

# B2B Organic Growth Newsletter



New Product Blueprinting by Dan Adams

Growth strategies for companies that supply businesses - not consumers

Nov-Dec, 2009

## Don't Make These 5 Product Launch Mistakes

If you're still launching new products the way you did 5 years ago, you should be nervous. Some B2B suppliers are now actually eclipsing the practices of consumer goods marketers... but most are still making costly mistakes like these:

### 1. Fuzzy Media Strategy

Do you have just a few prospective customers... or thousands? Are you a well-established supplier in your target market... or a newcomer? We've identified 20 different media strategies that should be *driven* by answers to questions like these. Once you've gone through this thinking process, you'll be able to efficiently spread your launch budget between 8 traditional and 8 online media:

A) **Traditional Media:** Print advertising, trade articles, trade shows, road shows, direct mail, trade speeches, customer seminars, and sales visits.

B) **Online Media:** News releases, search marketing, e-mail, webinar, white papers, online advertising, web micro-sites, and emerging technologies.

### 2. Unfocused Prospect Targeting

Consumer goods marketers create "personas" to help them picture their target prospects. As a B2B marketer, your job is more complex. You need to target a) preferred job functions within a company, e.g., marketing, technical, or management, b) multiple decision influencers and decision makers, and possibly c) various points in your value chain (direct customers vs. their customers).

A good first step is to use an approach developed here at AIM called the *2-Question Launch Survey*. You simply ask prospects in your target market, 1) "How does your company learn about new ideas?" and 2) "Who decides which ideas to pursue?"

Once you've collected this data, you can create 3 brief but critical sections of your Launch Plan: 1) Prospect Profile, 2) Message

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## E-Book on B2B Product Launch



Fresh new approaches are now available for launching B2B products in the digital age. Download this 26-page e-book at [www.b2bproductlaunch.com](http://www.b2bproductlaunch.com). (No charge or registration required.)

## Today's Quote

*"Nothing is more dangerous than an idea when it is the only one you have."*

Brief, and 3) Media Guide. Skip this and you'll likely squander your launch budget. Do it well and you'll be far more efficient than competitors in reaching the right people with the right message using the right media.

### 3. Sloppy Launch Planning

Solid new product launch planning looks like this: The work is done by a team, the team starts 10-12 months prior to launch, and a thorough Launch Plan document is created. This document helps the team:

- 1) Collect vital market information during the front-end and development stages,
- 2) Plan the launch through the use of helpful job aids,
- 3) Communicate key launch elements (to sales force, management, etc.), and
- 4) Measure and track product launch performance.

At AIM we've developed Excel-based *LaunchStar*<sup>TM</sup> for this... so named because it includes launch **S**trategy, **T**eam, **A**ctivities, and **R**esults. (More info at [http://www.b2bproductlaunch.com/launchstar\\_software.html](http://www.b2bproductlaunch.com/launchstar_software.html)) Whatever tool you use, include job aids such as sales force training, budgeting, project planning, lead scoring, etc. all in one document... to simplify planning and build "corporate memory."

### 4. Too Proactive

Excuse me? Too proactive? Here's what I mean: If your launch plan is all about arming your sales force to "go out and find new business," be aware of some new

**When you make a business purchase, do you wait for a supplier's sales rep...or do you Google?** market dynamics: In 80% of B2B transactions today, the *customer finds the supplier*... not the other way around. Think about it: When you make a business purchase, do you wait for a supplier's sales rep to visit you... or do you Google?

Smart B2B marketers work hard at being "findable" by prospects... when the *prospects* are ready. There's a science to this: Use your front-end market analysis to identify customers' hot buttons... in *their* language. Then use this to build a keyword strategy that ensures your news releases score high in their Google search results page. Finally, use "offers" (free white paper, webinar, etc.) that let them advance along the buying cycle at *their* pace. Remember, with online marketing, you don't have a sales rep gauging when to close the sale. (See the "Cattle Chute" approach on page 13 of my e-book at [www.b2bproductlaunch.com/e-book](http://www.b2bproductlaunch.com/e-book).)

### 5. Low-Impact Sales Calls

– *Emile Chartier*

## 7 Mistakes that Stunt Growth

### Mistake #7. Ignoring competitors when you design your product.

I find most product development processes are far too casual—and late—in assessing competitive offerings. Your new product makes a *lot* of money only if two conditions are satisfied: A) Your product offers significant value to customers, and B) customers cannot get this value elsewhere. Interviews tell you only about Condition A. You need side-by-side testing to learn about Condition B. This allows you to attack competitive weak spots, avoid getting blindsided, and optimize pricing.

Read a two-page [Executive Briefing](#) for the remaining 6 mistakes.

For most B2B suppliers, their in-house sales force is still the most effective—and expensive—way to reach new customers. Three steps will help you get the biggest bang for your dollar. First, a lead generation and scoring system... so everyone knows when marketing "owns" a lead and when sales does. This ensures your sales force focuses on truly "sales-ready" prospects.

Second, many companies need to rethink the sales tools they arm their sales force with. There are at least 24 tools you should be considering... which can make your sales reps look brilliant and your new product enticing. (See page 22 of my e-book at [www.b2bproductlaunch.com/e-book](http://www.b2bproductlaunch.com/e-book).)

Third, more dynamic pre-launch training is needed in many cases. Consider these 3 points:

- 1) Who will you train?** Direct sales force, channel partners, customer service, etc.
- 2) How will you train?** Live workshop, webinar, intranet, etc.
- 3) What will you train?** Product, message, pricing, tracking, rewards, sales tool use, etc.

This might sound like a lot of work, but we have good news after teaching these methods on four continents: Teams can dramatically upgrade their launches if they're willing to put reasonable time and money into this. It simply isn't that difficult.

So, plan to *launch* your next new product, not *release* it. "Release" is what you do with a toy boat in a pond... usually before it bobs around and sinks. If you'd like to ignite your launches, email me at [dan.adams@aimtolead.com](mailto:dan.adams@aimtolead.com). We can set up a brief phone call or private web-conference to answer your questions and give you some exciting ideas.