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Census is crucial tool for marketing

It's countdown time to Census Day, April 1, 2010. The Census is a count of every individual living in the U.S., every ten years, as mandated by the Constitution.

Marketers count on fresh census data as a tool to impacting sales, product, pricing, promotion, and even retail locations. Why? Because consumers aren't a "one-size-fit-all" commodity, they are as complex and multi-faceted as the census can ascertain. The upcoming census is a great opportunity to retool for your "real" customers based on demographics, psychographics or what lifestyle activities do your customers do, plus where they live, work and shop.

Census data is also used to distribute Congressional seats to states, to make decisions about what community services to provide, and to distribute \$300 billion in federal funds to local, state and tribal governments each year.

Whether you are a small business or work for a larger one, you need to know who your target market or audience is. This info consists of a set of buyers who share common needs or characteristics that the company decides to serve. Sophisticated marketing planning includes customer service, hiring the right people to serve, making right pricing and financing available, answering telephone inquires and all of the ways to secure sales.

If you don't want to wait for 2010 census data, conduct your own survey. I recommend business owners conduct a survey, re-discovering who comes into your store, the hours you are there and when only your employees are there.

Do you need an extra person, bi-lingual, tri-lingual? Not all of your customers come from a few miles away. Many come to your areas to work and play and may live 50+ plus away. Many speak more than one language. One of my recent students speaks six languages; this person has a tremendous asset to apply to his career.

Participation in the census is required by law. It takes less than ten minutes to complete. Federal law protects the personal information you share. When it comes to marketing tools, the census really counts; it is important to all of us.