

Marketing in the Good Ole' Summertime

By Karen E. Hipp

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Ah, summertime. It can be the most creative time to plan and implement marketing promotions. Living in Florida as I do however, summertime can be one of the most frustrating times of the year too! Everything "shuts down" from May-September. All because the "snowbirds" have gone back up north! I see advertising in various media plummet in the summer. Excuse me. But there are still millions of us here year round that would buy your product (if you paid a little attention to us).

But this challenge isn't just in Florida. I also hear "well, everyone's gone on vacation"(all summer?). And what about all the places that all the northern folk go back to in the summer? I know many Marketing Directors who basically ignore summer or give it little attention, thereby fulfilling their own thought. OK. So realistically, those of us who are smart enough to have figured this out can really make an impact because "the coast is clear", so to speak.

Let's take a peak at all the great things about business in the summer!

First, you can get cheaper advertising rates and take advantage of many promotions being offered to you from other businesses. Let's make a deal is the name of the game. Do you have a media outlet you've wanted to try but felt the cost too prohibitive? Give them a call and see what their "blue plate special" is. Plus, you'll have the advantage of advertising in uncluttered publications. Fewer ads will help you stand out.

Secondly, I always found that as the person responsible for marketing in a company, I simply had more time on my hands to look at, test, clean up all the stuff I had been meaning to get to the rest of the year. I clipped out ideas, ads and promotions that I liked and kept them in my "idea file", which is actually a 3-ring binder I keep when I need new creative ideas or inspiration. This would be a great time to implement some of those ideas, but never had time to get to.

Third, most marketing people have less clutter on their desk because everyone else follows their same philosophy (no business in the summer). Your advertising piece or message is sure to get much more attention! This is also a particularly good time for those that are in sales to pull out all the stops and be able to schedule meetings with those that were previously too busy.

Try these summer marketing ideas:

[] Create your own "idea" file. Clip competitor ads or simply ads that you like. Jot down ideas for promotions. Brainstorm with your staff on ideas you can use.

[] If you haven't done it, this is a great time to work on your marketing plan!

[] Follow up on what you might have thought were dead sales leads.

[] Try writing a press release and sending it to your local papers. Make it interesting and place a follow-up call. Submitting a professional photo is a good idea.

[] Develop a newsletter.

[] Review your current promotional materials. Do they need a new look?

[] Develop a web-site and a plan to promote it.

Here are the top 7 types of advertising used by small businesses:

- [] Yellow Pages
- [] 800 numbers
- [] Signs and displays
- [] E-marketing
- [] Direct mail/catalogues
- [] Cable TV
- [] Community local papers

From my marketing tip file:

I received the most absolutely to die for direct mail piece the other day. It was the size of an oversized postcard, with your standard message front and back, but it was made out of wood! It was light wood that was varnished to keep the mailing costs lower.

It was sent by someone who actually designs on wood and was promoting their services, but I have never received anything like it and it grabbed my attention so much that I placed it in my "keeper" file. My mind starting racing with the possibilities for client's.

The point of all this is that if you are going to do direct mail, you might as well put a little more money into the project and do something creative that will get noticed. I understand that you can actually send fruit, like a pineapple through the mail too. No carton needed!

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