



# Marketing is a Profit Center

## Diversify your plan.

*By Thaddeus B. Kubis, NAK Integrated Marketing  
Marine Marketers of America*

Recent data presented to the Marine Marketers of America indicates that the marine market, like many other consumer and business-to-business markets, has developed into a series of highly specialized segments.

In the past it was a basic understanding that power and sail ate from two different plates. Yet today the demographic and psychographic segmentation has increased to a point that not only the type of boat used but also the size and region that it's used in are now defining points and potential marketing demographics. Additional complexity is added to the marketing formula when one looks to regional and use patterns of these new segments.

What does this new data have to do with us as marine marketers? Well, it should make us all realize that marketing plans that focus only on offline media, will not provide the sales base needed to survive.

A marketer needs to address the segments and, using the latest in digital print technology, linked with leading media outlets (magazines and traditional offline media) must provide a cross media and multi-dimensional marketing strategy. Personalization, versioning, data base management, along with Web 3.0 technology (social networking marketing, mobile marketing are coming of age) must be contained within any marketing plan. Not only to generate viable and active leads but to reduce marketing cost while increasing the return on investment of any program.

Aggressive programs tied to existing customers (vertical, horizontal, upselling or add-on purchasing) must become part of the mix. Past program results and responses need to be data mined and surveyed to determine if they are potential sales. The marketer must build a valid business case that provides the lowest cost per lead, linked to an after lead program to convert that lead into a sale and an after-sales effort to keep that customer happy.

Reduction of a marketing budget is the extreme, but is the common response.

What is needed is a shifting from high-cost media to targeted and focused programs that measure results online and immediately determine the success or failure of a program. The need to examine data in real time, say prior to a show or just after one can only be handled effectively online, linked to your web site and to your sales, dealer or distribution network.

An old adage, is that a firm that maintains or increases its marketing budget during an economic downturn will increase its market share, research has proven this to be correct.

Versioning, variable data printing, personalization, linked to an aggressive marketing effort are proven tools in the sales of high end items, traditional direct mail results are under 1 percent, yet personalized direct mail linked to a website are sailing in at 4.5 percent and higher. The more you personalize the higher the response.

Cutting the budget may be the knee jerk response, but the money spend down the line to rebuild the market share loss (some say you can never gain the market back) will in many cases add to your marketing budget without adding to the lead to conversion factor.

The smart money goes with a plan to allocate marketing dollars with a business case and plan in hand. No one wishes to waste money, it is so hard to come by, but today one must measure the cost against the return and start the plan with a profit-generating response rate in hand.

No one wishes to waste money, it is so hard to come by, but today one must measure the cost against the return and start the plan with a profit-generating response rate in hand.

*Thaddeus B. Kubis is president of NAK Integrated Marketing. He can be reached at [Thad@nakinc.com](mailto:Thad@nakinc.com), 917/597-1891 or [www.nakinc.com](http://www.nakinc.com).*