

## **Think Vertical in 2008**

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As competition heats up and more products and services become commodities rather than unique offerings, businesses will need to look at different avenues in which to promote and market themselves in 2008.

Many organizations feel that marketing to the masses will have a greater impact because a greater amount of individuals will see/hear about the product or service, and selling to just a percentage of that entire group will reap a return on investment. However, we're of the philosophy that marketing to a narrow group – the appropriate purchasers – will garner a better return.

We tell clients to "think vertical" which means to identify their audience(s) and market more directly to them. Not every product is of interest to everyone and if you think everyone is interested in buying your widget, just think again.

This is especially true in business-to-business (B2B) organizations but can be utilized for all types of businesses. We encourage clients to prioritize the industries that would be best suited for their product or service. Who, if targeted effectively, will offer the best return on investment?

As you move into 2008, identify three to five strong vertical marketplaces in which to promote your offerings. Then determine what level of executive within these industries are your decision makers. And, based on that information, research the way in which these executives obtain their information. What trade publications do they read? What tradeshow or conferences do they attend?

Then, target your message – first making sure you understand and communicate to the buyers' specific needs and requirements – in those market mediums.

While this approach might take a little extra time upfront, it will greatly improve your return on investment in the long run.