader with being a pundit.
• Forget that you need to earn the trust of your audience.
• Lose patience—your company won’t establish instant thought-leadership status.
• Fear being a little controversial if you’re making a bold projection—just back up what you’re saying.
• Use a voice that doesn’t match your company’s personality.
• Fail to communicate thought leadership through multiple media—newsletters, by-lined articles, blogs, social media networks, webinars, symposiums, panels, white papers, case studies, surveys, research studies, speaking engagements and road shows.
• Neglect to seek an outside perspective before publishing any thought leadership piece.
• Trip customers’ “BS” meters with your content—demonstrate your desire to help them by being authentic, genuine, generous and accessible.
• Obsess about giving away too much information—you’ll get more benefit from leveraging your knowledge than trying to horde it in today’s fast-moving markets.
• Make thought leadership purely a marketing responsibility.
• Forget that thought leadership still needs to be part of a larger marketing strategy.
• Get sucked into believing that thought leadership requires being big—quickness and agility can be huge advantages.
Do’s and Don’ts of White Papers.

White papers aren’t particularly expensive to create, but that doesn’t mean anyone can just slap one together. They take some careful planning and decision-making to serve as true thought leadership builders. Here’s how to get your white papers off on the right foot.

- Know your audience and focus on their interests.
- Identify problems and concerns and provide a solution.
- Understand that people with different responsibilities view the same problem differently—accounting vs. sales vs. technical people.
- Think of your audience as a group of investors.
- Attract interest immediately or risk losing the reader.
- Assume that your reader is new to the topic.
- Tell people what you’re going to tell them; tell them; and then tell them what you told them.
- Subtly and carefully craft your own message into the white paper—case studies and customer quotes are a good approach.
- Include an executive summary—many people will only read this portion or read it first.
- Use compelling graphics to reinforce your message—charts, diagrams, illustrations, etc.
- Adopt a conversational style that includes the word “you”—no one wants to read a term paper.
- Let your first draft sit for a few days before you begin editing—you’d be surprised how much a little distance can help.
- Identify keywords for Web-hosted white papers before you begin and use them liberally throughout your white paper—load up the opening paragraph.
- Edit, edit and edit again.
• Make your white paper self-serving—no one wants to read dull details about your product or service.
• Forget to read a few white papers in your field—you’ll get a quick sense of the good, the bad and the downright ugly.
• Attempt to write the white paper yourself if you don’t have the depth of knowledge or the writing skills.
• Overwhelm your audience with techspeak and acronyms—offer clear definitions when you do use technical terms.
• Get lost in theory and forget to provide real world, supportive examples.
• Neglect to include a brief About Us section at the end—including telephone and email contact information.
• Task technical people with the writing assignment—make them information sources and members of the editing team instead.
• Make the white paper too long (6–10 pages are about right, but they could be as short as 1–2 pages—break longer topics into multiple publications).
• Write a user’s manual if your white paper is addressing a product or technology solution.
• Skimp on the promotional side—use news releases, email, postcards, social media, etc. to promote your latest white paper.

• Shortchange the introduction, conclusion and executive summary.
• Hesitate to use eye-popping color to attract attention and encourage readership.
• Neglect the title or the look and feel of the white paper—they are two of the key drivers of readership.
• Forget to ask yourself what action you want people to take upon reading your white paper.