

4. Referrals

One of the best ways to gain more customers and reinforce brand awareness is through referrals or personal recommendations. This can be helped by having innovative products and by great customer service (and account management if you are selling B2B). From a supplier's point of view, there is nothing better than someone you know telling you how good a particular product or service is. It's an endorsement which is easy to relate to and can make purchasing decisions easier.

It can influence a potential new buyer because someone they know has taken the risk to buy. This, to some extent, lessens any fears they might have about the product not working or not being of the quality or value they expected.

5. Social media

Social media can help you to build your brand by promoting the following areas:

- To help communicate trends to potential buyers
- To measure statistics to inform
- To encourage interaction and involvement with your products and services
- As a way of advertising the brand
- To communicate knowledge and up-to-date relevant information
- To promote a unique brand identity which articulates Unique Selling Points (USPs)

Social media can also help to develop a potential buyer's thinking from 'interest to commitment', from 'sceptic to believer' and from liking to 'defending your brand'. This is a powerful way of helping to create and maintain brand awareness. Customer loyalty is covered

in more detail in *Chapter 3, Changes that impact on the customer experience*.

6. Direct forms of marketing

Communicating your brand directly through digital and traditional methods to potential customers is another positive way of developing the early stages of brand awareness.

Making a connection

When you are looking at ways to create brand awareness, you need to take into account factors like price and the features of a product because the brand needs to be trusted and well liked. You should also look at five key drivers:

1. Awareness
2. Differentiation
3. Value
4. Accessibility (to your products and services)
5. An emotional connection

This can be illustrated in the following way:

THE KEY DRIVERS OF BRAND AWARENESS



An emotional connection with a brand is perhaps the most important element as it fulfils a customer's needs beyond a level where loyalty is always logical. It is often not transient because a genuine attachment to the product or service takes place.

KEY QUESTIONS

- What categories of the TOMA model do your brands fit into?
- How do you promote brand awareness?
- How do you measure your company's brand awareness, recall and recognition?

Chapter summary

Digital marketing has dramatically changed the way in which marketers communicate with their target audience. Companies are better able to reach potential customers through a number of different platforms and channels. This creates greater opportunities to increase awareness, bringing buyer and seller closer and on a mutually beneficial path. It has also led to a much greater amount of customer choice.

Digital marketing has changed how companies plan and execute their marketing campaigns. It has enabled smaller companies to compete in a way which wasn't possible before. This has involved using marketing to build a brand which incorporates social media and digital platforms. It helps to promote value in order to try and make potential customers remember a brand and want to use it. This gives companies a better chance to achieve growth and increase selling opportunities.

Checklist

- ✓ Look at how different types of digital marketing can help you
- ✓ Identify the components you need to successfully build your brand
- ✓ Think about what you need to do to keep your customers loyal
- ✓ Keep up to date with the changes taking place in your market (blogs, newsletters)

