

Smart Marketing

By Bob Leduc

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Are you attracting a large number of prospective customers at the lowest possible cost ...and converting the maximum number of them into paying customers? It's not very difficult if you follow these 3 simple steps.

Step 1: Control Your Advertising Expense

Look for ways to keep your sales volume growing without increasing your advertising expense. For example:

* Negotiate Price With Advertisers

Many advertisers are willing to negotiate a special discount to keep your business - or to get it away from their competitors. Take the initiative when you're placing an ad. Ask for a discount ...or a bigger discount than the one already offered.

* Trim Your Ads

Reduce the size of your ads so you can run more ads without increasing your total cost. Don't be surprised if some of your short ads generate a bigger response than your long ads. The most effective ad I ever used had only 11 words.

Step 2: Generate Some Unpaid Publicity

Publicity is what you get when someone else promotes (or you get them to promote) your business. It establishes more credibility with prospective customers than advertising ...and it generates sales at a much lower cost.

Start a publicity program for your business - or expand the

one you already have. Here are 3 simple ways you can use publicity to generate business:

(1) Find something newsworthy about your business. Write about it in a news release and distribute it to publishers.

(2) Contact non-competing businesses serving customers in your market. Offer to publicize their products or services to your customers in exchange for their publicizing your services to their customers.

(3) Write a short "how to" article to help customers in your targeted market. Promote a product or service related to the topic of the article in a short byline at the end. Distribute your article to ezine publishers, web sites and trade magazines serving your targeted market. Give them permission to publish it at no cost.

Caution: Don't expect unpaid publicity to replace the results you get with advertising. Use it to supplement your advertising. You control where and when your advertising appears. You cannot control where or when you get publicity ...or if you get any at all.

Step 3: Improve Your Selling Propositions

Most prospects who take the time to consider your product or service would like to buy from you. But they decided that other things they want are either more important or more urgent.

You can capture many of these sales by dramatically improving your offer. Create a "good deal" that's so enticing it becomes their first choice.

You don't have to reduce your price to improve your offer. Instead, simply load your offer with bonuses. Make sure your bonuses have a high perceived value to your customers ...even if they cost you little or nothing.

Always include an expiration date for your offer. Give prospects the choice to either accept your proposition within a short time or forfeit it. This will motivate many prospects to delay some other purchase so they can buy your product or service now.

Tip: To create an absolutely irresistible offer - include a special discount price AND a set of valuable bonuses in your offer.

Controlling your advertising expense and getting unpaid publicity will attract potential customers at the lowest cost. Improving your selling propositions will convert the

maximum number of those prospects into paying customers.
Together, these 3 steps are what I call "smart marketing".

Bob Leduc spent 20 years helping businesses like yours find new customers and increase sales. He just released a New Edition of his manual, How To Build Your Small Business Fast With Simple Postcards and several other publications to help small businesses grow and prosper. For more information:

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