

Over a 10 year period, **GPM Network** has worked with many businesses to promote their environmental credentials or aspects of their products or services.

Here are the **top 11 tips** as a result of that experience

[Click here](#) to view our portfolio of electronic marketing products designed to improve the environmental aspect of your marketing campaign.

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## **1 Keep it real**

Don't be tempted to exaggerate or over gloss your environmental claims, as the chances are you'll be found out. This will leave you open to claims of 'green wash' and stimulate negative media and word-of-mouth communications. It is much better to underplay with phrases like 'it's a step in the right direction' or 'we are doing our best'. Bold claims will be met with cynicism.

## **2 Bundle your benefits**

Research has shown that most people will only buy a green product or service when other factors, such as quality and price are in place. Most consumers are 'green inclined' rather than 'green advocates', so don't expect an environmental claim alone to boost your sales.

## **3 Distinctive messaging**

People are exposed to thousands of promotional messages every day; for your message to be heard, you need to be able to rise above this noise and make it distinctive and relevant to your target audience. Say something different or interesting with your message, and invest time (and possibly research) into identifying messages that will truly resonate with your customers.

## **4 Tell people about the impact**

If you've reduced packaging by 50% or use recycled materials, what is the impact of this on the environment? Inform (rather than promote) customers about how much carbon or resources this will save. Don't make it look like a 'promotional' statement and definitely make sure the figures are accurate. Translate the impact into something that is meaningful to your customers.

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## **5 Media choice**

Consider electronic communications, as opposed to printed material, to reduce your use of paper. Electronic media has the advantage of being able to be targeted and can engage your target audience to a greater degree. If you need to print, make sure you choose the best available option in recycled paper and environmentally friendly inks.

## **6 Green by design**

Green marketing must start at product/service design stage. This is about looking at materials and processes used. Using recycled cardboard for packaging may be a positive thing, but reducing packaging altogether is an even stronger statement.

## **7 Plan effectively**

There is strong evidence that businesses that plan better make better use of resources. This would seem common sense and applies to your marketing activities as well. Too great an emphasis on reacting can be a more expensive, less effective and have a negative environmental impact. If you identify and plan out your attendance at an exhibition, it will save you money, increase its effectiveness and use fewer resources, than a reactive panic when you find the exhibition is just around the corner. You can also consider and build in green marketing into your plan more effectively.

## **8 Target rather than blanket**

Media is so diluted these days. With a vast array of magazines, web sites and television stations, the 'mass marketing' approach is more difficult and generally less effective. It also uses and wastes more resources. Why except that 98% of a direct mail shot will be ineffective or, worse still, damage your image as a 'junk mailer'. A more targeted approach will allow you to tailor your message, making it more effective and offering a more environmentally friendly option.

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## **9 Price realistically**

Many businesses think that an environmental badge will enable them to charge a large premium. Research has shown that although for some consumers there is an option to charge a big premium, for most there is a limit. It varies between product and price ranges, but it is possible to leverage a modest premium, just don't be tempted to over inflate this.

## **10 Created green narratives**

Word-of-mouth communication remains the most effective form of marketing. It is possible to stimulate word-of-mouth by identifying good stories that will spread in the media and around the water cooler. Marks and Spencer's Plan A is a great example of how this initiative has mainly spread through word-of-mouth rather than big advertising campaigns. Presentations by M&S managers and editorials in the press have stimulated word-of-mouth and good narratives, such as the one that announced that despite original thoughts, the initiative would require a budget of X millions; it ended up making money for M&S.

## **11 Walk the Talk**

Make sure other areas of your business also follow good environmental practice. If you've moved your product to being 100% recycled, but they are then transported to market in a fleet of inefficient lorries, your green campaign could be destined to fail.

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**GPM Network** provides marketing services to green businesses of all sizes – from start up to multi -national – in both the public and private sector.

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