

MODULE 8 Advocate Advanced Topics

MORE MARKETING

M8C L5 Pinpoint Marketing

Pinpoint marketing is a series of simple micro-marketing techniques used to determine some aspect of a customer's marketing profile. Micro-marketing techniques have come about as a result of the growing number of free sites offering geographic and/or GPS based services online. These free online services can be used in a variety of ways by online marketers to discover facts about a potential client. For example, a marketer might want to determine the physical location of a client's home. There are several free online sites that enable you to locate a client's exact location within the greater community.

Using an Internet search engine, you can now pinpoint the exact location of anyone's home. Some map related websites like www.MapQuest.com also offer free directional locators for every city within the U.S. These programs even provide printable maps with arrow directions. These mapping tools can also be used by advocates to locate medical sources or as a means of determining the most appropriate location for a client meeting. Although these online mapping tools were not designed to be used in marketing, they are nevertheless useful to disability advocates.

Identifying a New Niche:

The Internet and pinpoint marketing can also be used to identify new market niches. With the growing sophistication of the Internet, businesses are finding unique ways of identifying niche markets using these free Internet tools. In the last two years, Internet based micro-marketing approaches of various types have begun to evolve into reliable techniques that include our pinpoint marketing technique.

There are many different types of pinpoint marketing techniques and most are very easy to use. Some of these techniques are used to identify locations as mentioned above, while others are used to determine a client's marital, criminal or medical status. With the growing number of free online databases, there is no end in sight to the future available of information sources.

Home Value in Pinpoint Marketing

To demonstrate a pinpoint marketing technique in action, I'll use my technique for viewing the value of a client's home. This information can be used to verify the worth of a client's assets and his probable income range. Keep in mind that the information you extract from a pinpoint marketing technique does not need to be 100% accurate to be useful. You're using the pinpoint marketing process as a quick-and-dirty method of determining some aspect of a potential client's profile.

In this example, the claimant alleges that he has earned \$50,000 a year for the past several years. He also indicates that he is a homeowner with other assets. Here is the pinpoint marketing technique used to determine the approximate worth of the client's home. This same pinpoint marketing technique can be used to identify the market potential of the claimant's surrounding community.

To begin this pinpoint marketing procedure, go online:

1. Note the client's mailing address.
2. Go to Zillow.com
3. Enter the client's address, city, state and zip into the input box and click go. This action will place you into a satellite view of the home or community you have identified in the address box.
4. Adjust the satellite view to hybrid so that the base price of the client's home is shown on the screen. If you have a specific address, the database will show that address as a red home icon. Placing your cursor over the icon will reveal value information about that property.

The Zillow database will provide an approximate value for the property address inputted into the address window. By moving the view screen from street to citywide view, you'll be able to use this same tool to pinpoint potential communities in your area for future marketing campaigns.

Interpretation of Data

A pinpoint marketing technique will only provide value if you know how to interpret the information it provides. For example, the home value number provided by Zillow does not include improvements or expansions to the property. Therefore, a given property could be worth as much as \$100,000 more than the number shown in the Zillow estimate. We address this issue by adding an equal improvement amount to all surrounding properties. You also have the option of just ignoring the actual value issue altogether and use the Zillow numbers as shown.

You should also know the average home value in a given community. For example, you may receive a home value of \$220,000 on the Zillow screen. How do you interpret this home value? The best approach is to know the average home value within the client's city. Knowing the average value in the client's city enables you to make an informed comparison to other homes and other communities within that area.

In some areas of a city, the average home value might be \$300,000 and in others \$150,000. In this circumstance, look at the average home value throughout the entire city. Use this average value to estimate the value of the claimant's primary asset.

If the price of the client's home is equal to or less than the average home value within that city, the claimant is probably earning an income equal to or less than average for that community. I use this client asset information to determine if I should offer the client an alternative fee agreement. Our experience has shown that those of average income or below find the contingency fee approach to be the most attractive. Therefore, if a person falls within the average income and asset range, I only offer these clients the contingency fee agreement.

If a client's home value is above the average value within the same city, the client may be at or above average income. Those of above average income are more likely to accept the terms of the advance fee approach. Why, because it saves them money. Paying a smaller up-front fee that is held in escrow until the successful completion of the case can save a client thousands of dollars in fees. Therefore, I usually offer these upper income clients a choice of either the contingency or the advance fee approach.

Conclusion:

The Internet is becoming an every expanding source of information that can be used by advocates as a reliable research tool. As this article demonstrates, there are a growing number of free services on the Internet that can be creatively used in advocate pinpoint marketing. Take a few minutes and explore this Internet tool and discover for yourself new ways of pinpointing your market.

Keeping a client happy is in most cases a matter of communication. The more you communicate, within business reason, the happier the customer will be. If you communicate with your clients more often than would be expected, you'll have happy customers even if you lose their case. Somehow, good people respond well and think highly of services that keep them informed.