

# Advertising vs. Marketing vs. PR: What's the Difference?



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**Understanding the nuances between advertising, marketing and PR is key to a successful marketing strategy.**

Marketing, advertising, and public relations are often thought of as the same thing, but there are important differences for businesses.

Small businesses can develop marketing and advertising campaigns that work together to enhance brand awareness and promote products or services.

Public relations can help a small business establish and improve its reputation with the public.

**•This article is for small business owners looking to build successful strategies through marketing, advertising and PR.**

It's easy to get advertising and marketing confused, especially as a small business owner juggling all areas of your business. Understanding what differentiates marketing from advertising is crucial for setting the right strategies in place to grow your business and audience.

Marketing, advertising, and public relations are similar, but each remains a different discipline for identifying consumer needs and promoting products to customers. Each approach offers a business owner specific strategies and tactics for growing their brand.

## **The differences between marketing, advertising and PR:**

Marketing describes how a company makes its audience aware of its brand and products or services. There are many different approaches to marketing, and it could be considered an umbrella term that encompasses both advertising and PR.

## The differences between marketing, advertising and PR:

Advertising describes the practice of promoting products and services. Advertising campaigns appear in almost every medium, including on television, social media and billboards. Advertising works hand in hand with marketing, utilizing paid platforms to increase awareness. To successfully promote products and build brand awareness, organizations need to have strong marketing strategies with engaging advertisements.

## **The differences between marketing, advertising and PR:**

PR describes the practice of cultivating relationships between brands and the public to organically promote brand awareness and customer loyalty. PR hinges on earned media coverage; businesses never pay for PR coverage, like they would to place an advertisement. It also involves controlling the narrative around news stories or managing brand crises as they arise.

## What is marketing?

Although marketing encompasses a wide variety of business practices and goals, one simple definition from Merriam-Webster describes marketing as “the activities that are involved in making people aware of a company’s products, making sure that the products are available to be bought, etc.” In short, marketing spans a series of actions that vastly improve the chances that your business reaches its target market and audience.

# Types of marketing

If the dictionary definition of “marketing” seems too broad, you may better understand what marketing comprises after familiarizing yourself with these common types of marketing:



**Content marketing:** According to the Content Marketing Institute, content marketing is “a strategic marketing approach focused on creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content.” In other words, this marketing approach focuses not on your products and services, but on developing and distributing online materials, such as blog posts, that educate your target market about your company and industry.

**Inbound marketing:** Through inbound marketing, your company creates experiences tailored to individual consumers. Such tools may include chat boxes on your company website that direct consumers to your customer service team. An inbound marketing strategy emphasizes attracting, delighting and engaging customers.

**Social media marketing:** Through social media marketing, your company uses social media channels such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram to reach your target audience. Paid advertising on social media channels comprises a large portion of a social media marketing plan.

**Digital marketing:** This category includes all online marketing efforts. It includes social media marketing and many inbound marketing and content marketing strategies, not to mention all marketing campaigns focused on search engines, email and other websites.

**Traditional marketing:** Traditional marketing stands in direct contrast to digital marketing. Traditional marketing describes marketing campaigns executed through channels other than the internet: Print, broadcast, phone, postal mail and billboards are examples of types of traditional marketing.

**Marketing communication:** Marketing communication comprises many activities included in the other types of marketing. All marketing messages and media that your company uses, whether branding or advertising, are included in marketing communication.

**Visual marketing:** The images associated with your company, from your colors and fonts to your logo and photos, make up your visual branding. These visual elements are a key part of any marketing campaign. This instant communication makes visual marketing one of the most powerful tools for a business to connect with customers

**SMS marketing:** Businesses use text message marketing, or Short Message Service (SMS) marketing, to deliver promotional messages directly to their customers' cell phones. Text message marketing is often used to increase brand awareness, generate returning sales, provide news updates, increase web traffic and run promotions.



**Email marketing:** Email marketing is a cost-effective way to market your products or services and reach your customers. Email marketing campaigns help businesses build trust with customers, increase website visits and ultimately draw more hot leads and sales.