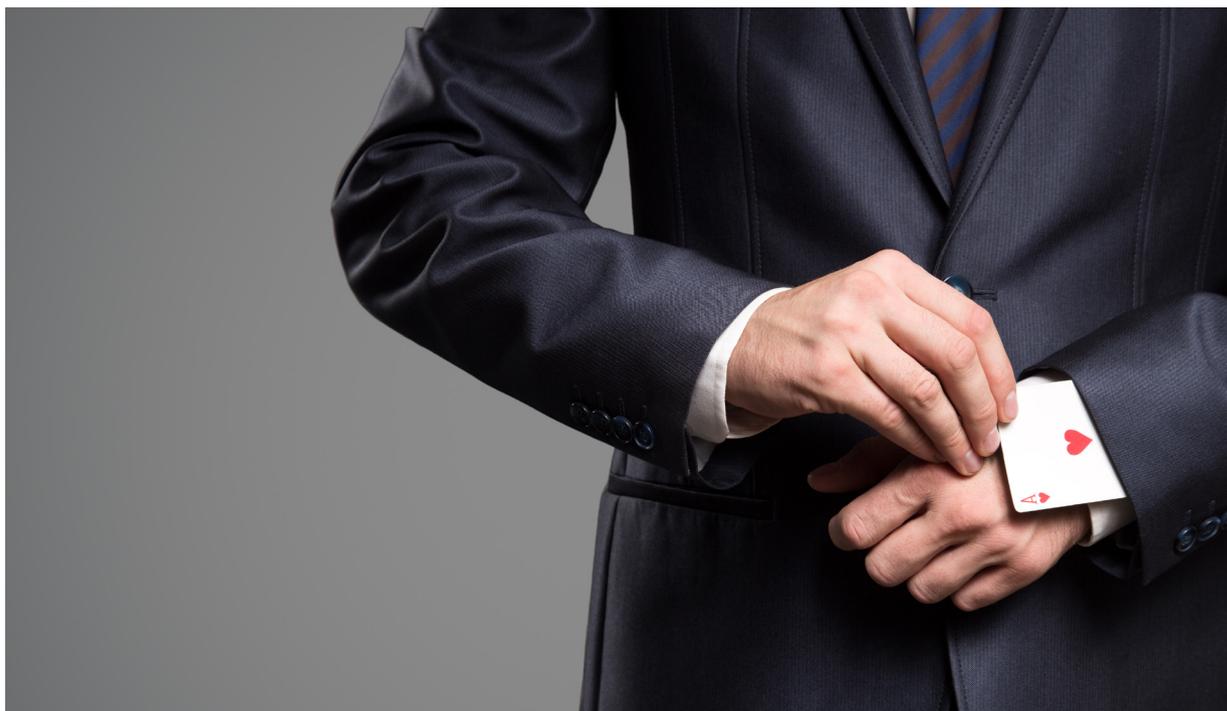


# PLAYING YOUR CARDS RIGHT



In the second of a series of articles on sales and marketing in the home improvement and DIY industry, **Kate Newton** from home and garden marketing agency Brookes & Co, looks at the shopping journey and its implications for marketing tactics.

Assuming you've done the research, you know your target customers and you know you have the right products and the right pricing, then the next thing to consider is the shopping journey for your product offering.

When do customers buy your kind of goods, how often, what prompts them to be in the market in the first place, how do they research their purchase options? Who are the key influencers and when does the customer interact with them, what are the 'touch points' that provoke a positive intention to purchase?

What happens in store, or online, or both, can a retailer sway a decision one way or another, what role might an installer play in choosing the type of product or the brand, and what might motivate that installer to push the end customer in a particular direction? And, after all of that, once a purchase is made, what can be done to ensure it is repeated and recommended to others?

## Keep yourself in the loop

So many questions might well require yet another tranche of research! And, even if years of

experience mean that the answers are pretty much known, some periodic investment in some extra drilling down into what happens in the real world is never going to be wasted, just because that real world is moving so fast. One way or another, it is vital to get the answers before committing funds to the massive choice of marketing tactics you might employ.

Not only might you be missing a trick and allowing sales to go elsewhere without realising, but equally you might be wasting money communicating the right things to the right customers, through the wrong channels or at times when they are simply never going to be in a mood for purchasing your stuff anyway.

Here are a couple of examples: There are plenty of products in the home improvement market that only get purchased, at best, every seven or eight years; or when the consumer moves to a new house. High spend on various kinds of traditional media exposure will work because there will always be some purchasers in the market. But there will be also be plenty of wastage. Clever use of permitted data – note

here to check out GDPR issues – and even cleverer customer and prospect relationship management, preferably with some human as well as digital input, may well produce a better return on investment.

## Make the most of various media

The big-ticket media spend might then reduce in proportion to how influential brand is in the category, and/or it might simply shift in favour of the peer to peer review potential of social media and online review. It might also be that online collateral takes precedence over the in-store toolkit – or the reverse – depending where research and purchase take place, factors which may also determine the relevance of incentivising third party influencers.

At the other end of the purchase frequency scale are home improvement consumables – which might be purchased monthly, weekly or even, in the case of some professional users, every day. Again, data which pinpoints individuals' buying habits can have exciting potential, but so can the very precise and time sensitive use of a whole mix of tactics and media. When the shopping journey equates to a daily

journey around a geographic area, with periods of time on the move, time spent in hard graft and time taking breaks, then all the following are going to have a potential role to play. All you need to do is work out exactly when the national tabloid, the local daily newspaper, the appropriate social media platform, or the printed catalogue will best come into play, in conjunction with the counter top point of sale and the instore incentive. When you know the answer to that, then you will not only know which cards to play, but also exactly when to play them.

