



INTELLIGENT
MARKETING

CUTTING THROUGH THE NOISE

THE ESSENTIAL GUIDE TO MARKETING COLLATERAL



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Marketing collateral – what is it and do I really need it?

When marketers talk collateral, we're referring to an amazing number of different types of materials that are used on the journey to win customers. What's important is understanding your objectives and how the collateral you create will help you achieve your goals.

Before we get into the details of this guide, let's take a moment to understand what we mean when we say, "sales collateral" or "marketing collateral."

In the traditional use of the word, marketing collateral is the physical assets that support the sales or marketing cycle. Today, the most effective assets are digital resources that help streamline the efforts of the marketing team in warming the attention of their target audience and converting that audience into leads, as well as the sales team's efforts to convert leads into paying customers. This doesn't mean that printed collateral doesn't still have a valid use; it most certainly does.

This guide provides some definitions of the different types of marketing collateral and indicates how and when these might be the most effective resource for you to use in winning your customers.

What is marketing Collateral Anyway?

Marketing collateral is a collection of media or advertisements used to support the sales of your products or services. This includes everything from print pieces to online media. Having the right types of marketing collateral at each stage of the journey that moves your target customers towards a successful sale. Marketing Collateral aids your sales process and also the job of your sales team.

Every piece of marketing material serves a purpose, but first, you've got to know what those pieces are. Once you understand that, you can begin to identify which will serve you best in helping you achieve the objectives and goals in your business.

Definition of the different types of Marketing Collateral

Marketing collateral comes in many shapes, sizes, and styles but they are all worth it when created and used to achieve your goals and objectives.



1. BROCHURES

Brochures are one of the most widely distributed marketing materials on the planet, and for good reason. Few other mediums lend the space to present a powerful message in such a portable manner. Typically, a brochure is going to be the piece of collateral that is full of robust information and includes intriguing graphics and is visually engaging. Its focussed on what you sell and can provide benefits about your products and services.

When people think marketing or sales collateral, they typically think “brochure” first. That’s not a bad thing, but it’s the reason why it’s important to remember the intent and use of your brochure.

When to use a Brochure

Brochures are a wide-angle shot at what your company can do. Brochures are intended to grab attention and awareness so you'll want to provide easily digestible information. If you’re launching a new program or product, and have the time, brochures are a great way to explain the new features.



2. EXPLAINER VIDEOS

Video is quickly claiming the majority of views and retention in the online realm. Explainer videos are an effective and creative way to draw attention to your business and in particular your products or services.

Explainer videos are very short videos that describe a product or service. With these videos you can give your customers a demo of how your product/service will change/impact their life, add value to their business or help them solve their pain points.

Explainer videos also offer your customers an insight into who you are. Human interaction is hugely undermined in the digital age, so putting your face to your brand helps personalize your brand as well as your product or service.

When to use Explainer Videos

Ideal for a product launch, but there are plenty of additional opportunities to use explainer videos. They should be used on your website but also on social media. Bringing practical value to content will only increase your awareness and traction. These videos will help you gain new customers as well as help retain and delight customers that have already purchased from you as well as help you cross sell other products and services.



3. TESTIMONIALS (written and video)

Testimonials from your customers are your biggest cheerleader. Prospective customers want to hear what your current customers' experience is like. These are a driving force in the decision process for leads and are gold dust.

The key to a good testimonial is focusing on how the customer has valued in both concrete and emotional ways since working with your business. This allows you to tell a compelling story of their transformation. It has greater impact if you can measure in quantifiable terms the benefits, savings etc.

When to Use Testimonials

Testimonials can be used as standalone collateral but also as supplemental media to other collateral pieces. Video testimonials can be used on social media channels and housed on your website.

Testimonials will help you grab customer attention in the awareness and retention cycles of the marketing funnel. Keep testimonials visible at any time you are trying to promote or sell a product. Having visible testimonials will give reassurance as to why customers should buy from you.



4. SELL SHEETS (print, digital, video)

A sell sheet is a simple tool that showcases the benefits of your idea, product or service in a succinct and compelling way. They're usually one or two pages (at most) and are more in-depth about a particular product or service than a company brochure would be.

A great sell sheet should grab the reader at first glance, so include a fine balance of images and typography to keep your sell sheet clean and readable. You should highlight an image of your product or service – whether literal or the benefit your product/service makes possible.

It also showcases the **big benefit** – why people would purchase it. A sell sheet needs to include contact information, as well as any patent information if applicable.

When to use a Sell Sheet

A sell sheet gives your product or service that little bit of oomph that it was missing. They're an advertisement, but not a coupon so remember that buyers in the awareness and consideration stages should be who you are targeting here.



5. CASE STUDIES (war stories)

Case studies are another powerful form of marketing collateral. They help to demonstrate exactly what you've done to help other clients or customers achieve their goals. They are in-depth examinations covering a specific scenario or example, which should provide both knowledge and actionable information for the reader. An example of how your process, product or service benefits another customer. Ideally a case study should include an overview, the customer challenge, your solution to the challenge or problem and the benefits to your customer.

Trust is easier to gain when a prospect can see tangible evidence that what you do truly work. A case study goes beyond seeing a very nice testimonial on your website. With a case study, you can expand on a customer's problem and explain how your business provided a solution.

When to use Case Studies

Rather than simply telling the prospect about your experience and the results you've delivered, having case studies prepared allows your sales team to hand off an easy-to-consume overview of what they could expect from working with you and what you've done for other customers.

This is great sales collateral, which should be ready and be sent over at a moment's notice to your prospects. Case Studies can be used as links from White Papers, Blogs and other content or collateral. It's great to use on your website and can be used to value early on in their buying cycle.



6. INFOGRAPHICS

Infographics are a mix of design, writing and analysis. The key is that they are visually compelling and when done well can communicate complex data in a visual format that is potentially viral. It's a great way to engage your target audience as visuals tend to be more easily digested by the reader as it's an efficient way of combining the best of text, images and design to represent content, story, analysis or research that tells a story.

When to use Infographics

Infographics are an amazing piece of collateral that begs to be shared via social media. Research shows that visual cues help increase memorability of the information, which makes your business more memorable. They can be used on your website and social media, but also provide aids to your sales and marketing teams who can share links at all stages of the buyers' journey.



7. Blogs

Blog posts represent a very effective form of marketing collateral. While blog posts are excellent for driving the traffic that fuels inbound lead generation, they can be used to support sales and marketing efforts throughout the buying cycle. While many businesses focus on the SEO (search engine optimisation) benefits derived from blogging, just as many miss the opportunities to use them to optimize other sales and marketing initiatives.

Blog posts can and should be created about any and all topics that provide value to your prospective customer. Have your marketing team regularly poll the sales team to identify questions that keep coming up in sales conversations. This will help marketing create blog assets that allow sales to qualify prospects and close deals more effectively.

When to use Blogs

Consider the benefits of a salesperson answering a question or addressing a pushback from a prospect. By sending a link to a blog post that clearly articulates the information they need, it gives the salesperson the ability to keep the conversation positive and helpful with far less opportunity for the prospect to get “cold feet.” Blogs can help prospects understand the answers to their questions or concerns more thoroughly, especially given that many of them contain visual aids, statistics, and other compelling information to support their point.

Blogs should be created and used regularly on your website and shared through your social media channels.



8. GUIDES

Downloadable guides represent a similar form of marketing collateral to blog posts, however they're typically more comprehensive than blog posts. They provide reference materials and knowledge that can be referenced by your prospects. Creating guides can be time consuming, however they generally have longevity if you choose your topics wisely. They can be both long and short, and include user friendly visuals, but most of all they need to provide some value to for your target audience.

When to use Guides

Ideally, a downloadable guide which enables you to capture data, visitors are prompted to exchange their contact information in order to continue learning. Create links from your other content on your website to continue to engage your website visitors.



9. WHITE PAPERS

A whitepaper is basically an extended in-depth piece of content, addressing an issue in greater detail; a deep dive into a particular issue, challenge or problem. Your business should leverage whitepapers as a way to thoroughly explain an aspect of your business that addresses this business challenge for your target customers. A topic that would be too extensive for a blog post, yet not complex enough to need an entire eBook (see below).

A whitepaper is like an advanced problem-solving guide. Readers expect a high degree of expertise backed by solid research that is fully documented by references. Normally, these documents require an email address for download, and you will be giving away knowledge that should be seen as valuable for the reader (who ideally is your target audience).

When to use White Papers

Whitepapers are a great way to capture leads if you ask for an email to download. Therefore, they are a great resource for your sales process. Beyond your sales efforts, a whitepaper will help build credibility and trust for your business. If you choose your topic wisely, they will have a good shelf in terms of relevance.

You'll get the most use out of whitepapers in a buyer's awareness and consideration stages of the marketing funnel. These are great when it comes to lead generation, so make sure to add a whitepaper to your repertoire.

Guides allow marketing to convert new leads, by advertising them directly with PPC campaigns or driving existing website traffic to them from blog posts. Guides also benefit the sales team, who can use them during the sales funnel journey. Guides aid both marketing and sales and are useful at all stages of the sales and marketing journey.



10. E-BOOKS

eBooks represent a longer form of content that can educate prospective buyers about topics important to the buyers you want to sell to. They are a great way to creatively demonstrate expertise while being more serious than an infographic.

eBooks should contain an even balance of text and visual aspects. The information in an eBook is typically educational and is more commonly written in a casual and collegial manner.

When to use an eBook

eBooks, as part of any content marketing strategy, can give you great opportunities to deeply connect with your target audiences.

They help potential customers learn more about you by delivering complex information in an easily digestible way. An eBook will help enhance your likelihood to be found in the awareness and decision stages of the marketing and sales funnel.

Conclusion: Marketing collateral Matters

Having the correct types of marketing collateral and knowing when to use them in the buyer's journey is an integral part of successfully marketing and converting your leads.

If you have multiple brochures about your business and services but if you're missing a sell sheet that spells it out perfectly for a client, or a case study or testimonial, it's going to be harder to close that deal or win that new customer. Half the battle is knowing the difference between collateral types and using them to benefit your business. Many have multiple uses which means you will get greater use and greater value from the investment you make in creating them.

If you need any help creating the right asset to aid your business and help you win more customers, get in touch hello@intelligentmarketing.co.uk

Talking your kind of language



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