



U.S. Channels  
Marketing

# Cisco Marketing Fundamentals





# Cisco Marketing Fundamentals

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## Introduction

Marketing is all about generating demand for your offerings by convincing your prospects and customers that you can solve their unique business problems. It sounds simple enough. However, an effective marketing program requires you to understand the different ways to reach your target audience, their individual strengths and weaknesses, and how to make them work together to be most cost-effective.

At Cisco, we are committed to empowering our Business Partners to succeed by helping you develop stronger sales and marketing programs. That is why we have created these Marketing Fundamentals. Each of these documents provides you with an overview of an individual marketing tactic. It's a "Marketing 101" approach designed to give you no-nonsense information that will help you quickly put these concepts into action. And if you are already an experienced marketer, you will find one or two tips to punch up your efforts.

Within every Marketing Fundamentals sheet, you will find:

- A brief definition of the topic and why it is important for you
- How to use the marketing tactic to improve awareness, lead generation or retention
- A hot tip to help you get greater value from the individual marketing tactic
- A worksheet or checklist you can use in your planning
- Resources for more information and insight

Our goal is to give you information that can help your company develop practical marketing expertise. We look forward to working with you to grow your business.

Good luck and good selling,

U.S. Channels Marketing Team





## Advertising

### Can You Profit from Advertising?

#### What is advertising?

Advertising brings attention to your business and your services through paid announcements or placements in a range of different media and settings.

#### Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?

Effective ads boost awareness of your company and increase your chances of getting your foot in a prospect's door—or of getting a prospect to contact you.

From running a classified to creating a full-scale television campaign, advertising lets you build awareness of your company. However, advertising is complex; to make it work you need to place the right message in the right medium at the right time.

When it does work, an ad campaign increases recognition of your company and its services, or even better, gets a prospect to contact you to learn about your offerings. The downside? It can be expensive and time-consuming, and there is no guarantee your message will be heard.

Follow these guidelines to select the media for your ad campaign:

#### Newspapers and magazines

Targeted newspaper and magazine ads can be effective brand builders and acquisition tools. The first step is to select publications that your customers are likely to read—for example, your local newspaper may have a monthly or quarterly technology section. Look at special interest publications as well, such as your area's business journal, a trade magazine, or industry newspaper. Costs for print ads vary based on size of the ad, the publication's circulation, your position in the publication, and the frequency with which you advertise.

#### Radio

Radio can be used to deliver a simple message to your target audience. Choose the type of station to advertise on based on your target market—technology ads are often most credible on an all-news station (especially matched to the business report), an all-sports station, or business/finance-oriented talk radio. Time of day is also a key decision. With B2B advertising, morning or afternoon drive time is best since you reach decision-makers during their daily commute.

Overwhelmed by the thought of developing an advertising campaign? A good ad agency does not have to be expensive, and can bring tremendous expertise to your selection of the media to place your ads in, the message to develop, the number and frequency of your ads, and much more.

### Television (TV)

TV offers a unique combination of audio and visual impact and audience reach. In general, local cable advertising is both the least expensive and most highly targeted way to use this medium. Many cable providers offer local advertisers packages on different but related channels such as business and finance, sports, and news.

### Yellow Pages

A surprising number of businesses still rely on the Yellow Pages to locate vendors. As a general rule, you get listings in both the print and online directories. Consider purchasing a display ad for impact; if your competitors advertise there as well, your ad should be at least the same size.

### Sponsorships

Professional and business organizations frequently offer a range of partnership opportunities that can let you reach a highly targeted audience. This may include sponsoring an event (such as a monthly user group meeting or annual awards gala), which allows you to promote your business through signage, handouts, an ad in the program and a prominent mention during a presentation.

### Outdoor

Billboards are an often overlooked medium, but can be cost-effective to get a very simple message—probably not more than your company name, a brief benefit, your phone number, and website address—to a large number of prospects. Likewise, the sign outside your office and the vehicles your staff drives for you all can be used to boost your visibility.

### Collateral and giveaways

From business cards to brochures and beyond, collateral materials are an excellent way to make an impression. And do not forget about giveaways—pens, mousepads, stress-balls and other tchotchkes that are kept on a desk can keep your company top-of-mind with customers and prospects.

## Elements of a Good Ad Campaign

When it comes to creating your advertising message, stick to these guidelines:

### Stick to one message

Communicate your core benefit in three seconds or less (“Your Data May be At Risk”) to get a response.

### Be credible

If a customer does not perceive a claim in your ad as the truth, you have wasted your money.

### Be consistent

Your message, your look and your brand must remain consistent across all media—print, broadcast, direct mail, signage, etc.

### Be easy to contact

In a print ad, make your phone number and web address prominent. On radio or TV, repeat this information so it sinks in. If you can, select a very easy-to-remember 800 number or URL.

## Cisco Marketing Resources

### Campaign Builder

Create customizable e-mail blasts, post-cards, ads, flyers, and more to build customer awareness, while reducing time-to-market and overall costs.

[www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder/](http://www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder/)

### Partner Marketing Services:

[www.cisco.com/go/partner-marketing](http://www.cisco.com/go/partner-marketing)

- Radio Advertising: Pre-produced radio spots ready for you to customize.
- Print Advertising: Pre-produced print advertising ready for you to customize.
- On-Hold Messages: Fully produced, ready to use messages on hold. Just download the audio files and port into your phone system.

## Generate interest, not sales

Because network equipment sales are generally complex, do not expect your ads to close deals. Instead, your offer ("call for a free security study today") should be aimed at generating leads for your sales force to convert to customers.

## Test, refine, test again

Test all aspects of your ad of your ad to make sure you are getting the best possible response. Track individual ads through offer codes or special phone extensions or URLs; at the very least be sure to ask callers how they heard of your business.

## Advertising Resources

### Locating Ad Agencies

If you want help developing ads, you can find an agency through:

- American Association of Advertising Agencies, [www.aaaa.org](http://www.aaaa.org)
- Agency ComPile, [www.agencycompile.com](http://www.agencycompile.com)

### Publications

These magazines cover the advertising industry:

- Advertising Age, [www.adage.com](http://www.adage.com)
- Adweek, [www.adweek.com](http://www.adweek.com)
- Brandweek, [www.brandweek.com](http://www.brandweek.com)

### Ad Rates

Find out about ad rates and media planning information:

- Standard Rate & Data Service, [www.srds.com](http://www.srds.com)





## Case Studies

### Developing Effective Case Studies

#### **What are case studies?**

A case study is a profile of how you solved a client's business problem.

#### **Why are they important for Cisco Business Partners?**

Real-world examples of your company's successes are effective sales tools because they help prospects envision themselves getting a similar result from your services. Case studies build your organization's credibility by presenting your customers' first-hand experiences.

Consider multimedia case studies. You can turn a client phone interview into a podcast, or set up a video interview where a client can share their experiences firsthand.

Case studies that demonstrate how you have met your customers' needs are powerful sales tools because they give potential clients confidence in your capabilities. Prospects can see how you solved a business problem that they may have.

Case studies can be an effective complement to many of your other marketing programs. Print them for trade shows. Incorporate them into sales presentations. Put them on your website. Pitch them to the press. Build them into your educational seminars and events. It is effort well spent.

At first glance, writing a winning case study may appear easy. But even many professional writers have trouble crafting them effectively. Use these techniques to develop winning case studies:

#### **Focus on problem solving**

The best format for a case study is "problem, solution, benefits." Clearly define the business issue the customer faced, how your company solved it, and the specific benefits the customer received. Try to cover only one issue and solution per case study: this helps readers understand the results most clearly.

**Involve your client**

Customer cooperation is essential, and the input they provide will enhance the success of your story. Get their permission before drafting the case study, and be sure to get their approval of your draft. If you can, get quotes from a high-level manager or executive who made the buying decision or participated in the implementation: the success of the project also recognizes that they did their job well. When you are done, thank the client with a framed or laminated copy.

**Use a template**

If you will have more than one case study, use a standard template to make them easy to read. Focus on the important elements of problem, solution, and benefits, and consider breaking out critical information—such as the client profile—in a summary that readers can take in at a glance. A consistent look and feel also makes your case studies appear visually united, which is especially important if they are together on your website or in a handout.

**Tell a story**

Try to avoid a simple recitation of facts and figures. Instead, use a narrative to engage and connect with readers. Create scenarios that are likely to mirror the experiences of your target customers.

**Quantify results**

Measurable benefits are the most powerful part of a case study. Look for ways to say a customer saved X amount of money or increased productivity by Y percent. Profitable results are the most compelling, but may be hardest to come by since customers may not want to divulge specific figures.

**Use images**

Graphs and schematics are often more persuasive than text for communicating complex ideas. Photos help readers connect by humanizing the story.

**Vary your topics**

Your case study library should include examples of each industry you work with as well as the different solutions you can provide. This way you can deliver information that is tailored to a prospect's specific needs.

**Case Study Development Checklist**

Your answers to these ten questions will help you create a successful case study:

1. Who is the client? Provide a brief overview of key details (location, industry, number of employees, years in business, number of locations, etc.)

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2. Who is your contact at the client (including their title), and is this person open to a case study?

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3. What problem did this company face?

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4. How did the company attempt to solve the problem previously?

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5. How did the client make the decision to use your services?

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6. How did your solution resolve the business issue for your client?

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7. How was your solution unique? What did you offer that competitors didn't?

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8. What was the client's reaction to your solution?

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9. What concrete results has the client recorded (i.e. time saved, dollars saved, productivity increased, etc.)? In addition to the post-installation results, did the installation go particularly well?

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10. Which client personnel can you quote? What images can you use?

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**Cisco Case Study Resources**

Please contact your local Channel Account Manager and copy the Cisco channel public relations team at [channels-pr@cisco.com](mailto:channels-pr@cisco.com) with any public relations questions.

**Resources****Case-study Resources****Reading case studies**

One of the best ways to learn how to write a case study is to read them. These sites regularly publish technology-related success stories and white papers:

- Bnet, [www.bnet.com](http://www.bnet.com)
- KnowledgeStorm, [www.knowledgestorm.com](http://www.knowledgestorm.com)
- Tech Target, [www.techtarget.com](http://www.techtarget.com)

**Finding writers**

If you don't have top-notch writing talent on your staff, you might want to hire an experienced case study specialist. These online directories can help:

- eLance, [www.elance.com](http://www.elance.com)
- International Association of Business Communicators, [www.iabc.com](http://www.iabc.com)
- Media Bistro, [www.mediabistro.com](http://www.mediabistro.com)
- National Writers Union, [www.nwu.org](http://www.nwu.org)



## Database Marketing

### The Value of Your Database

#### What is database marketing?

Database marketing involves collecting and storing customer and prospect information, and using it for more effective outreach.

#### Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?

A detailed, accurate marketing database lets you segment your audience more precisely so you can provide a more relevant, customized message. It helps you track your contact and sales history, and manage ongoing customer relationships more effectively.

By some measures, your company's list of customers and prospects is your most valuable asset. But you can make it even more valuable by implementing some basic database marketing practices.

Database marketing consists of a central repository of information on your customers and prospects; the analysis of that data to determine how, why and what your customers buy from you; and the development of tailored messages to those customers and prospects. The ultimate objective is to create the appearance of "one-to-one" marketing, where you use your data to develop personalized campaigns based on each individual customer or prospect's needs.

#### Assembling your database

The first step for some businesses will be to create or refine their database. If you are currently keeping customer data in a spreadsheet or Outlook file (or on sticky notes), it is time to transfer it to a more powerful tool. You can hire a database manager to build and maintain a customized database: however, most companies prefer the convenience of a packaged solution. These run the gamut from basic contact management solutions (Goldmine, ACT!) to salesforce management applications (Salesforce.com, SalesLogix) to full-featured customer relationship management solutions (SAP, Siebel).

The application you choose depends in part on the kinds of information you will track, as well as the number and location of employees accessing the application, and the integration you prefer with your other applications such as inventory management and finance.

Test your marketing message by tracking the effectiveness of your campaigns with different segments. Use this information to refine your communications and improve your results.

### Maintaining your database

Keeping information detailed and current is essential to effective database marketing. All customer interactions should be recorded so the information can be used and analyzed. Sources for this data will include your sales force and your service engineers, as well as other customer-facing employees such as call center representatives or even your receivables department. Some of these constituencies may be used to being proprietary about this data, so you may need to retrain them to put it in a centralized location.

Remember, your marketing database is only as good as the information that goes into it. Make sure that all relevant employees are committed to updating it continually; many marketing database projects have foundered because of lack of companywide buy-in.

### Segmenting your market

Identifying market segments can be the most challenging part of database marketing. Each segment needs to be large enough, in terms of potential sales, to justify a custom marketing strategy, but not so large that there are too many sub-segments that need individualized attention. Some typical methods of segmentation include:

- **Profitability:** This metric allows you to focus your marketing and sales on prospects that match the profile of your most profitable customers.
- **Demographics:** You can tailor your marketing messages by industry or company size.
- **Purchasing responsibility:** You can customize your message to the concerns of different roles in the purchase decision cycle. For example, C-level executives may want business benefits, the IT manager may be more interested in technology specifications.
- **Past purchases:** You can tailor your offers based on cross-sell and up-sell opportunities.

### Fields for Your Database

Here are some essential fields for your marketing database:

**Contact information:** Start with the basics—name, company, title, location, phone, fax, and email.

**Role:** More important than title, figure out what role this person plays in the buying decision. For instance, it could be influencer, researcher, recommender, or actual decision maker.

**Industry:** Identify industries by NAICS or SIC codes.

**Relationship:** Is this company a current customer, former customer, hot prospect, or cool prospect?

**Buying history:** Record the products and services the client has previously bought from you. Ideally, this will include products that are still active and those that have been retired.

**Buying cycle:** If possible, determine how quickly the company makes buying decisions and who is involved.

**Other solutions:** You may want to segment your prospects based on the technology, vendors, or solutions they currently use.

**Prior contact:** What marketing materials has this customer or prospect received? Which did they react to? When they have interacted with your personnel, what issues have they raised, and how were they addressed?

**Cisco Database-Marketing Resources****Co-Branded CPI**

A tool that enables Partners to create and distribute their own customized newsletters for end customers.

[www.cisco.com/go/cpi](http://www.cisco.com/go/cpi)

**Database-Marketing Resources****Books**

To look at database marketing from a technical and marketing point of view:

- *The One to One Future: Building Relationships One Customer at a Time*, Don Peppers and Martha Rogers
- *Optimal Database Marketing: Strategy, Development and Data Mining*, Ronald G. Drozdenko and Perry D. Drake
- *Strategic Database Marketing: The Masterplan for Starting and Managing a Profitable Customer-Based Marketing Program*, Arthur M. Hughes

**Database-marketing software**

Vendors of sales and marketing database solutions include:

- ACT!, [www.act.com](http://www.act.com)
- Goldmine, [www.goldmine.com](http://www.goldmine.com)
- Salesforce.com, [www.salesforce.com](http://www.salesforce.com)
- SalesLogix, [www.saleslogix.com](http://www.saleslogix.com)
- SAP, [www.sap.com](http://www.sap.com)
- Siebel, [www.oracle.com/siebel](http://www.oracle.com/siebel)

**Websites and blogs**

These websites offer advice and tips on database marketing:

- B2B Marketing Blog, [www.extraprise.blogspot.com](http://www.extraprise.blogspot.com)
- CRM Magazine, [www.destinationcrm.com](http://www.destinationcrm.com)
- Database Marketing Institute, [www.dbmarketing.com](http://www.dbmarketing.com)
- Sales and Marketing Magazine, [www.salesandmarketing.com](http://www.salesandmarketing.com)





## Demand Generation

### Generating Demand for Your Services

#### What is demand generation?

Demand generation means obtaining leads for your sales team.

#### Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?

An effective demand-generation campaign delivers qualified leads you can convert into profitable new customers.

Demand generation is where marketing meets sales. It is the process by which you locate qualified leads for your sales team to convert to customers.

While many demand-generation efforts use a single tactic such as telemarketing or direct mail, demand generation works best when you integrate multiple marketing tactics. For example, you might first invite a prospect to an event using an email, then a direct mail letter, then a post card, and then an additional email. Integrated campaigns can be significantly more effective than “one-shot” campaigns such as a direct mail piece alone.

Use these tips to develop an effective demand-generation program:

#### Identify your target

Who, precisely, is the person you want to reach? What is their title, the size of the company they work for, their industry, and their location? Is there one person in a given organization that you want to reach, or do you need to contact multiple people within a company? The more precisely you can identify your audience, the better you can determine how to reach them.

#### Know your goal

Since the sales process for networking products can be complex, the point of a demand-generation campaign is not usually to make a sale, but to get a prospect to self-identify. Define how you want your prospects to take action. For example, do you want them to call you, visit your website, mail back a reply card, or take some other action? Your goal should be central to the media you select and the message you convey.

Be sure your sales team has seen your ad or letter before it goes out. They should be prepared to answer the questions that your campaign generates, and to provide whatever you've offered—whether it's to register for a seminar or event, to schedule a meeting, or even to sell some gear. If you're directing respondents to a web page, make sure the page is consistent with whatever your prospects have seen from you.

### Select your media

Think carefully about the most cost-effective way to reach your audience. The ideal format lets you quickly and cost-effectively reach all of the individuals you want—and only the individuals you want. Direct marketing can be very targeted, but may miss attractive candidates that broadcast media such as radio or television can reach. Conversely, broadcast media may bring you lots of unqualified “lookers” who may take up your sales teams’ valuable time.

### Make a compelling offer

Industry experts estimate that the direct marketing offer generates 40 percent of your campaign’s overall response. Make your offer as compelling as you possibly can, and motivate action by setting a deadline. Your offer doesn’t have to be a discount: it can simply be a free seminar or white paper, or a complementary network assessment.

### Treat prospects like peers

To engage your prospect, tell them clearly how you will solve their business problems. Present business benefits such as ROI, productivity improvements, increased revenue, or cost savings. Do not use IT jargon, acronyms or other “insider” language that your prospect may not understand.

### Be prepared for responses

There’s nothing worse than a too-successful campaign that generates so many calls that qualified prospects are turned off by long periods on hold or a sluggish website. So be sure to match your outreach with your company’s ability to handle responses, for example, through limited initial tests of your campaign.

## Getting Past Objections

Telemarketing may seem old fashioned in these days of blogs and Webcasts, but it remains the foundation of many company’s sales efforts—and for good reason. Telemarketing is targeted, inexpensive, and allows you to tailor your message to your prospects’ needs. However, effective telemarketing requires you to be prepared to overcome common objections. It is a good idea to rehearse your answers, or to have examples or statistics to make your case. Here are some possible responses to common objections:

#### **Objection: “We’re not interested.”**

Response: It is fair to say, “Do you mind if I ask why?” to determine the reason for a refusal. Your goal is to determine whether it is a sincere objection—in which case you should respect it—or not. For example, if the response is “We don’t have time right now,” you might counter with “When would be a good time to continue our conversation?” This can move you from losing an opportunity to simply postponing one.

#### **Objection: “Send me a package and I will call you.”**

Response: Ask for the prospect’s top two or three goals so you can tailor the package accordingly. Also suggest taking a to-do off the prospect’s list by following up yourself (and ask for a timeframe for that call).

#### **Objection: “We are already working with someone else.”**

This objection is often legitimate and may mean it is time to move on to your next prospect. However, before you do, offer a few reasons why companies like theirs have benefited from working with you, and ask if your prospect is open to seeing if you can provide a better product or better service. If they still say no, then ask if you can subscribe them to your newsletter, or if you can check back in a few months.

## Demand-Generation Resources

### Publications

These marketing publications have information on and resources for business-to-business lead generation:

- B2B Marketing, [www.btobonline.com](http://www.btobonline.com)
- Colloquy, [www.colloquy.com](http://www.colloquy.com)
- Target Marketing, [www.targetmarketingmag.com](http://www.targetmarketingmag.com)

### Websites

These sites have a wealth of articles and tips on demand-generation tactics:

- Brian Carroll's B2B Lead Generation Blog, [blog.startwithalead.com](http://blog.startwithalead.com)
- Go To Market Strategies, [www.gotomarketstrategies.com](http://www.gotomarketstrategies.com)
- MarketingProfs, [www.marketingprofs.com](http://www.marketingprofs.com)

## Cisco Demand-Generation Resources

### Partner Marketing Services

Introduces you to third-party vendors—experts in their marketing disciplines and in Cisco standards. Drives partner revenue through high-impact, Partner-led marketing campaigns. [www.cisco.com/go/partner-marketing](http://www.cisco.com/go/partner-marketing)

**Print and radio advertising:** Pre-produced, Partner-led templates for you to drop in your unique value proposition for Unified Communication, security, and wireless.

**On-hold messages:** 30-second, pre-recorded spots for Unified Communication, security, and wireless—ready to be downloaded and ported into your phone system.

**Direct marketing and event planning:** the Cisco Partner Marketing and Event Resource Center (PMERC) assists with every aspect of direct marketing campaigns and events.

**Tradeshow booth rental:** an easy-to-use and comprehensive ordering system for all your tradeshow exhibit needs.

**Partner banners:** high-quality banners (customizable with your partner certification logo and company logo) are an excellent way to augment your presence at events like trade-shows and customer briefings, and even a great way to dress up your offices.

### Campaign Builder

A tool that lets you customize e-mails, postcards, ads, flyers, and more to build customer awareness while reducing time-to-market and overall costs. [www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder](http://www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder)

### CPI co-branded

Leverage the power of e-newsletters to communicate with your customers. The CPI co-branded tool allows you to quickly build a customized newsletter and track detail metrics on readership. [www.cisco.com/go/cpi](http://www.cisco.com/go/cpi)

### Cisco Interaction Network (CIN)

Weekly Internet broadcasts you can invite end customers to participate in. Broadcasts include various business and technology topics. [www.cisco.com/go/cin](http://www.cisco.com/go/cin)

### NOW Van

The Cisco NOW Van is a 25-foot mobile demonstration van equipped with the latest Cisco networking technologies. The NOW Van contains equipment and facilities to conduct onsite technical demonstrations of key networking solutions for the commercial market. [www.cisco.com/web/partners/sell/smb/resources/now\\_van.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/partners/sell/smb/resources/now_van.html)

### Secure WAN program

Build your security business with existing customers through advanced security. [www.cisco.com/go/partner-securewan](http://www.cisco.com/go/partner-securewan)

### Corner Café

Promotes the Unified Communication solution in a creative format. [www.cornercafe.net/salientstatic/intro.php](http://www.cornercafe.net/salientstatic/intro.php)

### ARM

Arm yourself and your organization with valuable Cisco services training and marketing tools. [www.cisco.com/go/arm-yourself](http://www.cisco.com/go/arm-yourself)





## Event Marketing

### What is event marketing?

Event marketing is the process of promoting your business through live activities such as seminars, company-sponsored meetings, trade shows, and other sessions.

### Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?

Events are high-impact ways to demonstrate your capabilities and credentials to prospects, to qualify leads, and to enhance relationships with current customers.

From one-hour lunch-and-learn sessions to full-day customer councils and multi-day trade shows, events can be a powerful way to market your services, display the talents of your team, reach out to prospects, increase customer loyalty, and ultimately increase your revenue.

An effective event requires detailed planning and hard work, but it can pay off by showcasing your company's expertise to highly qualified leads. Events can also increase customer loyalty by helping them become more familiar with the solutions you provide.

Create a memorable, profitable event using these guidelines:

### Demonstrate expertise

Each event must provide useful, practical information that complements your company's area of expertise. Sharing insights that attendees cannot get elsewhere reinforces the perception that your company is the place to go to for expert advice on your area of focus. For example, a reseller that focuses on the legal market can hold a session on how law firms are cutting costs and improving service through IP telephony.

### Match events to the audience

Select the type of event based on the audience you want to reach. Short-form events—such as one-hour “lunch and learn” sessions—may be most effective for targeting prospects. Customers may be willing to invest time in longer events, such as a half-day session covering specific network technology developments.

Not ready to create your own event? Consider a presence at a trade show as a first step. Associations for the industries you serve are likely to have national meetings, which can be a great place to meet highly qualified prospects.

**Don't be boring**

Successful events stimulate attendees. Lectures, slide shows, and tech-spec speeches can quickly induce yawns. Instead, look for ways to involve your audience and get them to interact. Set up hands-on demonstrations that let users see how a solution works. Bring in customers to present real-world examples of your company's successes. Get a high-profile, independent "expert" to serve as a keynote speaker to build excitement.

**Move the buying decision forward**

Don't turn your event into a hard sell. The focus must be on sharing information and knowledge. Still, be sure that everyone who attends knows that you are the company to implement the solution at hand. Distribute brochures that expand on the information you are sharing. Encourage prospects to go to your website to learn more.

**Promote**

Advertise your events to drive attendance and build excitement. Send out invitations by email and direct mail, and follow up with a personal phone call to your most promising prospects. List the seminar on your website. Alert local media or business groups to get into "events" columns. Have your employees include it in their email signatures.

**Measure results**

Gauge the success of your event by gathering customer input (for example, through a brief questionnaire) to ensure you are meeting their needs. Assess the quality of the attendees in terms of additional revenue generated—both in terms of new sales and cross-sell and up-sell results to current customers. Don't forget less tangible metrics such as goodwill and firm perception. Continually revise your events based on these metrics to ensure the most profitable results.

## Event Planning Timeline

A successful event requires detailed project management. Here is the timing for the key tasks:

**6 months before event**

- Establish goals focused on what you want to accomplish and who you want to reach
- Develop event plan detailing what actions will be required
- Determine necessary resources and set budget

**4-5 months before event**

- Select event team and assign responsibilities
- Create detailed agenda.
- Choose project manager to keep plan on track
- Procure a location and, if necessary, a caterer
- Identify and schedule guest speakers, if necessary
- Determine resources available from vendor partners
- Create a simple registration process, such as an on-line form on your website, to capture registrant's details
- Send out invitations to target attendees
- Begin publicity and promotion efforts

### Cisco Event Marketing Resources

#### Campaign Builder

Create customizable e-mail blasts, post-cards, ads, flyers, and more to build customer awareness, while reducing time-to-market and overall costs. [www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder/](http://www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder/)

**Partner Marketing Services:** [www.cisco.com/go/partner-marketing](http://www.cisco.com/go/partner-marketing)

#### Tradeshow Rental Booth Program:

This tool—exclusive to Cisco Channel Partners—delivers an easy-to-use and comprehensive ordering system for all your tradeshow exhibit needs.

**Banner Services Program:** High-quality banners are an excellent way to augment your presence at events like tradeshows and customer briefings, and even a great way to dress up your offices.

#### Cisco Partner Marketing and Event

**Resource Center (PMERC):** This tool assists Cisco partners with every aspect of direct marketing campaigns and events, including:

- Renting or purchasing mail or e-mail lists
- HTML e-mail blasts and event invitations
- Web registration
- Event registration material
- Onsite event support

#### 1-2 months before event

- Create presentations
- Develop handouts (including agenda, presentations, and survey), signage, and other collateral
- Order branded giveaways, such as pens or t-shirts with your company logo

#### 1-2 weeks before event

- Double-check and confirm all arrangements with location, caterer, and others to ensure there has been no miscommunication

#### 1-2 days before event

- Email or phone all registered attendees to remind them of the event
- Test all demonstrations to make sure they are working as planned
- Hold a run-through of the event with all participants

#### Day of event

- Arrive 1-2 hours early to make sure facilities are ready
- Organize demonstrations
- Review presentations
- Set up and staff a “welcome” table to register all attendees

#### 1-2 days after event

- Add lead information to contact database
- Begin follow-up with all attendees
- Debrief event team for ideas to improve next event

### Event Marketing Resources

#### Associations

These groups frequently publish reports and trends on event and trade show marketing:

- Center for Exhibition Industry Research, [www.ceir.org](http://www.ceir.org)
- Trade Show Exhibitors Association, [www.tsea.org](http://www.tsea.org)

#### Publications

To get case studies and best practices in event marketing:

- Event Marketer, [www.eventmarketermag.com](http://www.eventmarketermag.com)
- Exhibitor Magazine, [www.exhibitoronline.com](http://www.exhibitoronline.com)
- Successful Meetings, [www.mimegasite.com](http://www.mimegasite.com)





## Internet Marketing

### The Many Aspects of Internet Marketing

#### **What is Internet Marketing?**

Internet marketing takes advantage of the power and reach of the web to build awareness of your company, generate qualified leads, and enhance customer relationships.

#### **Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?**

Customers and prospects go to the web first for information about the services your company offers, so it pays to have an effective online presence.

You sell Internet-enabled technologies. But is your company taking advantage of the power of the web to get its fair share of new business, and to improve customer service and satisfaction? Use these Internet marketing tactics to bring visitors to your website, to demonstrate your expertise, and to nurture your customer base:

#### **Website**

Chances are you already have one, but is it really meeting the needs of your target audience? Is it easy to navigate? Is the design attractive and professional, and does it contribute to the experience you want your site visitors to have? Is the information on your offerings complete and current? Does it provide an easy way for a prospect to contact you? Now may be the time to conduct a detailed assessment.

#### **Email marketing**

Think of email marketing in two ways. You can use “alerts” or one-time emails as a promotional vehicle—a quick, inexpensive way to inform customers and prospects about offers. You can also use a “relationship” vehicle such as a newsletter—with information about how your offerings can solve pressing business problems—to become a trusted advisor to your customers.

The best way to do online marketing is to make sure your own site is well done. Ask employees, trusted customers—even your spouse—for their honest opinion. If you do not like what you hear, consider hiring a professional site designer to help. Your website is the foundation of your online marketing efforts.

**Internet advertising**

The most common Internet advertising options are banners, or ads you see at the top or side of various web pages; and interstitials, or ads that pop up in a new window. Costs are generally calculated based on the number of impressions (i.e. the number of times the banner is seen by visitors) that the site guarantees. This is usually expressed as CPM, or cost per thousand. If you opt for banner ads or interstitials, be sure to choose sites visited by your target audience.

**Search-engine marketing (SEM)**

SEM refers to ads or placements you purchase on a search engine. You generally bid on an ad, based on the amount you are willing to pay per click. An example is Google Adwords, the ads that show up in the right-hand column of your search results. SEM is popular since you reach prospects when they are actively looking for information on the kind of products or services you offer—so they are by definition warm leads.

**Search-engine optimization (SEO)**

SEO is the practice of developing your web pages so that they appear at the top of the “organic” or unpaid search results for certain keywords or phrases, such as “SMB VoIP” or “unified messaging.” SEO practices combine content and coding to improve the odds that a page will be found. Each search engine has its own proprietary indexing criteria and the criteria change frequently, so be prepared to update your SEO implementation often.

**Blogs**

Blogs—shorthand for web logs—are basically online journals. They are web pages with short, frequently updated posts arranged from newest to oldest entries. Although blogs are most commonly used as online diaries or commentaries, they can be an easy and inexpensive way to demonstrate your capabilities and expertise. Since each entry carries a date, a blog should be updated often in order to appear timely and valuable.

**Podcasts**

Podcasts are audio files that can be easily downloaded and listened to through your computer’s media player, or on an iPod or similar device. Podcasts can be used like blogs to share insights and tips of interest to your customers. They can also be a way to distribute recordings of presentations that customers or prospects were unable to attend.

**Webcasts**

You have probably seen Webcasts (if you have not, they are multimedia presentations delivered online), but have you considered presenting one yourself? Webcasting is a great vehicle to educate customers and prospects on the benefits of a particular application: you could even think of them as an audio-visual white paper. Webcasting is effective for a geographically dispersed audience, or for customers and prospects who are too busy to travel to a live event.

**Wikis**

Similar in structure to a blog, a Wiki is a collaborative website that allows any visitor to add, modify, or delete content. The best-known example is Wikipedia, the online encyclopedia, but there are countless others. Wikis are still relatively new to B2B marketing, but they can be used to encourage customers to share insights and information. You can also market your expertise by sharing your insights on targeted third-party Wikis (as you might on Internet message boards).

## Five Ideas to Improve Your Email Marketing

If you plan to connect with customers and prospects using an email newsletter, or want to sharpen your current email communications, try these ideas:

### **1. Be the expert**

Look for ways to demonstrate your unique expertise. Build a relationship with your readers by having an individual on your team write a regular column on the business problems your company solves for customers.

### **2. Focus on the reader**

Do not use your newsletter just to talk about your services. The most effective newsletters provide a mix of promotional elements (like special offers, product news, or case studies) with “how to” pieces, like an article on how to block spam or safeguard company data. Be sure any information in your newsletter is what your reader would expect you to be an expert on.

### **3. Create standard elements**

Regular, repeatable features—such as a “statistic of the month,” a company news section, or a listing of coming events—make your newsletter predictable and easy to read.

### **4. Keep it brief**

Email readers have short attention spans. Keep each item in the newsletter short (no more than 50 words) and scannable, linking as appropriate to a longer article on your website that provides more details.

### **5. Fulfill online**

If you have an offer in your email newsletter, be sure it can be fulfilled online. Provide a clear path back to your website with a specific URL, but also be sure to include your phone number...just in case.

**Cisco Internet Marketing Resources****Campaign Builder**

Create customizable e-mail blasts, post-cards, ads, flyers, and more—to build customer awareness, while reducing time to market and overall costs.

[www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder/](http://www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder/)

**Internet Resources**

The web, of course, is often the best place to go for getting timely advice on Internet marketing.

**General Internet marketing sites**

These sites often feature articles and resource lists covering the spectrum of online marketing tactics:

- ClickZ, [www.clickz.com](http://www.clickz.com)
- MarketingSherpa, [www.marketingsherpa.com](http://www.marketingsherpa.com)
- Web Digest for Marketers, [www.wdfm.com](http://www.wdfm.com)
- Web Marketing Today, [www.wilsonweb.com/email/index.htm](http://www.wilsonweb.com/email/index.htm)

**Email marketing sites**

These sites have a wealth of information and advice on effective email programs:

- Best Practices in B2B Email Marketing, [e-mailmarketing.blogspot.com](http://e-mailmarketing.blogspot.com)
- Chris Baggott's Email Marketing Best Practices, [exacttarget.typepad.com/chrisbaggott](http://exacttarget.typepad.com/chrisbaggott)
- EmailLabs, [www.emaillabs.com/resources](http://www.emaillabs.com/resources)
- Silverpop, [www.silverpop.com/practices/index.html](http://www.silverpop.com/practices/index.html)

**Search-engine marketing sites**

For additional insight on search-engine optimization and marketing:

- Search Engine Watch, [www.searchenginewatch.com](http://www.searchenginewatch.com)
- Search Engine Guide, [www.searchengineguide.com](http://www.searchengineguide.com)

**Internet advertising sites**

Information on trends in web ads:

- Interactive Marketing Bureau, [www.iab.net](http://www.iab.net)
- Nielsen NetRatings, [www.netratings.com](http://www.netratings.com)



## List Purchasing

### Buying the Right List

#### What is a list?

A mailing list provides contact information for a particular group of businesses or consumers. The list can be composed of many kinds of groups such as subscribers to a magazine, attendees of an event, members of a trade association, and many other criteria.

#### Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?

Lists are an essential component of any direct marketing campaign such as telemarketing, direct mail, or email. Industry experts estimate that the list accounts for 40 percent of a campaign's success, so selecting the right list is critical for your direct marketing campaigns.

Many companies attempt to generate leads by creating an attractive mailing with a compelling offer—and get disappointing results because they sent it to the wrong audience. Buying a list is not an area where it pays to try to save money.

Here are the three steps to buy an effective list, regardless of the kind of campaign you are planning:

#### 1. Determine your target market

By defining the type of individuals you need to reach, list providers can recommend the list that will best meet your needs. Your current customer base is the best way to create this profile: you want to find prospects with the same profile as your best customers. The more specific your definition, the better the list your broker will be able to recommend.

Specify:

- **Industry**, by SIC or NAICS code
- **Company size**, either by number of employees or annual revenues
- **Geography**, as explicitly as possible
- **Title**, such as President, CEO, CIO, IT manager, financial officer, etc.
- **Job function**, such as management, senior executive, purchasing manager, etc.

Keep in mind that the more targeted your list is, the higher the response rate is likely to be. Highly targeted lists often cost more on a per-name basis.

Test a portion of a list before you commit to a large investment. The test results will let you know whether to rent or buy the full list.

## 2. Review your budget

Determine your campaign break-even point to allocate how much you can spend on a list. Assess the entire campaign budget, which might include creative, printing, postage, and telemarketing costs—in addition to the price of your list.

Your budget may also determine whether you should buy or rent your list. Purchasing the list allows you to put the names into your company's database. List rental is significantly less expensive, but you generally only get to use the list once. So if you plan multiple contacts, you will need to re-rent the names.

## 3. Shop for a list provider

List providers fall into two groups, compilers and brokers. Compilers (such as D&B or Harte-Hanks) gather information from public sources (Yellow Pages, business directories, incorporation documents). They can generally offer a large number of names at a low cost, but they are not as highly targeted. You can also purchase a "verified" compiled list, where the vendor may have phone-verified the contacts.

For industry-specific lists, brokers are a better source. Brokers have access to a wide variety of list sources that they can use to recommend a list that meets your criteria. While some sources—such as magazines, associations, or trade show organizers—sell their lists directly, many sell only through a broker. While a broker typically charges a fee for its services, the broker may also provide a discount on the list itself. So your costs may be the same.

## Questions to Ask Prospective List Brokers

When speaking with brokers, ask the following questions to help you get the best list:

### What is the list composition?

Information on how the list was compiled, who is on the list, and what information is available for each individual will help you assess its effectiveness.

### Does the list include actual purchasers or merely inquirers?

Actual purchasers have more value than companies that merely inquired about a product or service. If the list is made up of actual purchasers, ask how recently they have made a purchase. Ask if the list includes multi-buyers, or companies that have purchased on multiple occasions.

### What is the "deliverability" of the list?

Deliverability refers to the percentage of mailed pieces that will be delivered. Some list brokers promise rates of as high as 95 percent. Shoot for the highest "deliverability" percentage you can get.

### How old are the names on the list and how often is it updated?

Mailing lists age quickly as individuals change jobs. An old list will not be as productive as a newer one.

### How often has the list been rented?

If the list has been used often, buyer fatigue can set in and it has less value than a list that has not been in circulation for as long.

**Cisco List Resources****Cisco Partner Marketing and Event Resource Center**

This tool assists Cisco partners with every aspect of direct marketing campaigns and events, including:

- Renting or purchasing mail or e-mail lists
- HTML e-mail blasts and event invitations
- Web registration
- Event registration material
- Onsite event support

**How many mailers have used the list?**

Ask what kinds of companies have used the list, for what kinds of products and services, and what their results have been. Repeat rentals or purchases by individual companies may indicate that they have had success with it—although, of course, you may not get the same results.

**List Resources****List compilers**

Go online to see what they offer:

- D&B, [www.dnb.com](http://www.dnb.com) or [www.zapdata.com](http://www.zapdata.com)
- DM2, [www.dm2lists.com](http://www.dm2lists.com)
- Harte-Hanks, [www.harte-hanks.com](http://www.harte-hanks.com)
- InfoUSA, [www.infousa.com](http://www.infousa.com) or [www.onesource.com](http://www.onesource.com)

**Vendor directories**

The names of list brokers or mailing list vendors are often available at your local library:

- SRDS Direct Marketing Resource™
- The Oxbridge Communications National Directory of Mailing Lists

**SIC and NAICS codes**

The standard ways to segment industries:

- NAICS, [www.census.gov/naics](http://www.census.gov/naics) (note: NAICS has replaced SIC codes)
- SIC, [www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sicsearch.html](http://www.osha.gov/pls/imis/sicsearch.html)

**General list and direct marketing resources**

- The Direct Marketing Association, [www.the-dma.org](http://www.the-dma.org)
- DM News, [www.dmnews.com](http://www.dmnews.com)
- Mailing List Buying Guide, [www.mailinglistbuyingguide.com](http://www.mailinglistbuyingguide.com)





## Public Relations

### Getting Your Name Out to the Press

#### What is PR?

PR—or public relations—is the process of promoting your company by generating positive press coverage.

#### Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?

Public relations is a low-cost, high-impact way to build awareness of your company, enhance your reputation with customers and prospects, and position your company as an expert on the solutions you provide.

Public relations is the set of activities involved in getting the media to cover your company. It is an effective marketing tactic because a mention in the press builds credibility for your business, demonstrates your expertise, and can generate qualified leads.

Can you control publicity? Once you've pitched your story, whether or not you receive coverage—and exactly what kind of coverage you receive—is not really something you can control. But reporters need stories to tell their readers, and your PR can give them a story their readers may find useful.

A successful PR campaign includes these elements:

#### Your press release

The most common way to get the word out to the media is through a press release, which is a brief document written in a specific format that alerts the press to your news (see related article). Send it to your media list or distribute it through a newswire service.

#### Your news

To determine what makes a newsworthy press release, ask yourself what readers, listeners, or viewers might be interested in. Tell this objectively to the media outlet and they'll be much more likely to write you up or give you airtime. Always have an angle. What is distinctive about your business? How do you solve a problem? How do you relate to a current trend? What have you done that's unusual? Read your target publications or watch a local broadcast to identify why they cover local businesses.

In making a pitch, look for ways to get your customer mentioned. When the story is about your customer, you appear as the “hero” able to solve a thorny business issue.

### Your positioning

Public relations cannot make you something you are not. It must communicate the truth. The way you position your company in your release should address several issues: what you want your customers to know about your company, what information impacts their buying decision, and what message you want to convey through possible coverage.

### Your list

PR is marketing to the press. Like any good marketing campaign, the list is critical. Identify writers, editors, TV or radio producers, bloggers, and others who may be interested in your company. Build your list strategically: ask customers what they read, watch, and listen to. Vertical industry outlets (trade magazines, industry websites), and local press (the business section of your city's newspaper, or your area's business journal) will likely make up the core of your list.

### Your pitch

If you are targeting only a few media outlets, consider using a personalized letter, email or phone call instead of a release. This can be especially effective when you want to be part of a bigger story. For example, recent coverage of a computer break-in can be an opportunity to pitch an article about network security policies.

### Your results

Get copies of everything written or broadcast about your company. You can do this yourself if you focus on just a handful of local outlets. If you are covering a larger area, hire a clipping service to track your coverage. Remember, the ultimate goal of your PR campaign is to create sales. Be sure to ask customers how they heard of your company so you can track the number of customers or leads your publicity has generated.

## Elements of a Successful Press Release

A good press release is written in an established format. You can find samples in the Cisco pressroom ([newsroom.cisco.com](https://newsroom.cisco.com)) or on newswire sites such as PR Newswire or Business Wire.

**Contact:** The name, phone number, and email of someone who can answer questions.

**Headline:** One or two lines at the top of the release that grabs attention and tells the news in descriptive terms.

**Subhead:** A slightly longer header that complements the headline and adds other details of interest.

**Dateline:** Your location (important for local coverage) and the date (to show timeliness).

**Lead:** Your first paragraph should tell the complete story by answering who, what, when, where, why, and how in factual terms. Build excitement with active language.

**Quote:** Underscore the focus of the release or express an opinion by using a quote from a reputable source—you, your customer, or an involved third party.

**Details:** Use the body of the release to provide detailed information that will answer questions a journalist might have, stressing why the information is important. Keep in mind that getting publicity means bragging about your own achievements, but it should not sound like advertising. Rather, you will need to take an objective tone that is similar to what a reporter would use in writing an article.

**Boilerplate:** The last paragraph should provide basic information about your company.

**Cisco PR Resources****Co-Branded CPI**

This tool enables Partners to create and distribute their own customized newsletters for end customers. [www.cisco.com/go/cpi](http://www.cisco.com/go/cpi)

Please contact your local Channel Account Manager and copy the Cisco channel public relations team at [channels-pr@cisco.com](mailto:channels-pr@cisco.com) with any public relations questions.

**PR Resources****Media Directories**

Assemble your media list with these references (available at your local library):

- Bacon's Directories: Listings of newspapers, magazines, radio, TV and cable.
- Gale Directory of Publications and Broadcast Media: Database of editorial contacts.
- Standard Rate & Data: Editorial contacts and calendar information for publications.

**Newswires**

Use these services to issue your press release or read releases issued by other companies:

- Business Wire, [www.businesswire.com](http://www.businesswire.com)
- PR Newswire, [www.prnewswire.com](http://www.prnewswire.com)

**Clipping Services**

Monitor your coverage...for a fee:

- BurrellesLuce, [www.burrellesluce.com](http://www.burrellesluce.com)
- Bacon's, [www.bacons.com](http://www.bacons.com)

**PR Firm Directories**

To find the names of PR firms:

- PRSA Red Book, [www.prsa.org/book\\_db/redgreenbook.asp](http://www.prsa.org/book_db/redgreenbook.asp)
- O'Dwyer Database, [www.odwyerpr.com/pr\\_firms\\_database/](http://www.odwyerpr.com/pr_firms_database/)





## Word of Mouth

### The Buzz on Word of Mouth

#### **What is word-of-mouth marketing?**

Word-of-mouth marketing is simply the practice of getting people to talk about your products and services.

#### **Why is it important for Cisco Business Partners?**

Positive word of mouth helps you stand out as a solution provider because a referral from a trusted source is so highly valued.

People are constantly talking about all kinds of products and services. Word-of-mouth marketing simply gets people to talk about your offerings.

While many people think of word of mouth as a consumer-oriented marketing tactic, it is at least as effective in the business-to-business arena. And it is not just for big businesses, either. In any size market, recommendations from a trusted peer probably give prospects more confidence than any marketing material you could provide.

Use these tactics to get your customers—and prospects—talking about you.

#### **Identify your audience**

Consider the people that would be willing to speak about you. Do you have customers who are excited about your service? Are there technology columnists in a local business journal who have a positive opinion of your offerings? Can you get any bloggers to talk about you in their postings? Think especially about the groups you would like your evangelists to reach. For example, if you target manufacturers, are there any individuals who are well regarded in that industry who would be willing to talk about you?

#### **Give people a reason to talk**

Once you know who you want talking about you, give them a reason to talk. Keep in mind that word-of-mouth marketing is not about just getting attention: you don't have to do something silly or outrageous to succeed in word of mouth. A special offer, terrific ad, unique offering, or great customer service are enough to exceed people's expectations, make them happy—and get them to talk about you.

Above all, be honest with word-of-mouth marketing. Word-of-mouth marketing is not about fooling people. It is about letting them know about the reality of your great offerings. Develop something that truly makes your customers happy—a service guarantee, first-call problem resolution, a cheery greeting on the first ring—and your evangelists will do the rest.

### **Help people get the word out**

Provide ways for your enthusiastic supporters to tell the world about you. Put a form on your website for people to submit their stories about working with you, and then post them on your site. Put a “send to a colleague” link on every article you publish on your website. Put a special offer such as a free network security audit in your email newsletter and include a “forward this to a friend” link. At your next seminar, hand out informative and professional-looking materials that attendees feel good about passing along. If a client gives you positive feedback, ask them if they would be willing to post their comments on a relevant blog, message board, or online community.

### **Be an advocate for your customer**

One way to make a good customer relationship great—and to benefit from your customer’s positive word of mouth—is to make your customer a hero. Issue a press release with the customer as the focus, not your company. Help them line up speaking engagements (alone or with you) that focus on their success with your solution.

### **Join the community...or form your own**

Be sure your company participates in customer-driven conversations. Join and present to user groups. Monitor and respond to postings about your company in online forums, message boards, and blogs. Look for ways to create your own customer forums. For example, advisory boards and customer councils provide your best (and most influential) customers with an opportunity to network with their peers in a collegial atmosphere.

### **Keep at it**

Last but not least, be consistent in your word of mouth marketing efforts. If your customer service, for example, slips, your word of mouth will too—so be sure to monitor not only your word-of-mouth marketing tactics but the talk around your company as well. Monitor blogs, message boards, review sites, and other places online where your company might be mentioned, and regularly solicit customer feedback to be sure they remain happy working with you.

In his book *Word of Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking*, Andy Sernovitz identifies the four rules of word-of-mouth marketing:

#### **1. Be interesting**

If you want people to talk about your company, do something special. The Four Seasons hotel once greeted a guest with a high-end bottle of water in his room—with his name and photo on the label. You can be sure he has told that story at a hundred dinner parties. What do you do to get talked about at dinner parties? Is your website interesting? Are your ads interesting? Is your hold music, your out-of-office alert, or trade show booth interesting? Provide a reason for people to talk about you.

#### **2. Make people happy**

It sounds obvious, but happy customers are your best advocates. Impress them through amazing products, excellent service, and remarkable experiences. When you make your customers happy, they will be happy to support the company that supported them.

#### **3. Earn trust and respect**

In addition to making customers happy, earn your customers’ respect by being honorable at all times. Make ethics an integral part of your company’s practices—nobody will refer their friends to a company that might embarrass them. And even if your business practices are ethical, are any annoying to your customers? For example, think about experiences you may have had with a bank that charges a lot of extra fees, a credit card company

### Cisco Marketing Resources

#### Co-Branded CPI

This tool enables Partners to create and distribute their own customized newsletters for end customers. [www.cisco.com/go/cpi](http://www.cisco.com/go/cpi)

that increases your interest rate after one late payment, or an airline that places all sorts of restrictions on your frequent-flyer miles. Could you be accused of anything like those practices? If so, you could be getting negative word of mouth.

#### 4. Make it easy

As powerful as word of mouth can be, you have to help start it by finding a simple message, and helping people to share it. What's simple? Something memorable, and nothing longer than a sentence. This is not the same as a commercial tagline, like "It's the real thing" or "We try harder." It is something uniquely different and valuable about your organization, such as, "that cinema has afternoon movies for families with young children," or "that restaurant serves you snacks while you're waiting," or "the people from that technology company are all so smart and friendly." Once you have your message, make it easy for people to spread it by putting it on your website, brochures—and best of all in emails, which can be forwarded so easily.

### Word-of-Mouth Resources

#### Word-of-Mouth blogs

Get the latest word-of-mouth practices:

- Seth Godin, [sethgodin.typepad.com](http://sethgodin.typepad.com)
- Buzz Builder, [buzzbuilder.typepad.com](http://buzzbuilder.typepad.com)
- Word-of-Mouth Communications Study, [wom-study.blogspot.com](http://wom-study.blogspot.com)
- The Word is Out, [blog.beaffinitive.com](http://blog.beaffinitive.com)

#### Association

This group focuses exclusively on word-of-mouth marketing:

- Word of Mouth Marketing Association, [www.womma.org](http://www.womma.org)

#### Tracking blog content

Find out what the blogosphere is saying about you:

- Technorati, [www.technorati.com](http://www.technorati.com)
- BlogPulse, [www.blogpulse.com](http://www.blogpulse.com)

#### Word-of-Mouth Marketing Books

Much is being written about word of mouth. These are some solid sources:

- *Word of Mouth Marketing: How Smart Companies Get People Talking*, Andy Sernovitz
- *Grapevine: The New Art of Word-of-Mouth Marketing*, Dave Balter
- *Buzzmarketing: Get People to Talk About Your Stuff*, Mark Hughes
- *Creating Customer Evangelists: How Loyal Customers Become a Volunteer Sales Force*, Ben McConnell and Jackie Huba
- *The Anatomy of Buzz: How to Create Word of Mouth Marketing*, Emanuel Rosen
- *The Influentials*, Ed Keller and Jon Berry





## Cisco Channel Partner Resources Quick Reference Guide

### Communications, Training, and Events

#### Channel Events

[www.cisco.com/en/US/partner/partners/pr47/events.html](http://www.cisco.com/en/US/partner/partners/pr47/events.html)

#### Cisco Corporate Website

[www.cisco.com/](http://www.cisco.com/)

#### Cisco Interaction Network (CIN)

[www.cisco.com/go/cin](http://www.cisco.com/go/cin)

#### Calendar of Events (CIN)

[www.cisco.com/go/smbinteract](http://www.cisco.com/go/smbinteract)

#### Cisco Customized Partner Intelligence (CPI) Newsletter

[www.cisco.com/go/cpi](http://www.cisco.com/go/cpi)

#### Partner Central Portal

[www.cisco.com/go/partners](http://www.cisco.com/go/partners)

#### Partner E-Learning Connection (PEC)

[www.cisco.com/go/pec](http://www.cisco.com/go/pec)

#### Partner Summit 2007

[www.cisco.com/go/partnersummit](http://www.cisco.com/go/partnersummit)

#### Road Warrior Connection

[www.cisco.com/go/roadwarriorconnection](http://www.cisco.com/go/roadwarriorconnection)

### Marketing Resources

#### Campaign Builder

[www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder](http://www.cisco.com/go/campaignbuilder)

#### Channel Marketing Destination

#### Cisco Partner Logos

[www.cisco.com/web/partners/market/partner-marks.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/partners/market/partner-marks.html)

#### Marketing Acceleration Planner (MAP) Tool

Here is your handy quick reference guide to relevant channel communications, programs, promotions, tools, and resources for Cisco Channel Partners. Now you can cut through the clutter and information overload to get to the information you need.

**Market Fund Builder (Joint Marketing Funds)**

[www.cisco.com/go/jmf](http://www.cisco.com/go/jmf)

**Marketing Made Easy Archive**

[www.cisco.com/web/partners/pr47/pr288/partners\\_marketing\\_made\\_easy.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/partners/pr47/pr288/partners_marketing_made_easy.html)

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[www.cisco.com/web/partners/sell/smb/resources/now\\_van.html](http://www.cisco.com/web/partners/sell/smb/resources/now_van.html)

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