



Trudy Belanco

Question

How Can I Make Sure My Business Is Not the “Best Kept Secret”?

Answer

When the going gets tough, the economy slows down, and profits are weakened, it seems that the easiest place to reduce spending is in the Marketing Budget—bad move! Without an effective, ongoing, targeted, marketing plan, you will soon become the best kept secret in town and your sales will disappear.

If funds are tight, use low budget marketing to get your message out to your customers on a regular basis. Prospects will become buyers if they consistently read about your company in print ads, hear about you in the community, attend a free seminar that you offer, visit your effective website, and trust you enough to do business with you.

Here are a few examples of low budget-high impact marketing plan techniques that focus around relationship-building activities:

- **Make yourself newsworthy:** Become the expert in your field and submit an article to the local newspapers, organizations, and business newsletters.
- **Maximize Word of Mouth Referrals:** Don't be afraid to ask your satisfied clients for testimonials to place on your website and/or marketing material or to forward your name to friends and family. A satisfied customer is more than happy to refer business to you, if they know that you are looking for more clients.
- **Offer free demonstrations or consultations:** Attend trade shows to showcase the value of your product/service to potential customers.
- **Sponsor or provide a Door Prize for a Charity Event:** This shows your commitment to the community and gives your business exposure to more people.
- **Get involved with local committees, business networking groups:** Choose groups that offer regular meetings that offer the opportunity to meet new people, create new relationships and possibly create joint marketing initiatives.

Developing a high-impact marketing plan even on a limited budget creates a roadmap or necessary guideline to follow. It helps keep you accountable to your plan. Marketing is not an event—it is an ongoing process. A one-time radio ad blitz, a one-time flashy newspaper ad, or a quickly put together website will quickly erode your budget and will not provide you with continued sales. You cannot expect instant sales results—stay the course and continue to methodically implement your plan to your target customers and watch your sales grow! **BR**

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