

## The Power of Three

Have you ever noticed that three is a near magical number? Everywhere from fairy tales to sports: it's always three: three wishes, three daughters, three chances, three strikes ...

The power of three exists in marketing, too. One of the most basic of marketing concepts, and the ground work for any marketing plan, is to determine your **3Ms: Message, Markets, Media.**

### Message

What are the key messages of your business or organization? What makes it unique? What is your brand promise?

Marketing messages, as with any viable communication, must be authentic. The messages will bear the same content to each market, even while being phrased in a way appropriate to that market. For instance, there are not separate or conflicting messages to seniors and youth. The difference will be in the phrasing (and delivery method).

Messages must be “upper tier” so that they can be crafted to relate appropriately to their targeted markets. The delivery method will also affect their “construction.” For instance, a tweet is very in different style and tone from an advertisement in a print magazine.

### Market

Who is your audience? You need to define your market/audience/community in order to select the best ways to reach them. Your marketing efforts will be more effective if you target them to your audience (the rifle instead of the shotgun). Small business should work at developing a genuine community. You don't want to over-reach with a community that is too large to manage on your own. Better to reach 10 real prospects than 100s of no-shows.

### Media

This refers to tactics. In addition to traditional media, such as print and radio advertising, brochures and billboards, public and media relations, new methods of social media engagement are increasingly important. The **media** selected to deliver the marketing messages are, in a large part, decided by who you are attempting to reach.

### More Threes

And, while we are addressing the Power of Three . . . if we dig just a bit deeper into **Media** options, we find another threesome.

Media Channels can be divided into – wait for it – three groups: Owned, Paid, Earned.

Business and organizations should have several of their **own media channels** through which to promote, celebrate, reach, build, etc. These may include your business website, perhaps a blog, social

media channels, such as Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, your print newsletter, your Mailchimp e-newsletter.

**Paid media** channels include the more obvious promotional options, such as print, radio, online or television advertising.

**Earned media** – is that wonderful world where PR – formal or informal – lives. This includes such media attention as a mention in a column of your local newspaper, being the subject of a magazine profile, a link from a blogger’s post about, for instance, your excellent customer service. These are often seen as gifts, and there’s no doubt that timing is important, but they are earned when you cultivate the opportunities and create the environment where you can receive such gifts. Mentions can be fostered by creating community, through consistent and reliable PR, and by “giving before you ask.”