

by Allen Moczygemba
CEO, American Angus Association



Where the rubber hits the road

I was in my teens when I first became intrigued by marketing. At the time, I assumed marketing was just another word for advertising. Over the years, my fascination with marketing has grown exponentially.

I've spent the majority of my career involved in developing and executing marketing plans. With the topic of this *Angus Journal* issue focusing on marketing your cattle, I thought I'd address some of the common myths of marketing.

Myth #1: Marketing is advertising. This the largest marketing myth of them all. While it's true, promotion is typically one of the most visible attributes of marketing, it's certainly not the only attribute. Promotion actually falls in the bucket of communication, which, of course, also includes public relations. While impactful advertising is important, marketing is much more than running advertisements. At its most basic level, marketing is an entire mix of business activities that help you position your brand while building your business.

Myth #2: Marketing is only for large breeders. I would actually argue that marketing is even more important for smaller operations attempting to get established than a well-known purebred breeder. Establishing a business, and creating awareness in the marketplace and ensuring that your business operation is positioned properly is what marketing is all about. Each

operation, regardless of size, needs a marketing plan.

Myth #3: The best marketing is word of mouth. While a positive testimonial message from a satisfied customer is hard to beat in this business, if you simply rely on word of mouth as your marketing plan, your success is going to be very limited. I don't know about you, but I want to be sure I control the message when it comes to the product that I have to sell. Be proactive and drive the messaging and positioning that you created. Don't depend on others to sell your cattle; because if you do, you'll ultimately be disappointed.

Myth #4: Marketing costs too much. Marketing can be expensive but doesn't necessarily need to be. Again, we're talking in generalities — while marketing (promotion) can be expensive, even that can be managed. A marketing plan is one of the most important components of your business plan and other than time, and possible access to some market research information, its cost is nominal. Even if you do hire a marketing consultant to help you build your plan, I'd argue that it's still money well spent.

Myth #5: Marketing will deliver immediate results. Unfortunately,

it typically doesn't work that way. Marketing, when done correctly, is a well-thought-out plan that is designed to achieve long-lasting results. You need a marketing plan built for the long haul and an understanding that the impressions you create today will be impactful for years to come. If done right, that's a good thing. If not done well, it's not.

Years ago, I was in the office of Bo Pilgrim, the founder and owner of Pilgrim's Pride Chicken. Addressing a group of us that were in the cattle business, Bo shared some advice I've never forgotten.

"Boys," he said smiling, "advertising and special sale offers are fun, but marketing is where the rubber hits the road. Without marketing, a business doesn't have a foundation upon to rest."

Sage advice from a very successful businessman — even if he did get rich raising chickens. **AJ**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Allen Moczygemba". The signature is fluid and cursive.

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