

Get More Customers - Management Tips Part 2 of 4

In the last article we looked at the top 5 advertising approaches to attracting new customers. There's no doubt they work if properly done. There is also no doubt that traditional advertising can cost a bundle, and leave you a little unsure of what you got for your money.

So let's move on and discuss some less traditional ways to get the word out. Some of these methods are often over-looked but they work if you're willing to put in a little effort. Here are 7 of the most over-looked ways to advertise on a budget.

1. Cold Calling

Cold calling is when you pick a list of people from a directory, or some other existing list, and contact them out of the blue. Many people hate making cold calls because you get rejected many more times than you get accepted. If you are going to cold call, understand that one positive response for every 10 calls is as good as it gets for cold calling. Don't get discouraged until you've made a lot of calls. You can't judge the effectiveness of a cold calling campaign until you've called on at least 50 people.

Like direct mail, cold calling is sometimes frowned upon, but it is still around for the same reason direct mail is around – it works.

2. Directories

Millions of people still look to business directories, such as the yellow pages, every day when they are looking for product or service providers. Don't forget about the many other business directories available to you like your local Chamber of Commerce.

3. Press Releases

Press releases are often overlooked as a way of advertising, but any kind of media coverage can be very good for business. Part of what makes press releases so valuable is that they come across as information instead of advertising. The other reason is that if they get picked up by a newspaper you can get a lot of coverage for free.

It is very important that you give your press releases a human-interest spin to get the attention of the editors. Although press releases can be very effective, there is no guarantee they will get picked up and run by anyone.

4. Articles

Writing articles for local media, or getting profiled in business articles is another great advertising method. This is good advertising because it doesn't look like advertising. It's just a human interest story. Like press releases, articles can be submitted to local papers and magazines, but there is no guarantee your story will get run unless you get a regular column. This might be easier than you think if you are willing to start with the community newsletter.

5. Events

Sometimes the best way to advertise your business is to hold a special event. Every so often you see a free seminar being held in your city. You can attend for free, you just have to register. Hosting an event like this is a great way to meet a group of people interested in the topic you want to discuss. These events are designed to educate people in what they need to know about a topic, and what you can do to help them. It is very important to not give people an hour long sales pitch. Spend 80% of your time giving them as much useful information as you can. If you focus solely on making the first 50 minutes of an hour useful for them they will be interested in what else you have to offer. Then you can spend the last 10 minutes telling them about your products or services.

6. Joint Ventures

Joint ventures are one of the best ways to generate new leads. Find businesses that have similar, complimentary offerings to you and put together a joint advertising campaign. This is an excellent technique for generating new leads for because both you and your joint venture partner already have lists of customers who buy the type of products and services you are offering. The effectiveness of advertising has a lot to do with getting your message to a group of people already interested in what you do. Few methods can target your message as well to a new group of people as a joint venture campaign.

Keep in mind that when doing a joint venture campaign, you don't need to give your customer list to your joint venture partner. You take his message

and send it to your customers. He takes your message and sends it to his customers. You both receive back only the interested responses from the other persons list. That way you are not compromising your customers' privacy, you are just making them an offer. Your joint venture partner only gets their contact details if the customer decides to call the number, or go to the website on the advertisement and divulge their information. Always respect your customers' right to privacy.

7. Referrals

Nothing beats word of mouth referrals. Do a great job for you customers and encourage them to refer others to you. Offer incentives or discounts for referrals, and give the referred customer a special deal as well. Let your customers know that they are not only getting something for themselves, but they are getting something special for the friends and family they refer to you.

Summary

Whether you are working with a tight budget or not, don't overlook the power and effectiveness of these 7 lead generation methods. Many small companies have grown to multi-million dollar enterprises using these methods. With a little effort these methods can bring many new customers to your door.

If part 3 we look at moving all of these lead generation techniques into the twenty first century with the power of the Internet. The future is on-line, and the future is now.

About the Author

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