

Big Marketing – Little Budget

John Safin © June 24, 2008

Everyone wants extraordinary impact from all of their advertising campaigns. If the return on investment is good, then the cost for the marketing strategy is justified (usually).

What happens if you have limited funds to invest in promoting your business?

A high impact, high results advertising campaign doesn't have to cost a lot of money. Many successful marketing plans cost less than \$500 and will generate interest in you and your business.

Networking Groups – This is a great way to get your name out and make some new contacts. Local newspapers typically have a calendar of upcoming meetings. There are websites, such as MeetUp.com or LinkedIn.com, to find people with similar interests as you or other groups where you'd like to have more involvement.

Partner Up – You're not the only one who needs increased exposure. Any non-competing business could be a match for cross promotional opportunities. Create a symbiotic relationship with a local business that offers products or services that support your company. Trading web site links and banner ads will increase online presence. How to start? Find a business owner and simply tell him/her about your idea. The worst they could say is "no."

Press Releases – If you have a good relationship with your local media, you're far ahead of most business owners. There are online services that will distribute press releases about you and your company. The fee is typically based on the type of distribution and number of news organizations receiving the material. Some will even write the piece for you. Research vendors to see which one will meet your needs. You can always blog your way across the Internet for free.

Direct Mailer – A targeted mailing campaign is still one of the best methods for building exposure. If the local print shop seems too cost prohibitive, there are many out of state and online printing companies. Some print houses offer mailing services as well. Contact lists can be pinpointed down to the smallest demographic criteria, which would increase your chance of finding THE right person for your product/service. *(NOTE: The author has written a separate article on the benefits and strategies of postcard campaigns).*

Optimize Your Web Site – Starting a web site is usually the most expensive portion of the cost and you've already made the investment. It's time to maximize this marketing tool! Publish new content on your web site as often as possible. This can be an article you or someone on your staff wrote, comments received from customers, news and information your targeted audience would be interested in reading. Keep content fresh; archive any page with information that is ninety (90) days or older. Make search engine optimization (SEO)

work for you by updating your title tags every other month. Compare the web tracking logs to pinpoint the tags that work best.

Social Media Sites – This is a great tool if you don't have company web site. The online, interactive communities are a great way to get your name out there. Some online communities are more professional, such as LinkedIn.com, while others are more informal, such as MySpace.com and Yearbook.com. Your profile page will need to be updated regularly with new information to keep everyone's attention. Be aggressive and creative without compromising your business integrity.

Start a Newsletter – The main criteria of publishing newsletters is consistent distribution. This could be monthly, every other month or quarterly; whatever time schedule works best for your business. With consistent delivery, your readers will realize your entire company must be as equally on-time, efficient and organized. Include articles about your clients, different aspects of your business, future events, and other information that current and future customers would be interested in reading. Don't have the time or resources? Hire journalism students to write it. After distributing the newsletter by email or post service, publish a copy on your web site. Make it accessible to everyone since someone reading might decide to become a customer.

There are many other ways to promote yourself and your business. Make sure you include a call to action and track the results whichever tasks you add to your routine

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Over the years, John Safin has provided counsel and coaching to many business owners and professional throughout the United States. He also speaks on several subjects including marketing, business efficiency and people management. In addition to a variety of certifications, John received a BA in Communications from State University of New York at Oswego. He currently resides in Arizona.

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