

Use CONSUMER

With 2018 fast approaching, many companies are beginning to take a step back and rethink their marketing strategies for the new year. To help our readers with their marketing, industry expert Andrew Scott provides a memorable acronym to help simplify what can be a confusing and overwhelming area of business. In marketing, remember the CONSUMER is key

C-onsistency. This is vital for establishing a good marketing campaign. Brand recognition and reputation rely heavily on repetition, whether this is a local installer or a multinational corporation. Marketing strategies often last between nine and twelve months and it's useful to have a theme running throughout these: this can be conveyed in the graphics and slogan you use and should be consistently run across all platforms (direct mail, advertising, website, social media) in order to make a business recognisable.

O-nline presence. The new year is the perfect time to refresh your company's website. You need to ensure your website performs beautifully on desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones, enabling prospects and customers to access the information they need quickly and efficiently. For best results incorporate video content, as this builds trust and will improve conversions.

N-ews. Releasing a stream of news stories into the media is one of the most effective ways of strengthening your brand. Ensure you stay up to date with current affairs, especially those concerning the wider economy and construction industry: you can then draw upon this knowledge to keep your PR relevant and informed. This will also allow you to position yourself as a thought leader in your sector, gaining the confidence of potential clients.

S-ocial Media. Updating your social media profiles is crucial to present your company as approachable. Many businesses now obtain a substantial number of leads through their social media accounts: Twitter and LinkedIn are becoming particularly popular platforms through which potential consumers, business partners, or clients can connect with companies. Twitter can also be especially useful for promoting business events, such as awards, through the use of hashtags.

U-SP. Every successful business has a unique selling proposition (USP). This is what sets your company apart from your competitors and should be emphasised in each piece of marketing you or your team create. However, remember that great service, quality products, and reliable deliveries are not USPs – these are what everyone claims to provide. USPs can take many forms including particular products, service levels, support packages, ordering or delivery processes. Locate your USP and use it to your company's advantage.

M-agazines. Trade and business magazines provide an incredibly valuable service to the industry and, today, these can be found both online and in print. As well as attracting potential new customers, advertising in the trade press gives confidence to your existing customers by showing that you are well-versed in your industry and its publications. It proves that you mean business. If you are considering placing an advertisement or PR piece in a trade magazine try to commit to a three, six, or twelve-

month campaign – this will create consistency and will make your campaign memorable.

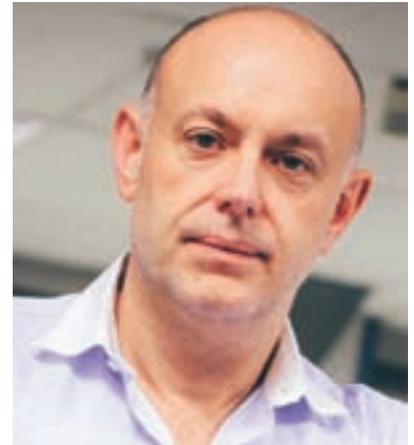
E-mail marketing. Email marketing is a low-cost way of making instant contact with a huge number of prospective or existing customers. However, emails give you only a matter of seconds in which to generate your reader's interest. This

means that messages must be short, sharp, and attention-grabbing – subject lines and preview text are key for this reason.

R-eliability. Third-party credibility is an extremely powerful way to establish your business, and PR is a great way to achieve this. Frequent press releases, feature articles, and opinion pieces will help solidify your reputation as a thought leader in your sector and will present your company as knowledgeable and, most importantly, reliable. In writing these pieces it is particularly important to ensure that you use an appropriately formal tone and style and that your grammar and spelling is correct.

Finally, it is of course important to remember who your consumer is, and all marketing campaigns should be created with a specific audience in mind. Advertising, PR pieces, feature articles, and email marketing should appeal to the needs of your consumer – even if they do not yet know what these are – and should show them that they can have confidence in the product or service that you provide.

Use CONSUMER to help your company build a successful marketing strategy for 2018. □



Andrew Scott

Andrew Scott is the managing director of Purplex – the full-service marketing agency specialising in the fenestration and construction industries. Previous to founding Purplex in 2004, he worked with a number of fabricators, installers, and fenestration companies before going on to help build several high-profile companies, including Cambrian Windows