

## **EXPLORE THE STRATEGY OF INDUSTRIAL MARKETING**

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Consider the differences between a candy store selling a chocolate bar to a single customer, and a chocolate manufacturer selling thousands of chocolate bars to a single candy store. While selling candy to an individual customer might rely on salesmanship and knowledge about individual tastes and cravings, selling candy to a store takes more than attractive packaging. Rather, the manufacturer must ensure a safe, profitable agreement between the two organizations. The manufacturer will market the quality, cost, and customer appeal of its chocolate bars to convince the candy store it will have an easy time selling them.

What is industrial Marketing?

Industrial marketing, also known as business-to-business (B2B) marketing, is a branch of communications and sales that specializes in providing goods and services to other businesses, rather than to individual customers. Because industrial marketing often involves large orders and long-term relationships between the producer and client, the process from first pitch to close of sale is often more complex than the process between a business and a private customer. While B2C sales might focus on one-on-one interactions between two parties, businesses are usually made up of a number of individuals. Before the product appears on the other store's shelves, the two businesses must reach a deal that will involve the manufacture, purchase, and shipping of thousands of products.

Many companies create and market products that have little to no application on the level of the individual customer, so their only clients will be other businesses. A company that makes large-scale manufacturing machinery, for example, is either unlikely or unable to sell that machinery to private individuals because those customers are unlikely to be able to afford it or won't need equipment of such size. The machinery would have to be sold to another business that has both the resources and need to produce large quantities of their own product, such as a mass-market toy factory that needs to create one million units of the same toy each year.

Many consumer product companies develop special marketing divisions specifically for B2B clients. Furniture manufacturers often do this, opening up their tables, chairs, and couches to businesses that may want them for their corporate offices. This typically happens when the manufacturer's business grows to a large enough scale to accommodate larger orders. Service providers also occasionally expand to industrial clients to take advantage of more lucrative contracts. A legal practice specializing in contract law, for instance, could expand its scope from representing only individuals to helping businesses develop their own contracts.

**Industrial Marketing Strategies**

Industrial marketing is an intricate process that occurs at many stages. It can involve a wide variety of marketing strategies, such as:

- Informational websites with language directed at other businesses
- Personalized presentations to the management staff of potential clients
- Product samples to demonstrate confidence in the quality of the product
- Online videos displaying products and sales staff

The first step in developing an industrial marketing plan is the same as developing any kind of marketing plan: identify the customer. The producer must understand what kinds of businesses would benefit from the product. This creates a foundation and focus for the rest of the marketing plan. Next, the producer needs to tailor their introduction to prospective clients. Though old-fashioned, face-to-face networking is alive and well in the business-to-business world, it is increasingly important to have a strong online presence. Potential clients will always research a company before negotiating a sale of its product. A website with detailed but not overly specific content about the company and its products serves as a great introduction.

In our previous example of the chocolate bar manufacturer, they might create an aesthetically pleasing, well-written website talking about their company's history and the candy they produce. They would then augment the effectiveness of the website by adding a regularly updated blog about new products, or post on social networks informing users about the locations where they can buy their chocolate.

Once a potential client is interested in the product, the producer should shift focus from the general introduction of its web presence to more personalized meetings and presentations. Even if the client isn't ready to sign a contract right away, getting to know them with professional, non-pushy contact can be of great benefit.

Communication with potential clients through email, phone conversations, and in-person presentations helps nurture the business relationship. Professionals at the chocolate manufacturer might send product samples with personalized notes to develop a strong impression ahead of a business meeting.

Once the client is ready to discuss the details of a contract, the marketing phase is nearly over. The focus of all materials for this specific client should shift to maintaining a good working relationship. The chocolate manufacturer should have a solid plan with its accounts managers for how to compose emails and conduct phone conversations with representatives of the candy store, as well as how to inform them about new products. Because the store is no longer a new client, all communications should be customized to their specific experience with the producer.

### 21st Century Industrial Marketing

In 2009, the fencing company Louis E. Page decided to launch a blog with tips and tricks for using iron fence material in creative ways. According to the Windmill Networking consultancy firm, LEP's dedication to good, targeted content got them thousands of page views and opened up opportunities with a new generation of industrial clients after more than 200 years in the business.

## References

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