

Focus on marketing

Former *Apprentice* contestant and marketing superstar **Kimberly Davis** is back with her second column, showing us how to tell the rip-off merchants from the real deal

The flash, the fluff and the fakers

Here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Have you ever wasted money on marketing that doesn't work?
- Have you been told that marketing is impossible to measure?
- Are you confused about who to trust?

If the answer was yes to any or all of the above, don't worry. You're not alone. In fact, 80% of marketing is wasted!

That means that right now, you are literally throwing money away on products and services you don't need or that yield very little or no results.

Why?

Unfortunately, marketing is not a regulated industry like law or medicine. Absolutely anyone can declare that they are a marketer. Even if they studied marketing, it doesn't mean they know how to apply it.

As a result, the industry has been flooded with cowboys that I refer to as The Flash, Fluff and Fakers™.

FLASH = distracting detail and design that doesn't do anything.

FLUFF = silly marketing jargon that doesn't say anything.

FAKERS = unqualified people or agencies pretending to know or understand marketing.

So how do you know who to trust? Here are my top three tips on how to identify (and avoid) The Flash, Fluff, and Fakers™.

"If a marketing agency tells you that they can't measure results, turn around and walk out the door"

1. BEWARE OF "MARKETING" COMPANIES.

It's scary how many "marketing" agencies don't understand the definition of the word.

I define marketing as: anything and everything that is a representation of the company. It is anything that influences the world's external perception of you.

Marketing is the umbrella. Under it, you will find many specific areas, such as: social media, design and branding, copywriting, PR, advertising,

customer service, promotions and events, merchandising, etc.

When a company mixes an element with the overall term "marketing", it doesn't make sense. A marketing agency looks after all the elements. A specialist agency focuses on one element. You must be one or the other. You cannot be both. For example:

a) Marketing: I run Sarsaparilla Marketing. We analyse your entire marketing programme in order to a) identify and detox out the waste, b) show you how to attract and convert more clients and sales, and c) incorporate systems that allow you to measure results.

b) Specialist: 'ABC is a social media agency that sets up and manages your Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn account so that you can bring in sales from all over the world,' or 'XYZ is a website development agency that will design, construct and host a site that gets your phone ringing off the hook'.

The next time someone tells you, 'We're a design and marketing agency,' RUN the other way.

2. CREATIVITY DOESN'T EQUAL CONVERSIONS.

There's a fine line between marketing and art. Too many people believe that marketing is all about creativity. They think that if they develop something funny or memorable, their sales will skyrocket.





While it's important to stand out and be remembered, the truth is that creativity without function is just art for art's sake. Just because someone remembers you, it does not mean they will buy from you.

Remember the 'Wuuuz uuuup?' ads from Budweiser in the 90s? You couldn't walk down the street without hearing someone use the phrase. Yet Budweiser lost a whopping 15% in revenue over the three years it ran.

How many times do you remember an advert but not what product it was for? You must have creativity AND function in order to achieve success.

3. MEASURE, MEASURE, MEASURE. If a marketing agency tells you that they can't

measure results, turn around and walk out the door. There are dozens of ways in which you can measure marketing. And if an agency doesn't know them, or isn't prepared to implement them, then it's a sure sign that you're dealing with a cowboy.

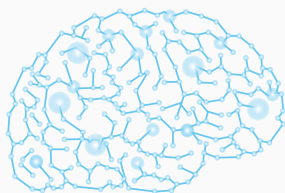
Measuring marketing can be something as simple as asking callers 'How did you hear about us?', through to heavy duty tools, which will seem like 007 is spying on your prospective clients.

You won't always make the right decisions every time, which is why measurement is so important. If you can identify a mistake shortly after it's made, you can rectify it, get moving on the right path again and minimise the damage. Likewise, if you do something right, you

can identify it and invest more money into that activity thereby increasing your profits. Measure, measure, measure.

You don't need to know everything about marketing, but you do need to understand how to make it work. Marketing should be an investment, with clear return on investment, not an expense.

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