

Moving Your Business Creates A Marketing Opportunity

Rumor has it—you're moving, eh?

Well, don't let the hubbub of the move distract you from using your move as a marketing opportunity.

Here are some suggestions to keep you focused amidst the packing and to help you think strategically while keeping your business running business-as-usual for as long as possible.

- 1) Send a post card and e-blast to tell your past and current customers you are moving, when, where, etc.
- 2) Make it fun and reinforce your relationship. You may want to create a "VIP Customer Moving Sale." You will have less to pack and the event gives you a chance to see your customers before they have to learn a new pattern of behavior to find you at a new location.
- 3) Put signs up in your new location as soon as you can. If you have a lot of lead time, create some suspense with a "teaser" campaign. Consider putting brown paper over all the windows so people get curious and post some signs that you change every few days or once a week to give them clues as to who's coming to town. You can even create an online contest if you want some real fun, using your website or Facebook fans to get it out there easily.
- 4) Meet with sales reps of key publications in the new community well in advance, so you are in a position to negotiate the best rates for your paid-for advertising.
- 5) Write a press release to tell the new market about your services and products. These usually run for free in most media. If you are dealing with weeklies or monthlies, plan in advance.
- 6) Plan a grand opening several weeks after your actual move, allowing time to unpack and get settled. Invite VIPs and the media, and your past/current customers to a VIP event with food and giveaways; hold the public opening separately to which customers are also invited. Contests are great ways to build a database. Be creative...you're in a fun business so have fun, but be sure to capture email addresses.
- 7) Host a few open house-information sessions soon after your opening, so you can expose scuba to those who've never considered it. Promote through your newsletter, signs in the window, press releases, and your ads.
- 8) Create a proactive marketing plan for your first six months, recognizing that you need to front-end some of your marketing expenses to get the word out fast and build business back up (particularly if you are moving too far away from your current customer base).

- 9) Make sure your website and marketing materials are updated and professional. No stickers on the back of your old brochures. You're a professional, so look like one, and the business will come. Think about magnets, too. They are easy to put on the house refrigerator until customers get used to your new number.
- 10) Get involved in the local business community by joining an association, and get involved in the public community by donating your services or products for charity auctions, hosting events to benefit the community (a kid learn-to-swim program, for instance, or something to help the local environment like a lake trash pick-up day). Get publicity on any of this community work—it creates awareness, and you build goodwill.

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