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MARKETING MICHELLE GAMBLE

Twelve of the best to boost your sales results

NO MATTER HOW your business is performing, it's always a good time to explore low cost marketing opportunities. Low cost marketing doesn't mean lazy marketing. It takes a lot of planning and perseverance, but getting results from a small dollar spend not only adds much needed cash to your bottom line, it can give you a confidence boost also.

And confidence is definitely needed in your position, because that's what keeps you coming in to work each day with a positive attitude and the oxygen you need to breathe life into your business.

Low cost marketing can quickly spiral into high cost if you don't set solid goals early on. So, take a moment to think now exactly what it is you want, for example:

- I want 20 new customers in 20 days who will each spend more than \$100
- I want one new client who will buy my \$15,000 consulting service
- I want to retain my current customers and increase their spend by five per cent in the next month
- I want to set up meetings with 10 prospective customers within the month
- I want to generate 50 new enquiries for my product/service in the next two weeks
- I want to clear all last season's stock... at a 20 per cent profit
- I want to launch a new product/service and sell the first one on day three of the campaign

Now that you've set your goal, you need to identify exactly which group of customers will help you best meet your

target. Your low cost marketing strategy needs to then totally focus on this group. A lazy marketer always falls back on the scattergun approach, but when you're serious about getting results, it's being focused that saves costs.

Here are 12 low cost ideas to try this month:

- 1. Media release** — come up with a story idea about your business and send an email or make a phone call to a newspaper. Make sure your story is relevant to the paper you're sending it to, and also suggest a photograph that might work well with the story.
- 2. Public speaking** — contact a local service club like Rotary and see if they'd be interested in you doing a presentation on a subject of interest. This doesn't mean you bore everyone silly with a sales pitch; come up with an interesting topic that has something to do with your expertise and turn it into a fantastic talk
- 3. Direct mail** — contact all your past customers with a special offer
- 4. Key word marketing** — on the internet you can buy key words relating to your product from as little as 10c. Just make sure you target your specific market, there's no use buying words that people from Czechoslovakia will see, if you're only selling to people in country NSW
- 5. Take notice of noticeboards** — put up an ad or notice at your local community board (maybe with a tear-off offer)... yes... people do read them!
- 6. Get networking** — Join a business or special interest group in your area

7. Cross-promote — contact other businesses and work out some cooperative marketing strategies

8. Start stalling — Take a stall at a local fair or market

9. Get distressed — Call your local paper/trade mag and ask them to contact you when they have last minute (distressed) advertising space to sell (only do this if print advertising is part of a campaign that works for you)

10. Sign up — Order magnetic signs for your personal vehicle so you can promote your business when you're out and about... who knows who will see you in the carpark! (Be sure to always drive courteously when sporting a sticker!)

11. Start talking — Get over your phobias and actually talk to people about what you do. Start selling to friends and acquaintances

12. Pass it on — With every product/service sold, include a voucher that the customer can give or share with a friend or colleague

To find out which works best for you, ask every customer in the coming month: "How did you hear about us?" In marketing-speak, that's called "measurement" and it's a saviour to your bottom line. You'll never throw good money after bad marketing if you're disciplined about finding out where your customers come from. ●

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