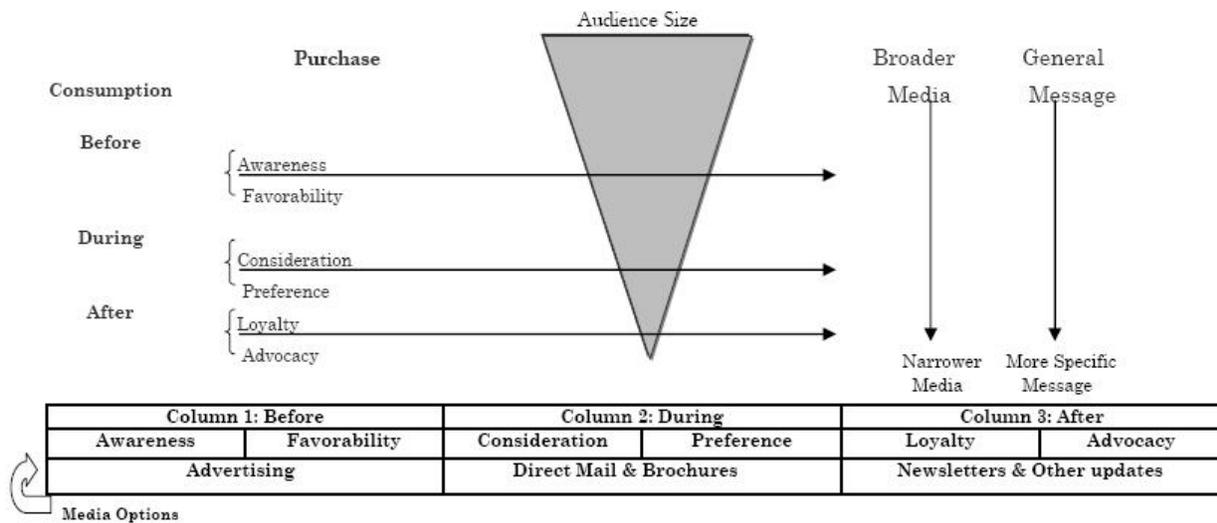


MARKETING TIPS

By Sanford Miller

At a meeting recently a client said, “We are advertising in a new territory, but it doesn’t appear to be working.” That triggered a number of thoughts on my part, one was, how did they know that? And then, what were their expectations? What message were they trying to deliver and how did they deliver it?

Charts we use in teaching can be helpful in answering these questions. The chart below is the purchasing decision model which we apply in communicating with customers and prospects.



Potential customers, whether they are looking for a business or a consumer product, must develop some awareness for a product, a service or a company. That awareness must become favorable before they decide to actually purchase. Once they have reached the buying decision they prefer that product or service for which they have a positive impression. After they have used it and have a good experience, they become what we call loyal advocates, happy customers who extol the virtues of that product or service.

If you think of advertising being used to develop a favorable impression about your company you will craft a message to do that. You will use a different message to reinforce the fact that they made a great decision.

Building awareness and a favorable impression takes time. It is done with media vehicles that reach broad audiences, such as magazines and newspapers, TV and radio if you can afford it and if it is appropriate.

In talking to customers you craft a narrower message, they know who you are. In communicating with them you continuously reinforce that you provide a great service or product. And you talk about more specific things that you have done, other customers you have served. This includes detailed information that might not be appropriate for someone who has no idea who you are.

So back to the model: you have the purchase cycle down one side, the audience is larger when you are building awareness and smaller when you are communicating with customers. Also the message is more general in nature to those unfamiliar with you and more specific with people who know you.

So something to think about, building awareness with prospects and communicating with customers need different strategies to create different results. I hope this chart gets you to think a little differently about how you “talk” to your marketplace.