

## THE NEW PRODUCTS MARKETING CHECKLIST

- Survey the Market.** Determine its size, who the decision makers are, how much they pay... just for starters. *Understand how the business works and why these target customers buy what they do.*
- Perfect the Product Concept.** To succeed your product must solve a problem for someone, or satisfy an unfulfilled desire. *Stand out from the rest of pack, or get lost in the shuffle.*
- Write a Marketing Plan.** You'll need a clear selling message, an effective distribution strategy, a smart pricing scheme, a realistic sales forecast... and lots, lots more. *Remember... the devil hides in the details!*
- Name the Product.** There are just a few simple rules, and one of them is that most great brand names are made, not born. *And face it, it takes big money to create a big brand.*
- Test the Concept.** Go to your target audience. The concept is key. Polish it like a jewel, then measure purchase intent. *Forecast sales from data, not dreams.*
- Register Your Trademark.** Search to be sure. "Oops!" can be an expensive word.
- Design the Package.** Be guided by the 3-S's... it must *ship* and *store* and *sell*.
- Build a Promotional Program.** Most markets have a pipeline. You've got to push it in one end and pull it out the other... and grease it all the way along. *Be prepared to pay for performance.*
- Check Product Logistics.** If you don't have it, you can't sell it. Think of initial stocks, re-order points, manufacturing capacity, warehouse locations, shelf-aging studies... *and never forget QC!*
- Review Labeling.** Make sure it is *correct down to the smallest detail*. There are guys out there who police this stuff! And if not, there's a pack of lawyers lurking behind every serious product claim.
- Identify Key Influencers.** Prepare a marketing grid (map). Everyone who recommends, specifies, prescribes or approves needs to be sold also. *Tailor a portion of your program to target them as well.*
- Prepare Product Publicity.** At a minimum, prepare a simple news kit to get your product into the new product feature sections of trade journals. *It's virtually free advertising.*
- Prepare Selling Materials.** *Make them sell!* This means giving them *a reason to buy*. Talk trade interests to the trade, product features and benefits to end-users -- and value to everybody.
- Prepare Advertising.** In addition to those critical copy and media selection decisions, *watch your timing!* Ads run to empty shelves is the same as fanning in baseball.
- Detail Your Selling Plan.** Define who you intend to sell, how much, when, *and who is going to do the selling*. New products often starve for lack of attention once they hit the field. Be alert to this.
- Plan Your Management Tools.** Keep the reports simple, but keep them timely. *You've got to be able to stay on top of things from Day 1.*
- Test your Financial Controls.** Most new products fail, and most of those fail when the money runs out. Watch the pennies, and yes, the dollars will take care of themselves.
- Test Market.** A test market is your pilot launch. Plan it precisely. Gather all the data you can... *and get out into the test markets yourself as often as possible to see what's actually going on.*
- Plan Product Sales Training.** People who sell new products need lots of education. Anticipate key questions and objections, and prepare sound answers. *You can never share too much good information!*
- Really Launch It!** Make the launch a true event. Get everyone excited. *Get everyone committed!*
- Track Your Progress.** The discipline of monitoring your brand's progress to measure awareness, selling point recognition, etc. is critical to maximizing success. *A tracking study is radar not to be done without.*
- And one last thing.** *If you need help doing any of this, that's what we're here for.*