

Start The New Year With A Bang!

By Carolyn West-Price Touhey

In keeping with the spirit of the “12 Days of Christmas,” here are “12 Tips for Smart Marketing in the New Year.”

- 1) **Stay in their faces.** As you connect with customers, prospects, and people who can refer you business, build your database so you can stay in touch with these people on a regular basis. Maintain your “share of mind” by developing a campaign that puts you “in their faces” at least 6-8 times per year. (Newsletters are great for some of these touches!)
- 2) **Make them feel appreciated.** In addition to maintaining your share of mind, be sure to examine the customer experience with your company--from start to finish—looking for opportunities to make them feel appreciated. (FYI: 60% of customers stop doing business with a company because they feel unappreciated, not because they are dissatisfied.)
- 3) **Invest in your image.** If your marketing materials are produced in-house, outdated, and/or not reflective of the benefits you provide your customers, invest in the expertise of a professional marketer to write the materials strategically, and a designer who can make your first impression one that is reflective of the quality experience a customer will have when doing business with you.
- 4) **Be consistent.** From your business cards to your email signatures, and every other place your company name appears, use a logo that is eye-catching and unique. Even a stylized-type logo is better than no logo. And, consider a slug-line that can convey something about your business, especially if your company name does not reflect your industry or benefits.
- 5) **Toot Your Own Horn.** If you do anything newsworthy—from starting or expanding the business to hiring a manager or creating a fundraiser for a non-profit—tell the world by issuing a press release to the media. There is no charge for the papers to run these announcements, and the better they are written (in compliance with PR style), the more likely they will run—giving you free visibility *and* credibility (whereas, ads can only buy you visibility).
- 6) **If you can’t afford repetition, don’t advertise.** Advertising is a media based on repetition. If you are not financially committed to a campaign that facilitates multiple hits, don’t bother with one-hit wonders unless you have another motive, such as supporting a charity supplement.
- 7) **Invest in good creative.** While it is great that the media offer to do ad creative for free, all artists and writers have a style so you may not stand out from the

other advertisers who use their services. Work with a professional to design good ads that can be used and updated while projecting a consistent image within a campaign and across campaigns. Do not start your ad with your company name—that's a tell-tale sign that a pro did not help you. Instead, think benefits or emotion to grab the audience.

- 8) **Participate!** If you invest membership fees to join an organization, get involved. If you don't participate, you won't get what you expect out of the group.
- 9) **Educate the market.** If you are an expert in what you do, then let the world know that through education—start a newsletter, host workshops, send an educational e-blast with tips. This is an investment of time to distinguish you from your competition.
- 10) **Cooperate.** To stretch a budget and increase your exposure, consider working with another complementary business to share marketing efforts. For instance, co-host a workshop or open house; share a newsletter—you write for theirs, they write for yours.
- 11) **Give to get.** If you are generous with your time and talent, you will be rewarded. Volunteer for committees or boards of directors, chair a committee, donate to auctions. These charitable deeds do not go unnoticed, and you will meet people who share the same interest and can do business with you or at least refer you business.
- 12) **Plan your success.** Not only should your marketing plan include a SWOT analysis, objective, and strategy/position statement, but also tactics that include: public relations, promotions, direct selling, advertising, client/customer relations, and collateral (your identity pieces).

Make sure that when you write your 2010 marketing plan, however, that you include objectives for your business AND for yourself. Clarify your vision for the company, and include what you want your life to look like in 5 years...10 years.... None of us knows how long we have to live this life...pursue balance and be happy.

May 2010 be your best year yet! Happy New Year!

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