

\$14.95
FREE*

Small Business, Big Marketing™

A practical guide to Marketing for Small Businesses on a tight budget



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INTRODUCTION

It's not easy being a small businessperson, is it?

You work long hours, take few if any holidays, and you bear the responsibility for the overall success of your company.

And of course, you are a born optimist. You are always looking for ways to improve your bottom line profitability, and take your small business to new heights.

Since you downloaded this book, I'll assume you believe that effective marketing could be a big help to your business. The problem is that hiring a marketing consultant can cost you a ton of money, and you probably can't afford it. And without some background in marketing, it's tough to come up with all the answers you need to put an effective marketing plan in place.

That's where this book comes in. In it you'll learn:

- How to define your "market position", a critical step in your business plan that even the most successful companies know they must do before they purchase a single ad
- How free publicity for your business can drive sales through the roof (and how to get that kind of publicity for your business)
- How to use the marketing tools available to you to communicate your message to the market
- And much more

This book offers you my experiences as a Corporate Marketing Manager for both large and small companies.

It's like having a marketing consultant for your small business, without the price tag. I offer it free to allow small business owners to benefit from information about marketing and publicity, in the hopes that your business will grow as a result.

Enjoy the material, and good luck in your business endeavors.

CHAPTER 1

“POSITIONING” YOUR SMALL BUSINESS FOR SUCCESS

*“A product or service that tries to appeal to everyone winds up appealing to no one.”
- Legendary marketing authors Al Ries and Jack Trout*

Many small business owners spend a lot of time focused on the tactical elements of their marketing campaign. They stress over what color they should use in their latest local newspaper ad, or whether they should change their tagline for next month’s radio campaign, or how many flyers they can print on their home computer for distribution this weekend.

We’ve all been there. And in this book, we’ll spend some time talking about tactical marketing issues.

But....before we get into the “what” of marketing for your small business, it’s important to cover the “who”...

WHO DO YOU WANT TO BE IN THE EYES OF THE MARKET?

That question hits at the very core of business strategy itself. Who do you want to be? What is your “**market position**”? If you haven’t spent some time sweating over this issue, you should. Deciding “who you want to be” is the most important decision you’ll ever make about your small business. It will often determine whether you succeed or fail.

MARKET POSITION DEFINED...

Your “market position” is essentially the space you occupy in the market, as perceived by your clients.

- Volvo is the “safe” car
- Wal-Mart is the “low-price” retailer
- Coke is “the real thing” in colas

In the case of Volvo, there are other cars on the market, and many car makers spend a lot of money promoting their “5-star” crash test ratings. But if I asked you to name the safest car on the road, you’d probably say Volvo. That “market position” belongs to them thanks to years of engineering safe cars and an aggressive marketing campaign to promote the safety of their cars, back when auto safety was an emerging issue.

The same goes for Wal-Mart. Major retailers run sales every week, and I have occasionally found an item elsewhere on sale that costs less than it does at Wal-Mart. But if I asked you who the low price leader was in retail, you would say Wal-Mart. They own that “market position”. It’s entrenched in the minds of consumer. Volvo means safety. Wal-Mart means low prices. They’ve defined their market position very effectively, and thanks to that fact, people know what they’re going to get when they buy products or services from those companies.

EVEN McDONALD’S HAS A MARKET POSITION...

McDonald’s is one of the most successful companies on the planet, but it started out as a small business. They ultimately achieved their growth and their success by focusing on who they wanted to be - a family friendly, kid-oriented fast food restaurant offering low cost meals that taste great.

Only after they decided who they wanted to be did they get started on the “what” – they developed ads that targeted kids, sold franchises in urban areas located close to schools and family neighborhoods, and so on. (They also included indoor playgrounds at many of their locations, a dead giveaway that they are catering to children as part of their marketing strategy.) All of these tactics helped to communicate to the market who McDonald’s is and what they stand for in the market.

To put it into “marketing speak”, when McDonald’s decided to be the family friendly low cost restaurant in the fast food business, they were deciding on what market position they wanted to own within the fast food market.

Perhaps the best way to describe McDonald’s market position is to illustrate all of the market positions they could have gone after, but decided not to:

- McDonald’s could have been a fast food restaurant with better quality food than all of their competitors, but at slightly higher prices and that would take slightly longer to prepare
- They also could have been the fast food restaurant with the widest menu offering the most choice to their customers
- Or, they could have targeted the adult market instead of focusing their marketing efforts on children and families

But they did none of those things. They looked at the market and decided that the best opportunity for their business was in attracting the business of families with children – and so they took up that “position” in the market.

Now bear in mind, McDonald’s didn’t just wake up one day and “decide” on their market position. They did plenty of research on the market and identified the most profitable market for their products, then refined their marketing and operations to deliver on what their chosen market would want.

Clearly, their decision was a success for them. However, even though McDonald’s dominates the fast food category, there are plenty of alternative market positions available to other businesses in that market.

NOT ALL BURGER JOINTS ARE CREATED EQUALLY....

While you might think that all burger places are the same, from a marketing standpoint, they couldn’t be more different.

Burger King has started to establish themselves as the choice of the young adult market, notably among young males. Watch their advertising – you don’t see nearly as many ads featuring kids or families. Instead, their focus is on the teenage crowd and up.

Burger King is simply playing the market position game. Since McDonald’s has the kids and families market wrapped up, Burger King took aim at a different part of the market, and has found success by tailoring their menu and marketing to a different market segment. They are attempting to secure the position of “choice of teens and young men”.

Wendy’s has taken up a position in another part of the market, targeting adults. Notice their menu is quite different than that of Burger King or McDonald’s. Wendy’s offers substitutions on their menu to accommodate health conscious eaters. You can have a baked potato instead of fries, for example. And you can purchase a lunch sized salad if you want to skip the burger altogether. (Unlike McDonald’s where they might grudgingly give you a salad instead of fries, Wendy’s actively promotes their healthy choices.) Their market position is clear: healthier fast food.

Three companies, all in the “fast-food” business, but all with different market positions and different target audiences.

TWO “FAST-FOOD” MARKETING LESSONS FOR YOUR SMALL BUSINESS

There are two lessons in the examples above that have a HUGE impact on the marketing choices you make as a small business owner.

1) Take a lesson from McDonald’s – you can’t please everybody so don’t bother trying.

Despite their incredible growth over the years, McDonald’s has pretty much stuck to their original game plan. Get families and children into the store, keep the menu short in order to prepare meals quickly, offer food at the lowest possible price, and so on.

Sure they have made attempts to go after health conscious customers by offering more low-fat menu items as the market for healthier food has grown, and they’ve had some success doing so. But in the immediate future, these tactics can’t replace the dollars they earn from their core customers – families and the youth market.

Even the mighty McDonald’s realizes that you need to take up a market position to have any chance of succeeding in business today. You must stand for something and make it known to the market what you stand for, or else you will easily be forgotten.

2) Take a lesson from Wendy’s and Burger King – find market positions that aren’t taken...and take them!

Just because some other company is dominant in your market doesn’t mean that there aren’t some great marketing opportunities for your business. BK is using their marketing and advertising to win back young males and teens from McDonald’s. Wendy’s is using a healthier more flexible menu to target health conscious adults who want the convenience of fast food.

In both cases, they are still in the fast food business, but they are focused on a particular part of the market. Their “market position” is designed to establish them as an alternative to the leader, McDonald’s.

A MARKET POSITION FOR YOUR BUSINESS

You probably aren’t in the fast food business, so let’s take a look at some of the elements that would be common across all small businesses, and how they can be used to build a market position for your business:

- Price you charge for your product/service versus the competition
- Level of service you provide
- Geographic area in which you compete
- Quality of your product/service versus the competition
- Type of customer you are targeting

There are others – this is by no means meant to be an exhaustive list. But for now let’s use some of the factors noted above to illustrate how using a market position can take an otherwise ordinary business in a market where it’s not easy to tell competitors apart, and make it stand out.

For example, imagine that you run a marketing consulting firm out of a home office. You provide marketing advice, strategic guidance, and advertising services to small business owners.

The core of your offer isn’t really unique – type in “Marketing Consulting” on Google and you’ll see what I mean. It seems half the population is an expert in marketing.

COMMON POSITIONING FACTORS

So how could such a business be positioned to actually mean something in a crowded marketplace? Well, you could start by leveraging some of the market positioning factors outlined previously:

Price – You could scan the market to determine what your competitors charge and simply charge less, giving you ownership of the “low-price” position

Level of Service – You could offer more services than the competition, or you could do the opposite and offer fewer services allowing you to specialize in certain types of consulting.

Geography – Thanks to the Internet, you could be a consultant to anyone in the world, or you could choose to offer your services on an in-person basis within a defined geographic area.

Quality of your Service – What credentials and experience do you bring to the table that would allow a customer to judge the quality of your consulting services? Are you better equipped or less equipped than your competition in this area?

Target Market – Do you have a defined target market for your product or service? McDonalds was clearly targeting families and the youth market. Geico.com targets cost conscious consumers who are willing to accept over the phone service instead of in person service from their insurance company in exchange for a discount on their premiums.

While being a marketing consultant is hardly unique, you could manipulate the factors listed above to create a compelling offer for clients.

EXAMPLE – DEFINING YOUR MARKET POSITION

For example, you could determine that a market opportunity exists in providing marketing consulting services in your local market, aimed specifically at small retail stores. This would effectively shut out your online competition, since it is much more likely that a local small business owner would do business with a consultant who was an expert in the local market before hiring someone found via the Internet.

In doing this, you would take up the market position as “the marketing consulting choice for local retailers”. (To focus on this market, you would need to establish the size of the market and determine whether there was enough business potential to keep you going. Or you could plan to service this market for the first year of your business, then expand to focus on non-retail businesses, or to focus on neighboring communities.)

As you can see from the simple factors listed above, there are all kinds of market positions you could review to determine if they represented a legitimate business opportunity.

A MARKET POSITION DEFINES WHO YOU ARE – AND WHO YOU AREN'T

In establishing a market position, you are making your attempt to carve out your slice of the business that's out there in your market.

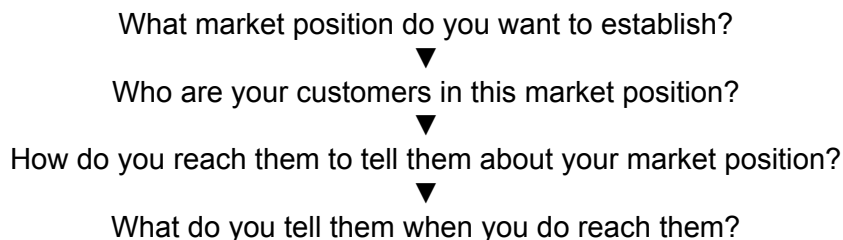
What you are really saying with your market position is “This is who I am, and I believe that a certain percentage of the market is going to prefer my market position over my competitors. And, I accept that some people will prefer something else.”

McDonald's does not count the number of people who go to a lobster place on a Friday night as lost sales. They just accept that on those occasions where a customer wants a fine lobster, they're not going to get it at McDonald's. They are ok with that, since they realize the strength and profit that comes from having a tight grip on their market position in the burgers and fries market, rather than being a fringe player in multiple markets. Same goes for your business. Serve a particular market through a well defined market position. You may exclude some potential clients, but that's ok.

SUMMARY - YOUR MARKET POSITION AND YOUR MARKETING

So what does all of this have to do with tactical marketing? What about ads and flyers and brochures? Your message in those marketing vehicles is really just an extension of your market position.

Think of the marketing process like this:



Your market position is the foundation for everything else you do. All of the ads you run will serve to promote your position to the right audience, and will help to establish your business in the minds of customers because you stand for something.

To repeat the quote from the beginning of the chapter, “A product or service that tries to appeal to everyone winds up appealing to no one.”

McDonald's knows it. Volvo knows it. And now you know it.

CHAPTER 2

START MAKING HEADLINES – THE INCREDIBLE POWER OF FREE PUBLICITY

“It’s the end of the era of advertising domination. Today, great brands are built with PR.”
- Richard Edelman, CEO, Edelman Worldwide

Most businesses focus all of their marketing efforts on paid advertising or sales activities. We’ll talk about those topics a little later. First, let’s cover the most overlooked weapon in the small business marketing arsenal: free publicity.

Being recognized as an “expert” in the media is a very attainable goal – in fact you probably already have the credentials to do this. And the benefits to your business can be remarkable. If you have a solid market position and need to gain exposure and credibility to help your business grow, you need to invest some time and effort into generating publicity for your business through the media.

TRUST ME, YOU CAN PUT YOUR BUSINESS ON TV OR IN PRINT TOMORROW FOR EXACTLY \$0

If there’s one thing you need to know about publicity, it is this – anyone can do it.

The proof – I was in my mid-20’s when I began making regular appearances on television and radio on behalf of my employer at the time, an independent firm in the staffing services industry. I had only worked in the industry for a little over a year, and had NEVER done any kind of PR previously. None. All I had were the ideas in my head and the backing of my company to give PR a try.

Within a few weeks, I landed a spot for us on the city’s most watched morning show on a major TV station. A steady stream of low cost, high reward media opportunities followed over the next year that generated significant awareness for us at almost no financial cost.

Read that again – **I was 20-something!** I had no specialized knowledge of the business, I was not an “industry veteran”, I did not work for the largest company in the business (in fact we were not even in the top 3). And yet, we made serious waves (and immediate profits) in the media thanks to some good ideas and a willingness to invest a little time in media relations.

Trust me, you can do this.

THE GREAT EQUALIZER

I often refer to PR as the great equalizer for small businesses. When it comes to local news, there's no reason a small business can't compete with a business ten times its size. In fact, you could make the argument that local news outlets like TV stations and newspapers are "biased" in favor of local small business owners.

HOW TO MAKE IT HAPPEN -- START BY WATCHING THE NEWS

Think about the last time you watched the 6 o'clock news. There was the usual variety of depressing stories about car accidents and house fires. But there were also stories about local issues, and usually in those stories people appeared on camera from the local area to offer a comment.

For example, when summer barbecue season rolls around, a local reporter will often visit a local retailer who sells barbecues to ask about what's new this year for backyard barbecue enthusiasts. They might also consult a local food expert to talk about great grill recipes for the summer. They may also have the local fire chief on to cover off some safety tips. Three local residents or business people all received valuable free exposure on a well-watched local newscast, and all they had to do was talk about what they do everyday.

It's called *publicity*, and it's probably the best marketing weapon a local businessperson has to get added exposure for their company at no cost. But how do these people get on air or in print? They must know somebody, right? Actually no. In fact, when you're watching a news related show and they consult an "expert", chances are that person is no more an expert in their field than you are in yours. And they got on air by simply pitching the story idea to the station.

The local newscast is one hour every night. It doesn't matter whether or not there was one hour's worth of news during the day, they still have to fill the airtime. On slow news days, newspeople are looking for local stories just like the one I mentioned above that will appeal to a wide audience (who doesn't like to fire up the grill in the summer time?!) and that they can put together without a lot of research or effort.

The same is true of newspapers. Reporters often need to generate a story idea for tomorrow's paper, and they would jump all over a good local story that is of interest to a wide audience.

So How Do You GET “IN THE NEWS”?

So how do you get on air or in print? Follow these tips:

- a) *Send a news release in to a few local TV/Radio stations and newspapers with a good story idea. Remember, it has to be NEWS, not shameless self promotion:*

“Shameless” Self Promotion	Positive News Spin
Visit my auto repair shop today because I want to tell you how hard I work to please my customers.	As the winter approaches, now would be a good time for your viewers to have their vehicle inspected to ensure worry-free winter driving. As a local mechanic, I can help by offering practical information about what to look for in a mechanic, and what safety systems you should have checked on your car before the snow flies this winter.
I’m a new chiropractor in the area and I’d like to build business by running an article in your newspaper.	Many local residents live with back pain everyday. As a local chiropractor, I’d be pleased to share with your viewers the 3 most common types of back problems, and the steps they can take to correct them now before the problem gets out of hand.
My new toy store took a lot of work to get up and running, and I think people would be interested in hearing about the exciting products that I have to offer.	With the Christmas season rapidly approaching, parents are looking for quality toys that their kids will enjoy for years to come. As the owner of a local toy store, I’d be happy to give you information on the latest toy crazes for the festive season, including what’s hot, what’s not, and some toy buying tips for parents to help them stretch their shopping budget.

See the difference? Shameless self promotion is just that – it’s an attempt to promote your company through the news media, and it simply won’t work. Positive News Spin takes something that your business is recognized for and turns it into a story that a news outlet would be likely to broadcast or feature in print. Same topics, same business. But a slightly different spin makes all the difference.

Don’t worry...if they do send a camera or reporter to run the story, they’ll put your name and business name on the screen or in the paper without you even asking. It’s common practice. And that kind of exposure, my friends, is very good for business.

Remember, the news does not maintain its credibility by promoting businesses. Nobody in the press really cares about your business and doesn’t really want to go out of their way to promote it. However, offer them a news story that involves your business, and it is no longer promotion. It’s news.

b) *follow the news*

When something newsworthy happens, the news likes to cover it from different angles. A story that was not very interesting yesterday can quickly become interesting today, if something happens in the news to spark people's interest.

NEWS : A rash of break-ins in the local area has residents wondering about their safety.

Anyone who owns a security company should be all over this one. You could offer your local news station safety tips, information about how home alarms can protect your home, and so on.

When something is in the news it gets people's attention, and they are much more receptive to hearing about what they can do to avoid the problem themselves. In a situation like this where viewers are concerned about their health and safety, they will be very attentive to any news item about securing their homes. The newspeople know that if they interview you to discuss safety, they're feeding the public's appetite for safety related articles. Just remember you are not on TV to pitch your product. During the interview, talk about alarms in general and provide general household safety tips. It will add to your credibility and the phone will be ringing off the hook the next morning.

What other companies could benefit from this type of news. Self-defense classes? Neighborhood watch programs? Private security patrol companies? The list goes on...

WHAT ABOUT MY BUSINESS?

You can find PR opportunities in almost any business. To carry on with the previous example I gave you about my personal experiences in the field, take a look at the following list of news topics that I used in my business to generate publicity for our company. On the left is the story that appeared in the news, and on the right is the release that I sent out just after the news broke to gain publicity for my business:

News Item	News Release Topic
Unemployment Rate Increases	Tips for finding work in a tough economy
Major layoffs at a local employer	Guide to surviving layoffs, both emotionally and financially
Major workplace accident occurs	The importance of workplace safety and steps companies can take to ensure a safe working environment
First day of Summer arrives	A look at this year's summer job market

You can see that as long as the news story pertained to employment in any way, I could generate a news release. In many cases, simple story ideas like these landed me on local television or radio, where I gave a brief interview on the topic...and naturally, I mentioned our company name and how viewers could contact us for further info. The switchboard always lit up on days when I appeared on TV or Radio.

FIND THE NEWSHOOKS FOR YOUR BUSINESS

As I mentioned, the news is much more likely to run your story if it's *on topic*. So when major layoffs were in the headlines, I was on TV and radio and in the newspaper giving interviews about what to do to protect your job and your financial situation because I was the local expert on the topic, and because I called and emailed my local stations and newspapers offering advice. I tied our company's expertise and experience into a local news story, effectively making our company into a news story.

As you watch the news, look for what we call a “newshook” (sometimes referred to as just a “hook”). A newshook is a piece of news that you can hook on to with a story idea related to your business. I've given you a few examples already in this chapter of what a newshook might look like. For example, if you are in the home security business, a rash of break-ins would be a “newshook” for you. It's something you could hook onto and provide additional information to a media outlet, which in turn would be more likely to run a story featuring you.

The only tools you'll need to increase your publicity are a knowledge of local news stories and the ability to craft a decent news release and carry a good conversation.

If you are interested in learning more about getting valuable free publicity for your small business, consider investing in a new audio presentation from author Will Dylan. [Small Business, Big PR™](#) is aimed at giving small business owners the tools and knowledge you need to put your business on the evening news or in the local newspaper at no cost to you.



You'll learn:

- The two key benefits of getting free publicity for your business – exposure and credibility
- The two types of news and how small business owners can have a great influence over one of them
- Strategies for delivering ideas to reporters that increase your chances of getting featured
- The benefits to your business of being featured in just one article in a major newspaper, or one segment on the evening news
- How to deliver a great interview that gives your business positive media coverage and keeps reporters coming back to you again and again
- How to increase the effectiveness of your existing marketing programs by Integrating your successes in PR with your marketing strategy
- And much more

[Learn more by clicking here](#) – of course you can finish the rest of **Small Business Big Marketing** first!

CHAPTER 3

PAID MARKETING TOOLS

“99% of advertising doesn’t sell a thing.”

*- David Ogilvy, co-founder of Ogilvy and Mather,
one of the world’s most renowned advertising agencies*

Publicity is a great way to draw attention to your business. Still, at some point almost every business will use some form of paid advertising to communicate with potential customers.

This is a major challenge for the small businessperson. Traditional advertising is expensive. Newspapers, TV and Radio sell advertising “space”. That’s an accurate term, since all you can really buy from any of these media outlets is space. Then it’s up to you to fill the space with something that actually sells your product or service.

Likewise, you can buy all kinds of pay-per-click ads online, but again, it’s just space. You pay for the clicks and the web space, and try to turn that space into something that will sell what you have to offer.

An ad in your local newspaper will cost hundreds of dollars. Major dailies cost even more, and radio and TV get expensive in a hurry. To be successful at advertising, you must keep the concept of “payback” (or Return on Investment) in mind.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT

One approach proposed by many small business owners is a pure ROI model for advertising. You measure each ad against its potential pay back and invest only in ads where you believe you can make money.

For example, if you sell widgets and you generate \$5 profit per widget, and an ad in the newspaper will cost \$100, that ad needs to directly contribute to the sale of 20 widgets for you to break even. (20 widgets X \$5 per widget = \$100 payback). Once you’ve worked this out, take a step back and ask yourself if you can really achieve this goal with the ad you are considering.

Some businesses prefer to take this a step further and look at the profit they make per widget instead of revenue. If you make a \$2 profit on each \$5 widget, you’d need to sell 50 to make back the \$100 advertising cost. (50 widgets X \$2 profit per widget = \$100 payback)

I would argue that the decision is not that simple. It overlooks that there are two kinds of value you can get from advertising. Value today (in terms of business) and value tomorrow (repeat business).

If you sell a product or service that people need repeatedly, then you don't necessarily need to break even on the first ad you run. You might make your money back over time, through the repeat purchases of new customers you brought in with your advertising.

In many businesses, it is rare that any single ad is highly profitable. It does happen, but I can tell you from the advertising experience I gained working for major corporations that the biggest companies around view customer acquisition as a long term proposition, and are willing to take what appears to be an initial loss on advertising to gain customers, who in turn keep buying and over time, more than paying back the cost of any one ad.

THE MANY TOOLS OF THE ADVERTISING TRADE...

Newspapers: There are two types of ads in newspapers – display and classifieds. Display ads usually start as small as the size of a business card and go up to 1 full page. Classifieds are self explanatory, and less expensive than display ads.

The issue with display ads is the cost of “**creative**”, which is the marketing term for the actual content of the ad. Display ads often contain logos, specific typefaces, graphics, etc. Big companies pay big advertising agencies to create the look of these ads, and then they provide the ad to the newspaper.

Most small business people don't have access to an agency, so you'll either be relying on the newspaper to create the ad for you or you'll be doing it yourself. Be sure to ask the newspaper if there is a cost for the creative before you buy the ad and agree to have them create it. (And beware that ads created by newspaper staff look like they were created by newspaper staff).

Newspapers offer geographic targeting. The Boston Globe is well read in Boston, but not in Miami. So if you operate in a particular city and are looking to market something city-wide, it's relatively easy to choose a newspaper that will reach the area.

At the local level, you can often find newspapers that target particular communities or neighborhoods, which is great if you are targeting a tighter geographic area.

There are some newspapers that target specific cultural groups as well.

Generally though, newspapers cover a fairly broad spectrum of interest, and are most commonly segmented by geography only.

Magazines: Generally more expensive than newspaper ads because magazines have a longer “shelf life”. (Newspapers are thrown out at the end of the day, while magazines are usually good for a month. They also have a habit of hanging around in your doctor's waiting room for much longer than that).

Another reason that magazine ads cost more is that most magazines are national. It's not like buying an ad in your local newspaper, where a few thousand people will see it locally. Magazines are usually sold across the country, and thus your ad will be seen by people in some very far away places. If you run a company that only services your local

area, steer clear of major magazines. You're spending money to reach people that are outside of your trade area.

Radio: Radio ads have a very short shelf life, about 30 seconds. Once they're over, that's it. You can't read the ad again like you can with a printed ad. That's why radio ad sales people are always looking to sell you campaigns, made up of a certain number of ads per week for 15 weeks (called a "**flight schedule**". Each ad is relatively inexpensive, but in total they really add up.) You need a "flight" because nobody will remember any one ad they heard on the radio (or so the sales pitch goes). Radio ads are called "**spots**". So when you are discussing the purchase of radio ads, you ask the rep "How many spots am I getting?"

Most radio stations will write the scripts for your ads and provide the voices at no charge as long as you buy a flight from them. For the local businessperson who is looking to spend a few thousand on ads, radio is not a bad choice. A solid 12 to 15 week campaign on the right stations will definitely get your message out. If you're looking to save some money, go with 6 weeks. It's almost as effective and will cost you less.

Don't bother buying a 1 or 2 week campaign on radio. Your ads won't be running long enough to make an impact on your business. If you really want to save money and you can only afford 2 weeks of 30 second ads, buy 4 weeks of 15 second ads instead. Make your message shorter and get it heard more often.

Radio ad pricing is determined by two things: the popularity of the station and the time of day the ads are running. The most popular station in the city during the morning show (when everyone is in their car on the way to work) will be an expensive advertising proposition. A flight will usually contain a mix of ads at different times of day. The radio folks have a word for the different segments of the day : "**dayparts**". Morning drive is a daypart, midday is a daypart, so are drive home, evening, and overnight. The two most expensive are the morning drive and the drive home.

So if you do buy a radio campaign, make sure that your "flight" contains a healthy mix of morning and afternoon drive spots, to help get the most bang for your buck.

TV – This is usually out of reach for most small businesses because of the cost. Not only is TV time expensive, but also you need to supply the station with **creative**. In other words, you need to hire an agency or production company to put together your 30 second ad. That can be very costly, usually \$1500 to \$3000 for a very basic 30 second "spot". Local TV spots will cost about \$200 to \$500 for 30 seconds, and that means that on a shoestring budget, you would not be able to run many ads before your budget was used up. That's why I leave TV ads for my larger competitors. I get more bang for my buck elsewhere.

Direct Mail - More commonly referred to as "junk mail", direct mail actually comes in many forms. There's addressed direct mail, which is probably too expensive for your needs. You need to hire a list broker to get the names you want, then a print production company to actually create the mailings, then a "**mail house**" to actually distribute the mail through the post office. And that gets expensive.

There are options though. Many communities have “Valu-Pak” type mailings where one envelope contains a number of coupons and offers to customers. You usually can’t control the distribution of these mailings – in other words, you provide the coupon and they mail it out. You don’t really know who will end up getting the letter, because all you know is that the envelopes are being distributed in a certain geographic area. This is ok if your business is tied to geography, such as a pizza company servicing a local area, or a local dental office, as long as you have some idea that the mailing will be delivered to the area you serve. It’s probably not ok if your business only targets senior citizens who are looking buy golf vacation packages. (unless the geographic area that you deliver the mailing is a neighborhood filled with senior citizens.)

Keep in mind that the best direct mail campaigns generally elicit a response rate of between 2 to 3%, and a common response rate is less than 1%. Experienced marketers with reasonable budgets are getting 1 in every 100 people to contact them after getting a mailing. Can you afford 99 of your 100 letters to be tossed in the trash? Think about it before investing in a direct mail campaign.

TARGETING IS KEY

All of this talk about the many ways you can part with your money when buying ads gets us back to the issue of targeting the right customers.

Every form of advertising has an element of waste That is, as soon as you buy the ad, there’s a certain percentage of people that will see your message but simply will not care. As I leaf through the newspaper and spot an ad for a new car, I don’t really look at it since I’m not currently in the market for a new car. That advertising money is gone up front. As soon as you buy the ad, you can almost hear some of the money being blown out the window.

So for all that you probably hear about targeting your advertising and marketing efforts, what you’re really getting at is which advertising opportunities have the least waste. A well defined market position is key to determining which marketing and advertising opportunities make sense to support your market position.

CHAPTER 4

MONEY SAVING MARKETING TIPS

“A marketing campaign or promotion that doesn’t get consumers to buy more of your product is, by definition, a dud.”

- Sergio Zyman, Former Chief Marketing Officer, the Coca-Cola Company

So how can you use these paid advertising vehicles to your benefit? How do you maximize the impact of your ads so that people will notice you, without breaking the bank?

Put your advertising sales rep on notice – Ask questions like “how will advertising in your publication help me reach my target audience”. Be clear about who you are trying to reach, and make them explain to you exactly how many of your potential clients will see your ad.

Don’t pay the asking price for almost any ad – Buying ads is a bit like buying a used car. The price really isn’t the price. It’s the starting point. Obviously something as small as classifieds tend to be non-negotiable because they cost so little to begin with.

A 15 week radio campaign on the other hand, could easily come down 20% or more from the proposed selling price before the deal is done. The same goes for TV ads or newspaper ads. Any ad space that’s not sold by the station or newspaper generates exactly \$0 in revenue. So if the \$100 radio spot they were going to sell you ends up being sold to you for \$50, the station is still better off than if they don’t sell the ad space at all.

I was recently approached by a local radio station to run a 15 week campaign, with a price tag of \$15,000. This included the spots as well as a promotion we were running. I also proposed a contest to accompany the flight.

I didn’t have the budget for a \$15,000 radio campaign, so I started working on the price. My first step....do nothing. I left the pitch meeting and never called the sales rep back. I made her call me. I explained that \$15,000 was too much. Quicker than you could say “radio campaign”, the price magically shrunk to \$13,500. Then we talked about dropping the contest spots and running just the regular spots for under \$10,000. In the end, I passed on the opportunity. Still, it was a clear example of how quickly an ad campaign can come down in price if you are willing to wait them out.

The same happens with newspaper ads.

Spend a little bit on your Publicity – As I mentioned before, publicity is free and offers your business a great chance to get local recognition. But it won't work without well crafted news releases. So don't be afraid to spend a few bucks to get a writer working for you on a freelance basis if you need that support to generate news releases and spot story ideas. One significant article in the local paper could be worth thousands of dollars in additional sales to your business.

If you're local, stay that way – Before you go and place an ad in the newspaper or on radio, ask yourself: Who will hear or see this ad? If you service a relatively small area, don't buy ads on a radio station that reaches far beyond the area in which you do business (your "trade area".) Same goes for the newspaper. You are paying for coverage that you are not interested in. Buy local ads that local customers will be exposed to.

Now there are exceptions. If you found a station or newspaper that speaks to your demographic perfectly, then that's the place to advertise, regardless of geographic reach. All things being equal though, you shouldn't pay to advertise in markets that you don't serve.

CHAPTER 5

COMMON SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING MISTAKES

In my business dealings, I've seen so many small businesses fall victim to marketing mistakes. Remember, dollars are scarce and time is limited, so you can't afford to waste your resources on marketing pitfalls.

Here are some common marketing mishaps that befall small business owners:

Spreading your investment too thin

Too many entrepreneurs fall into this trap. They scrape together a small marketing budget, then they spend it on a small newspaper ad here, then 6 weeks later on a small radio purchase there. Always doing small, disjointed marketing activities with long gaps in between.

It doesn't work. In fact, it's a colossal waste of money. It's tough to have a small budget, but the least you can do is use your money in spurts so that people actually become aware of your business. The public is bombarded with advertising every day. If you run a handful of ads on the radio, or one small ad in the paper, you won't break through the clutter. Nobody will notice you.

Instead, focus on making an impact with your limited budget. Run as many radio ads as you can afford for 6 or 7 weeks in a row, then stop for a few months. (In the business, they call that a "***pulsing strategy***"). That's a lot better than running a few ads per week. By focusing in a brief campaign period with some repetition, you'll have a better chance of motivating people to buy your product, or at least getting people to remember who you are.

Copying the big guys (when it comes to marketing)

There's really no point in trying to copy your larger competitors marketing tactics. They have bigger budgets, and no matter what you do, you'll get steamrolled. 10 people will notice them for every one that notices you.

Instead, look for advertising opportunities where your competitors are not strong. If your competition advertises in the major daily newspapers, focus on community papers and buy bigger ads that are more noticeable. Or get modest sized ads and put them in many community publications. Companies are always looking to advertise where their message will encounter little or no competition from direct competitors. (Big companies buy "***exclusivity***" in certain newspaper sections on certain days for just that reason---so that they can be the only company in their industry talking to customers that day.)

In short, advertise where your competitors don't often advertise. It's tough enough to get customers, you don't need your ad going head to head with a larger competitor on top of it.

Buying “brand advertising”

Here’s a crash course in brand vs. retail advertising. ***Brand advertising*** (or “image advertising”) is carried out by beer companies, cola companies, and car companies, among others. They invest millions of dollars just to tell you about their product. They don’t tell you where you can get it, or even how much you might have to pay for it. (In the last cola commercial you saw, did they tell you that it was a dollar a bottle? No, they just told you about the product by showing you some cute polar bears or a bunch of happy people drinking the stuff).

Retail advertising is just the opposite. It’s the grocery flyer that is contained in your newspaper or the ad on TV from the local car dealer. It says “We’re not going to tell you about this product since we know the company has already done that for us. We’re just here to tell you we have the product, and it’s on sale this week, so you should buy it from us instead of any other store in the neighborhood”.

As a small business owner, you probably have to do some of both to be successful. Since the majority of your potential customers are not aware of who you are and what you do, you’ll need to tell them. But you can’t afford the millions of dollars spent by the cola companies promoting their product, so you also have to sneak in the message about where they can buy it.

Where am I going with this? A lot of ad sales people will try to sell you on the idea of branding your business through advertising. You say you want to run a 4 or 6 week ad campaign because that’s what you can afford. They talk you into buying ads for 12 weeks to help “build brand identity”, or “build brand awareness”.

Don’t believe them. Remember two things:

- What you really want to do is make people aware of your product/service, and then sell it! Leaving a lasting impression on a non-buyer doesn’t pay the bills, does it? Don’t be talked into buying a bunch of ads on the notion that everyone in town will start recognizing your name and beating down your door for you product. Conserve your resources, target your market as well as you can, and focus on selling. When you’re rich, you can run all the ads you want, I promise. Until then, don’t blow your budget on a sales rep’s recommendation to “make a splash”.
- Your larger competitors have done a lot of groundwork for you. They are spreading the word that companies should have the product or service you offer. ***DON’T SPEND YOUR MONEY TELLING THE MARKET WHAT YOUR COMPETITORS ARE TELLING THEM ALREADY.*** Let your larger competition sell the idea for you. Focus your dollars on pitching your company as the better alternative to the top companies in your area. You offer the same products or services, but with better client service, a more local feel to business, and a few unique features not offered by the competition. Let them open the doors for you with their advertising.

You focus on walking through the doors. Got it

CHAPTER 6

MARKETING MESSAGES – WHAT TO SAY

Perhaps the toughest aspect of advertising is what do with ad space that you have purchase, either online or in traditional print publications.

Now that you've got the space, what do you say?!

With a clearly established market position, your job gets a bit easier. Knowing who you want to target, and what market position you are looking to establish goes a long towards helping you create more effective advertising for your business.

But it doesn't do the writing for you. McDonald's may be the choice of families with children when it comes to fast food, but they don't actually come right out and say that in their ads. The might be advertising one specific product, or a specific offer. So how does it all tie together?

USING YOUR VALUE PROPOSITION IN YOUR ADVERTISING

In marketing, there's a lot of talk about the "**value proposition**". That's a fancy way of saying "What's good about whatever it is that you are selling, and why do I want it?"

So, what's your answer?

Think about the product or service you are selling. Then think about all of the **benefits** that your product or service offers.

If you sell vacuum cleaners, what's different about the cleaners you sell than those sold by anyone else? If your competition is selling the same vacuum cleaners, then how are you different? Better price? Better service? Free vacuum tune-up every year for as long as you own the vacuum? What's your market position in the vacuum market?

Finding and promoting the subtle difference in your product or service versus the competition is called "**differentiation**". What is it that you do that makes you stand out? Why should I buy from you, and not from your larger competitor down the street?

The key to differentiating your product or service is selling the benefits, not the features. The key to marketing your business effectively is to let people know about your value proposition. Whether you do so through advertising, the media, or the mail is secondary in importance to the offer itself.

Here’s a quick primer on features vs. benefits:

Features	Benefits
This vacuum features the most powerful suction nozzle in the business	This vacuum gives you the cleanest carpets possible in no time at all!
The new BMW325i features a new durable engine design	This car offers unmatched reliability and provides worry-free driving for many years
This book features information about marketing on a tight budget	This book will help small business owners market themselves more effectively, leading to higher sales and profits.

Once you know your value proposition for the specific offer you are making, you make that your message and that’s all you talk about from then on when you are trying to attract customers. You don’t sell vacuum cleaners, you sell the **best** vacuum cleaners. Or you offer the **best** warranty in the business on your vacuum cleaners.

This is the reason that you never see any ads on TV that say “This vacuum cleaner will clean your floor”. Where’s the value in that? That’s no different than other vacuum cleaners. The ads always say “This vacuum cleaner will clean your carpet better than any other”, or “This vacuum cleaner will clean the carpet and it is the cheapest cleaner available.”

In short, the “*value proposition needs to mean something to your customer*”. It needs to be a benefit, just like those listed in the chart above.

Here are some additional examples of value propositions:

Business	Value Proposition
ABC Roofing Co.	Quality Service and the Longest Guarantee in the area
Local Donut Shop	Convenience – Open 24 hrs to serve you
Al’s Plumbing	Reliable service backed by 20 years serving the community

Each of these businesses is different, but no matter that they do they can still boil down their value proposition to a single statement.

Why should a customer hire the roofing company? Well, the longest guarantee of any company in the area will appeal to those who are looking for a high quality, worry free roofing job (the “reliability” position). And the Plumber’s value proposition is that he’s local and has a long history in the area. This makes customers feel more comfortable calling him, because his value proposition is all about serving the local community, and with a long history, customers will feel more confident that his business practices are legitimate. (the “experience” position).

CHAPTER 7

DIRECTORY ADVERTISING (YELLOW PAGES)

Directory Advertising, commonly referred to as “Yellow Pages” advertising, is often a major tool employed by small businesses in an effort to generate sales. Most small business people believe you **MUST** be in the Yellow Pages to keep up with your competitors, and they are right. A basic line ad in the Directory for your area ensures that your name will be seen by every potential customer looking for your product or service.

This dilemma has now spilled onto the Internet, with most directories offering online listings as well. While the vehicle is different, the issue is really the same – how much to spend on a directory listing.

How big should your ad be? Is a line ad enough? Should you dump all of your money into a massive Directory ad, hoping that every person who looks up your category will be blown away by your huge ad and will call you first? The answer depends on what type of business you’re in. Don’t worry, I’ll give you all the guidelines in a minute, but first, a quick story.

THE SMALL BUSINESS FOCUS GROUP...

I once attended a focus group for small businesses. A focus group is essentially a market research session paid for by a big company, in this case, the local phone company responsible for the Yellow Pages in my area. They assembled a group of small business people and asked them what they thought about advertising in the local Yellow Pages, including topics such as the value they were getting from their ads, any alternatives they would consider, etc. As the Marketing Manager for my company (one of their advertisers), I was invited to participate.

The differing views on advertising from around the table were quite interesting. Some people, like the appliance salesperson, were convinced that they needed the biggest ad in their category to be noticed at all. Others said that the Yellow Pages was their only form of advertising, including the plumber, the bicycle shop owner, and the flower shop. Still others lamented that fact that although they did get business from the Yellow Pages, they found that it was “low quality” business. (He was a lawyer, but a really nice guy).

Why the differing viewpoints from small business people? Simple...they are in different businesses. Some categories in the Yellow Pages are very crowded, some are not so crowded. Some have one or two identifiable market leaders in them while others are comprised mainly of small businesses without significant brand recognition.

WHAT TO DO, WHAT TO DO

In my opinion, there are two ways to handle directory advertising:

Option 1 - Go as small as you can – Check your category. For example, let's say you're in the Flower Shop category in the Yellow Pages. Your main competition comes from two major flower shops in town that just about everybody has heard of. Being a small business, you are not as well known.

Think about your customers for a minute. Why do they use the Yellow Pages? Well, probably because they are looking for a product or service and need to find a business that offers it. If these two major flower shops are so well known with very memorable phone numbers and web addresses, why did the customer open the directory to seek out a business in the first place? Didn't they know about the "big" shops in town?

Maybe they didn't, and when they see their big impressive ad, they will call them. Or maybe, they went looking for an alternative to the big shops. They knew about your large competitors, but they chose not to deal with them. They went to the Yellow Pages looking for a local florist who could help them, or looking for someone who specialized in a particular kind of floral arrangement.

In cases like this, it's not always a case of the biggest ad wins. When a customer is seeking alternatives, they are looking beyond your larger competitors, and that's where a line ad or small display ad often does the trick, especially one that is focused on a particular niche within a broader market.

If you are in a business category dominated by a few, well known businesses, don't bother trying to outspend them in the Yellow Pages. Your customers wouldn't have opened the Yellow Pages if they were looking for the big guys. Go small and use your money to fund other marketing ventures, like generating publicity or investing in an ad campaign on local radio.

Option 2 - Buy the biggest ad you can afford

There are some cases where you will need to spend a little extra on advertising in the Yellow Pages. Imagine you are a lawyer just getting your business started. There are scores of lawyers in your local directory, and some of them have sizeable ads. In general though, the market for lawyers is generic. In most cities or towns, 99% of the lawyers are unknown businesses who people only look up when they need them.

In cases like this, where you are in a large generic category that is not dominated by one or two well known businesses, a slightly larger ad than the basic listing will provide additional visibility for your business. You still don't need to purchase a full page, but a small display ad may serve you well. When people consult the local directory, uncertain of just who they will call out of the list of dozens of relatively unfamiliar businesses, your more noticeable ad will help steer more callers to your business.

Of course, there is an option 3 here – don't advertising in online or offline directories, and use your money elsewhere. Ultimately you'll have to make this decision based on the cost and estimated return of a directory ad in your area.

The overriding message is that directory ads can be a useful part of your overall marketing campaign, but don't rely on them for all of your business. Remember, anyone can put an ad in the local business directory. As a small business, you can't buy the biggest ad or buy enough space to dominate a particular category. If you do what all of your other competitors do, you're not doing everything you can to get more than your fair share of the market.

The small business focus group I attended illustrated that many businesses just don't have this whole marketing thing figured out, which is an advantage to you. Some of these small business people had never considered generating publicity for their company, or building a strong, profitable referral program (which we'll talk about later on). They looked at the Yellow Pages as their entire marketing plan, and that's far too limiting. As I mentioned, it's a part of your overall marketing plan, but it's not the entire plan.

Don't count on one ad in one book to keep you thriving forever. Anyone can buy a bigger ad than you, but very few people will have an effective marketing plan in place or have a well defined market position, or even an understanding of how advertising and publicity work. That's your advantage!

CHAPTER 8

THE INTERNET

I couldn't write a book on marketing your small business without mentioning the Internet.

If you run any kind of business, chances are you've been approached by computer consultants or other tech-savvy folks to persuade you to spend money on a flashy internet site, or on SEO (search engine optimization). They tell you that you can advertise free and that people from all over the world will be exposed to your product. It's a "can't miss" opportunity, right?

Let me say up front that there's no way to cover everything there is to know about online marketing in the confines of this ebook.

So my framework for the discussing the Internet will be as a part of an overall marketing plan focused on a strong market position. In this sense, the Internet is viewed as another communication vehicle for your business – another way to have clients interact with you or decide to do business with you.

FORGET THE HYPE...

Let's tackle some of the myths of the Internet right now:

It's free, 24/7 advertising for your company – Not true. Sure you put up a website, but nobody (and I mean nobody) will visit the site unless you pay to advertise it, or you invest your valuable time in generating content that will attract visitors.

You can get business from all over the world – This could be true, as people everywhere have access to the Internet. Think about your business, though, and ask yourself if you want business from around the world. Are you a plumber who services a radius of ten square miles around your house, or a writer who could send your work via e-mail anywhere in the world and receive payment on-line?

Furthermore, people are somewhat biased geographically. Given a choice between purchasing something from a business in another country, or one that's 10 miles away, they are more likely to choose the latter.

It's a virtual cash machine for your business – If this were true, all those dot.com companies wouldn't have fizzled out in 2001. The Internet by itself does nothing to make you money unless you use it wisely as part of an overall marketing plan.

THERE ARE TWO TYPES OF INTERNET SITES...

Having said that, there are two ways to look at the Internet for your business:

An online ad – Sites like this are generally thin on content and really serve as an ad for the business more than anything else. For example, a local plumber might have a website that provides a name, contact number, and a list of prices for common plumbing jobs. The website's sole purpose within the marketing plan is to drive customers to pick up the phone and call.

A store – This is more involved than the simple online ad site. A product or service might be available on the site, with additional content, a means to make an online purchase, and other tools.

If you fall into category one, you might be in one of these businesses: dentistry, plumbing, landscaping, catering, cleaning, carpentry, auto repair, dog walking, child care, and so on. Your business relies on the local area for success.

Category two means that you are likely in a business like resume writing, collectible figurine sales, book sales, etc. If your business is information based, or involves a product that can be shipped out, the Internet would be a great place to invest some money since anyone from anywhere in the world with a credit card can buy your product.

In keeping with our categories, let's have a look at how Category 1 and 2 businesses can capitalize on the Internet.

Category 1 – The Online Ad

Your internet site will probably serve as more of a directory site. It may only have one or two pages to it, and all it does is lay out who you are, what you do, and talks about your value proposition to clients.

To build your site, you might want to consider looking into a local college or university and hiring a "web designer in training" to draw up your site for you. Students from a reputable college web design program will often have the skills necessary to help you and will work at a very reasonable price. You don't need a Picasso, just a decent functional site that points customers in your direction.

Alternatively, you can purchase web design templates which allow you to fill in your content using a pre-made web design template. The template business has grown exponentially in recent years, but you'll still need some knowledge of web editing software to use a web template.

Another alternative is to find out if your town or city operates a business website for the area. Many internet design companies have deals with individual cities to build a website to promote the services of local businesses. You can usually advertise with these companies without actually designing a site yourself. For example, they may prepare a one page company website for you with your agreement to purchase one year's worth of advertising.

Category 2 – The Store

If you are relying on your site to drive transactions and sell your product or service, then you may want to hire a professional web designer for your website. You need more than just a display site; you want your site to actually do something, like take orders or offer an on-line catalogue of your products. BE CAREFUL....consult with a number of web designers before you proceed, and get a good idea for what your cost will be before you invest. Web design is not cheap. Be clear about your expectations, get it in writing from the company you hire, and specify your budget up front.

As for the design of the website, you'll find that a good web designer has all kinds of good ideas for you. Just remember to be clear about your budget up front and compare prices.

Regardless of what type of Internet site you desire, there is definitely value in having some presence on the Internet. It's just that it is more valuable for some businesses than others. Spend your money accordingly, and remember that the Internet itself won't sell your products or services without a strong marketing plan to back it up.

Entire books have been written just on this topic, but let me clarify some principles for using the Internet as part of your marketing efforts:

- The Internet is just another tool at your disposal to tell the world about your market position
- The Internet itself cannot sell your product or service
- Having a sloppy Internet site is worse than having no site at all in some cases
- Spending money on online ads that draw people to your website is a fine idea, if your website is designed to convert these visitors into buyers

CHAPTER 9

WALKING ADVERTISEMENTS

“If your customers buy your product and never think about it again, you can’t expect them to talk about it too much.”

- Emanuel Rosen, Author of the Bestseller, “The Anatomy of Buzz.”

So you’ve used the advice contained in this book to gain some customers by clarifying your market position. You are proud of your publicity efforts, and you’ve applied some of my tips to cut your marketing costs and increase the effectiveness of your overall marketing plan.

Now what? You’re not just going to sell your new customers a product and let them walk away, are you?

Not when you’re marketing on tight budget! You now have to use the customer in front of you to build your business, and you do that with a successful referral program.

Referrals work. Word of mouth advertising is still the most powerful form of advertising available. (Most marketing people who are paid to buy ads and run radio campaigns would rather you didn’t know that, but it’s TRUE!). You need to make every customer who buys your product or service into a walking commercial for your business.

HERE’S HOW

Give them a reason : Offer your customers a discount on their next purchase if they refer a new customer to you. A lot of companies do this already, but amazingly, not many of them publicize it. If they remember, they mention it to you on your way out the door.

Well I say you make *damn sure* your customer knows before they leave that you want their business, and you want them to bring their friends in to buy your product or service as well.

Think of your local mechanic. They might have mentioned to you at some point that if you refer a friend, they’ll give a small discount next time around. But they could do much better than that, couldn’t they?

If I owned a garage (and believe me I never will because I can barely hold a wrench let alone use one), I’d make sure that after every transaction I told my customers that if they refer a client to me, and that client brings their car in for any kind of repair at all, I’d give them a free lube oil and filter on their next visit. That’s a retail value of about \$20. It would cost me about \$10. You can’t tell me that if you were in the auto repair business you wouldn’t buy a new customer for \$10!?!

Just give your customer a reason to make the referral. Deliver good service, charge a fair price, and make it worth their while to send a friend your way. (By the way, the referral program also helps to bring the original customer back in to get their free oil change, so it's really like getting 2 follow up visits from just one referral.)

ANOTHER EXAMPLE

What about the plumbing business? Here's a quiz for you. Name 3 plumbers in your area. I'll wait.

Couldn't do it, could you? Most plumbers are independent businessmen and women. They don't have big advertising budgets, and they only service a local area.

So you can imagine that a plumber, who sees 4 or 5 or maybe 6 clients a day would be well served by offering a referral program. Turn those 6 clients into 12 by having them each refer a friend who has a plumbing problem.

Can this really work?. You only call a plumber when you need one, so what good is a 10% discount off your next plumbing job? It's not like the mechanic who does regular maintenance on your car. You might use a plumber once, and then never again. How would a plumber come up with a referral program?

I'm no plumber, but here's my idea. You refer any client to me who has a job of \$100 or more, and I'll install a fancy brand new kitchen faucet for you at no charge. The faucet won't cost a plumber much, because he's got the inside track on deals in the industry. So a nice \$80 faucet at the store probably costs him \$40. And he can put it in about 15 minutes or less. Now who wouldn't want a nice new kitchen faucet, installed free! All they have to do is mention you to their friends. If one of them calls, you make \$100 less \$40 for the faucet, and gain another client for the future. Do that for a few years and watch your business grow.

Any business can do this. Think about the connections and knowledge that you have, and what value it represents to your clients. Then package it up, just like the mechanic or the plumber did in these examples. It could be simple as 10% for a referred customer, or a little different like our plumbing example. Either way, it creates business at low cost. And that's just the point, isn't it?

Another point...you probably couldn't name two plumbers in your local area. Imagine if a plumber had taken the time and effort to gain some publicity for their business on the local news or in the newspaper, or taken advantage of our money saving tips to advertise more effectively with a small investment. In a business filled with no-names, that plumber would probably stand out in your mind.

CONCLUSION

I hope you can see it now. You don't need big budgets to market your company effectively. You CAN compete with larger competitors using clever marketing techniques and a well defined market position.

You can use publicity, the small businessperson's number one weapon against big budget marketing. It's free, and effective. People believe what they see and read in the news. If you can put your business in the news, you are in a powerful position to drive sales higher.

You can use your enhanced knowledge of advertising that I've presented to you in this book to help guide your marketing decisions towards opportunities that will generate a good payback on your investment, and away from advertising vehicles that are priced too high for the average small business.

You can avoid the common mistakes of small business people, like spreading your marketing too thin or trying to copy the marketing strategies of your larger direct competition.

And finally, you can use clients as walking advertisements for your business by giving them a reason to send business your way.

THE LAST WORD

I sincerely believe that if you invest some time and effort into publicity, and take the marketing knowledge I have given you in this book to heart, you will have the tools you need to run a more successful, more profitable business. I wish you success in your endeavors, and encourage you to contact me with any questions or comments about the book or about small business marketing in general. You can reach me through our website www.marketingyoursmallbusiness.com.

Now, go out and show your larger competitors how it's done. Good luck and happy marketing!



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