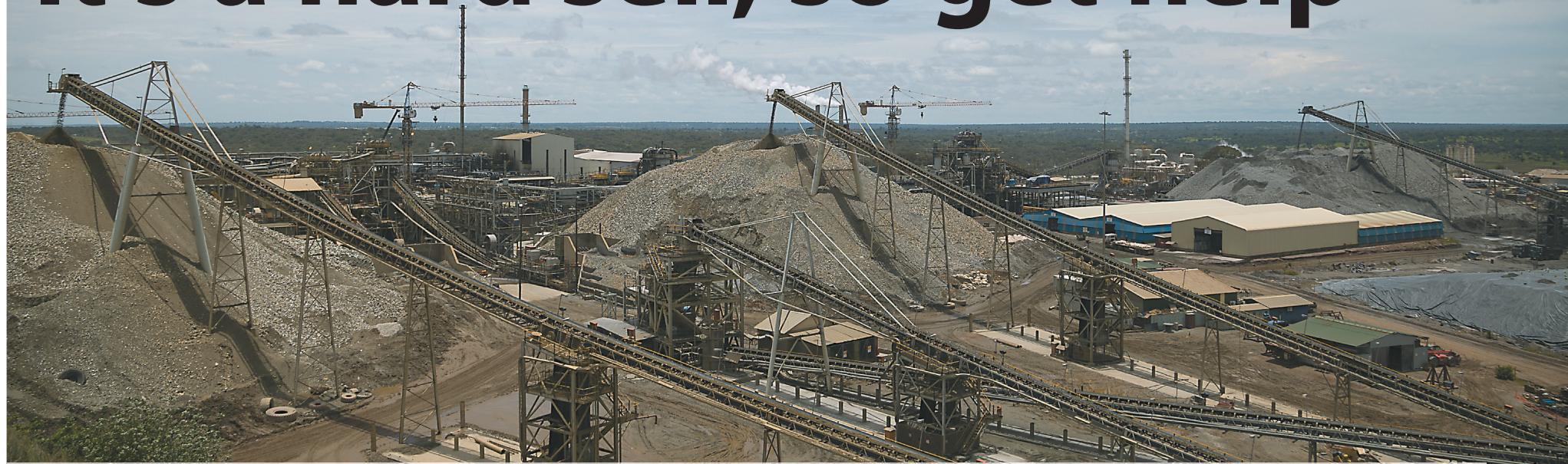


52% Marketers who have found a customer via Facebook

Source: WebDAM

FOR THE RECORD

It's a hard sell, so get help



ONE TRICK: Many mining suppliers and service providers take the 'sugar hit' approach with one-off ad hoc solutions to promote business. Photo: iStockPhoto



The mining supply and services sector mostly fails to get its message to the market.

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THE thing I enjoy most about my business is meeting people in the mining supply and service community, from big and small companies.

I have observed companies that have had great success in marketing, but most struggle. Here's why:

1. Underestimating the time and resources required to build a brand.

As the saying goes, Rome wasn't built in a day. If you think placing a one-off quarter page advert in a mining journal will result in a tsunami of inquiries you are deluded. According to our research, mining suppliers and service providers on average invest just 5 per cent of their annual sales turnover on marketing – and 25 per cent of that on advertising.

Investing in marketing is like putting fuel in your car: it's necessary, but not sufficient to get you to your destination.

How can you sell to someone without laying the necessary groundwork? Answer is you can't.

You can't, just like you can't drive from Perth to Port Hedland if you have not first filled up on fuel, planned your journey, set your GPS, stopped off along the way for refreshments, and put in the hours of driving to reach your destination.

2. Ad hoc one-off promotion activities.

In desperation or in a half-baked attempt to boost business, many mining suppliers and service providers invariably take the 'sugar hit' approach with one-off ad hoc solutions to promote business.

One advert. One mail-out. One trade show. One blog. One article. It's no wonder

people give up on investing in marketing or become cynical and sceptical about marketing when this approach fails to meet their (unrealistic) expectations.

3. Excessive investing and obsessive focus on the company website.

Your website is important and it needs to be found for any relevant online keyword searches, but it's not the be-all and end-all of your marketing efforts. If no one knows you, knows your company, knows your company's reputation, knows what your company stands for, then no website – no matter how sexy – is going to boost business.

4. No strategy or focus.

Let's face it, most companies operate on the daily mantra "get the business, get the business, get the business", but have no plan on the who, what, where, why and when to get the business.

And the more complex or the more brands your business provides, the simpler your marketing message needs to be.

6. Failure to reach out for help and build alliances.

In my experience, most mining supply and service companies are run by people with great technical skills and knowledge – people who are really smart when it comes to engineering and technical solutions, but who have little or no understanding of marketing.

In a bid to manage costs or some other misguided view, these people take on the marketing task themselves. Alternatively, they bolt the marketing job on to someone in the company that has little or no marketing expertise – or whose time would be better spent focusing on what they do best. Get the right people to do the work. Hire, outsource or partner, but

out of the box to meet customers' specifications or requirements and will go to great lengths to meet those requirements. When solutions to technical problems are the core focus of a business, marketing sadly gets put to one side or ranks way down the list of priorities.

8. Poor communication.

Promoting a can of energy drink is easy. Promoting a cone crusher, blast initiation system or dewatering pump requires a focus on the productivity, efficiency and safety gains to the end user. Most mining suppliers and service providers have little or no understanding of how to communicate these essential benefits.

9. No plan, vision or goal in mind.

One of the first questions I ask mining suppliers and service providers is, 'what's your marketing objective? – what do you want to achieve?' Very few have a clear and coherent answer.

10. No differentiation.

Most mining suppliers and service providers, but mainly service providers, fail to articulate and promote the genuinely unique points of difference about their company.

Too many rely on their company record and personal relationships to win business and not enough on why an end user of their solutions should consider them over a competitor.

The last word.

If you want to stop failing at marketing and start succeeding, take a deep breath and ask yourself: "Am I really doing what needs to be done?"

“ Investing in marketing is like putting fuel in your car: it's necessary, but not sufficient to get you to your destination

5. Trying to be all things to all people.

Due to a lack of expertise and 'thought' leadership, many companies make the mistake of positioning themselves as an 'all-things-to-all-people' solution provider. As a mining supplier or service provider, you simply cannot be all things to all people. Identify your core business and promote it constantly and consistently.

don't make the mistake of doing it all yourself.

7. Great equipment and service. Terrible marketing.

For the most part, the mining supply and service community is full of bright, intelligent and clever people developing and delivering innovative solutions for their clients. They often have to think