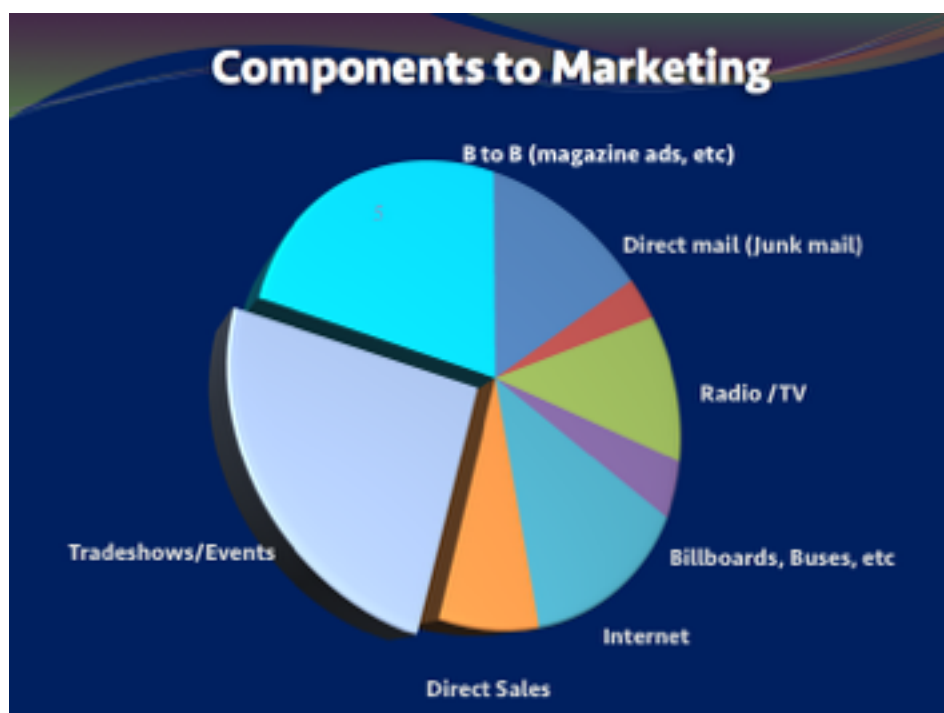


Integrated Trade Show Marketing

When I became VP of Sales & Marketing for Greyhound Exhibitgroup in 1999, I asked the question “what’s the difference between **sales** and **marketing**? My definition of marketing vs. sales: “Anything you do to support a *selling situation* is marketing.” Upgrading to first class to sit next to a fellow business traveler is a marketing strategy. You usually strike up a discussion that leads to “So, what do you do?” Most first-class travelers are business people, so the topic of marketing often is understood. This brief face-to-face encounter is very powerful, and the element of emotion kicks in to carry the *marketing situation* to a *selling situation* very quickly. Many different marketing strategies can serve to support/create a “*selling situation*.”

My wise friend Llona Kitzing conceived the concept of integrated trade show marketing. The concept has now been embraced by several trade show industry associations. Today, there are seven major components to marketing:



The rule of thumb for a company's marketing budget is that 5 percent of your business revenue should be used for marketing. This of course depends on the business you are in. A consumer product company would spend more than a machine tool company, so 5 percent is a fair starting figure. This 5 percent marketing budget is then divided as needed to work best for your strategy to increase sales and build awareness of your brand. The chart below illustrates a likely assessment for many companies. For many companies, the trade show/event portion of the budget will be the biggest component. With that said, measuring the impact of the trade show with other marketing components, is key to continuing this investment activity. It's not about the exhibit structure, but what the structure is doing to enhance a message and reach a targeted audience, according to Llona Kitzing.

When setting your marketing budget, no one component of the seven is more important than the other. Your formula for which components you combine is up to you and each must work in harmony. Together they create an *integrated marketing strategy*.

Collectively, all components should contribute to creating a *selling situation*. In some cases, when you know exactly what you really need, human contact may not be needed. For example, shopping through the Internet to buy a commodity like a watch, an appliance, or a set of golf clubs, can work just fine and can be less time consuming, provided you know exactly what you are buying and relative value. But when you are uncertain what you need or expect to receive, human contact is a powerful tool to influence your decision to buy.

Of all the seven marketing strategies, only two components require eye-to-eye contact where emotion comes into play—**direct sales and trade shows**. Of all the seven components, trade shows are the greatest expense and can deliver the greatest return when executed correctly. It

must be noted that without the support from each of the other components, this human-contact element would be minimal if starting from scratch to sell your product/service benefits and its value.

Trade show marketing can be very expensive, but the return is great if executed directly- especially internationally!

Larry Kulchawik