



AMi eNewsletter

Supporting Marketing with Impact

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Whether you love them, hate them, or don't even realize they're there, community carnivals provide a good opportunity to re-evaluate our own marketing efforts and the impact they have on our market.



Half the P's, All the Fun: Lessons from a Community Carnival

When you first walk through a community carnival or fair you may only see the bounce house that looks like it hasn't seen soap or disinfectant since 2006. Or the field of glass dishes waiting to be won in dime toss. Or the \$8 hamburger.

But if you look closer, you'll see the magic of marketing principles working around you. We're not talking about place or promotion. Without distribution channels or warehouses--only interstates and backroads -- to deal with, carnivals put themselves right in the midst of their markets. And promotion? Most rely on local business support, community signs, and word-of-mouth to keep their events well attended.

No, we're talking about the other two P's of marketing: product and price. Carnivals handle both well and provide a good excuse to examine your own management of the two.



The Product Principle:
More than Just a Thing

While you're focusing on selling the latest technology or promising the best service, carnivals sell one thing: fun. An experience. A limited-time opportunity to enjoy a time-honored summer tradition. And although you may not trust the temporary base on the Tilt-a-Whirl and your nutritionist may not approve of that deep-fried Oreo, you know that the carnival offers you something you can't easily access every day: the excitement of a tower drop. The taste of sugar-dusted funnel cakes. The pride of winning that 5-foot Jamaican banana. Carnivals sell fun, and thousands of people are buying.

Carnivals understand that a product has to do more than just fulfill a need. It also has to provide value. It has to provide an experience that's different. You could spend all evening glued to your electronics, or you could get outside, mingle with your community, and enjoy the festivities at the fair. Likewise, you want your customers to look at your product or service as more than just an item to check off a list. You want them to see the company behind the product. You want them to feel immersed in an experience that they'll want to repeat. The personalized and responsive customer service. The exceptional detail or quality of your goods. The reliable regularity of your services. The convenience of your complementary offers. The way they feel after they've interacted with your company.



The Price Principle:
Overcoming Adversity

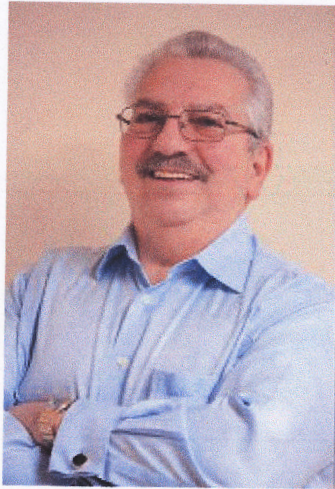
But not all good experiences come cheaply. We'll be the first to admit that carnivals can get a little expensive. With individual rides easily costing \$4 or more per child, games starting at \$5 or more, and concessions galore, carnival night--at least for families--is a small financial investment.

So why do people do it? For starters, carnivals offer exclusivity. After all, they come around only once a year. If you miss it, you have to wait until the next summer to get in on the fun. For the smart planners, there's also advanced-purchase tickets, which attendees can buy at reduced prices prior to the start of the event. Both factors make the cost of carnival attendance more digestible.

How do you help customers overcome any cost concerns? Are you giving them the exclusivity they're looking for? Do you occasionally offer fantastic deals to draw them in? If you're not getting the response that you used to, or if your customer list is slowly shrinking, you may need to re-evaluate your pricing strategy. Maybe the features or benefits that once set you apart from your competitors are no longer unique. Maybe the great discounts or special packages you cut from your offers are making a bigger (negative) impact than you predicted.

No matter what your industry or your product, you need to be able to justify your price to survive.

It's only when everything comes together that the celebration begins.



Don't Forget the Food

We dare say you'll never attend a carnival or fair that doesn't sell food. Food attracts and keeps people at the event.

What keeps your market around? Flashy graphics? An unbelievable offer? Convincing copy? All of those certainly make a difference. But even more important: easy-to-find contact information. Without it, clients don't know where to call, prospects can't find your website to peruse, and donors don't have a physical address to mail donations to.

*Very truly yours,
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