Small Business Marketing Guide

Compiled by
Jodi Kaplan, Principal
KaplanCopy

Expert advice from Jodi Kaplan, John Jantsch, Andrea Nierenberg, Biba Pédron, Jeri Quinn, and Wendy Weiss

KaplanCopy 439 E. 84th Street, New York, NY 10028 212-628-9809 www.kaplancopy.com

Table of Contents

Nine Ways to Stretch Your Marketing Budget
by Jodi Kaplan

1. Don't Print Thousands of Brochures – Make Them Modular

If you're a small business, brochures can be a big investment in paper (and storage space). Instead of one-size-fits all (which it never does), try customizing your brochures to suit different prospect profiles.

Make your brochures "modular" and create different sections highlighting particular services or areas of expertise. Keep the sections in one large document, and then just copy and paste sections as needed.

For example:

- sections for different services or products
- copy divided by different
  - industries
  - job levels
  - market segments

If your customers are primarily product distributors (say, electrical supplies, plumbing supplies, and building supplies) you can have different versions of your brochure highlighting your expertise in each area.

Or, you can even tailor a sell sheet or marketing materials to fit a particular prospect.

2. Can't Afford a Designer? Use Pre-Made Templates

Many online printers offer templates for brochures, postcards, business cards, and more. You just select the one you want, fill in your details, and you're done.

http://www.psprint.com
http://www.vistaprint.com

Or, you can try one of these sites that offer free or low-cost templates. Prices start at $29.

http://www.stocklayouts.com/AboutDesigns.aspx
http://www.mybrochuremaker.com/

3. Add Photos

Make your brochure or Web site look more professional and attract more interest with professionally designed photos and illustrations. Images cost as little as $1.
https://www.fotosearch.com/lblogin.asp

http://www.istockphoto.com

4. Market Your Business with Postcards

They're inexpensive, they have high impact, and you can create a series of messages to gain and build interest. Repetition improves retention, builds trust, and increases your credibility. Use an attention-grabbing headline, bullets (with benefits) and color to get your point across.

You can use them for generating leads, announcing new products, or telling your customers about a sale.

www.modernpostcard.com
www.amazingmail.com

5. Develop Alliances and Share Marketing Costs

Find someone whose business serves a similar market, but doesn't compete with yours (say a real estate broker and a mortgage broker).   Put together a mailing that promotes both. Or put together a directory of 20 complementary businesses (graphic designer, list manager, copywriter) and send them to your clients and prospects. This spreads the costs and effort around so you're not stuck with the entire bill.

6. Start Small

Trying something new? Start with a smaller mailing, then mail again, in larger quantities, to the lists that worked best. You can cut costs by mailing fewer pieces (a letter and a brochure with attached order form and mailed. Fewer pieces means lower printing and lettershop costs (lettershops stuff the envelopes, affix postage, and take the mailing to the post office). A smaller, lighter package will also require less postage.

7. Letter Size Matters – Choose a Smaller One

Bigger pieces cost more. For instance, an 8 1/2 x11 10-page brochure on thick paper will cost more to print and mail than a 6x9 6-panel self-mailer.   Talk to your printer before you finalize your design. It's a lot cheaper to change the design before they start!

8. Get Volume Printing Discounts

Use a printer that combines (or "gangs up") different print jobs from multiple customers. You will lose some flexibility (there will be fewer choices of paper size, type, and quality), but you will gain full-color printing and significant volume cost savings.

Regardless of which printer you use, if you think you may need a few extra, order them. Much of the cost is in the initial setup, so doubling the quantity won't double the price.

9. Use Bulk Mail

You need at least 200 pieces of mail and you'll have to put the names on your list in zip code order. Check with your local post office or lettershop about size, weight, and addressing requirements. It takes a bit more work, but you can save up to 40% off of regular first-class mail.

*****
Jodi Kaplan fixes "broken" marketing. She transforms ineffective mailings and unappealing Web sites into powerful revenue-generating tools. If your marketing is broken and you'd like to fix it, visit: http://www.kaplancopy.com for free articles, marketing resources, and information on marketing services.

Create Your Own Referral Sales Force
by John Jantsch

Surround yourself with a network of competent professionals and add more value to your client relationships.

Joining referral networks like BNI or local chamber groups can be a great way to help you network and generate referrals. The most powerful way to use this strategy, however, is to grow your own. Almost any business can benefit from having a group of trusted providers effectively marketing your business like a referral sales force. When you build your own private referral network your business benefits in two very powerful ways: you experience an increase in leads and you have additional resource to bring to your client relationships. In some cases, this second benefit may produce the greatest long-term impact of this approach.

How to build it The key to building your own referral network is to focus on developing relationships with businesses you can believe in thoroughly. I would suggest that the first consideration should always be - what can this business bring to my client and not what can they bring to me. You might start by identifying the top products and services you know your current clientele need and use. There are many ways to build a "formal" referral network. Let me explain the idea of formal. To me that means there is an agreement between the parties that explains what each party will do. There is a process where each party educates the other on the best way to refer each other. There are marketing materials of some form that help each business cross promote. Once this basis framework is in place, creativity can come into play in many ways. The one place I see these efforts trip up is when the focus is on compensation. In other words, if everyone in the group is concerned about keeping score, the group is bound to fail. You must focus on the benefit to your clients, if you do that; the universe will take care of the rest. There will always be members that only want to take; you've got to be ready to move them out of your network.

Let me give you an example This financial planner created his very own referral and lead network by sending a letter to 10 other professionals that he had worked with and felt comfortable referring business to. This letter informed them that he was creating a unique referral network of 100 of the area's top professional service providers. He invited them to become members and explained that he needed them to recommend 10 others who belonged in this exclusive group.

He then created a resource directory and website that featured all 100 professionals. The entire group promoted the directory and web site and referred business to each other. As a result, other professionals begged to be allowed into the group. The strategy was so powerful that many of network members did no other form of marketing. Once you put your group together there are many ways to take advantage of power of this new sales force.

Create a blog network If ten or fifteen related businesses were to get together and create a blog focused on a specific target market, in a specific geographic location, they could easily create a very valuable local resource. With very little effort this blog would rank very highly for local search engines terms related to the blog topics. Even with the mainstream recognition of blogs this is still a wide-open opportunity.

Interview each member for a teleseminar series Host a monthly interview with an expert and feature one of your network members. You can conduct these interviews over the phone and have all the members invite attendees to the teleseminar series. Record each session and you've also created some killer content for other marketing efforts. Keep these calls non-sales, high impact, and information rich.

Create co-branded white papers You should be creating and using white papers in your lead generation efforts anyway, so take those educational pieces to other members of your network and let them start offering them to their clients and prospects. Put their logo on the cover with your logo and you've got an instant hit.

Do endorsed mailings One of the simplest ways to promote members of your referral network is to mail a letter to your clients endorsing another member's work. If every member of the group were to do this same thing you could experience an instant flood of new business.

Put on a group workshop Once you have built a strong group you should consider hosting an all day workshop covering the hottest topics of concern to your target market. Each member of the group can present a topic and all parties invite participants. For some groups this could turn into a profit center above and beyond referrals.

Distribute marketing materials and offers It's pretty simple to create little leave behind marketing pieces so that when the plumber makes a house call he can leave a special offer from the heating and cooling and electrical members of the group.

Bundle each others products and services In some cases partnering with your referral network can help you make a much more competitive offer. Putting your products and services together with two or three other providers might give your firm the ability to compete with much larger organizations. With some careful consideration and a little effort you could build a referral network that would rival any sales force.

******
Related article - The Ultimate Referral System in 7 Steps . ~ ~ ~ John Jantsch is a marketing and digital technology coach, award winning social media publisher and author of Duct Tape Marketing. He is the creator of the Duct Tape Marketing small business marketing system. You can find more information by visiting www.ducttapemarketing.com

A "Warm Calling" vs. "Cold Calling" Rant
By Wendy Weiss, The Queen of Cold Calling

Had another conversation with yet another entrepreneur who told me he does not "cold call," he only does "warm calls."

I continue to be baffled by those who cut off possibilities with a semantic twist. "Cold call, warm call," it's simply a state of mind. Your mind. Your prospect does not make those distinctions. Just because you have designated a call to be "warm" doesn't mean that the person you are calling thinks it's "warm." This "warm call/cold call" concept is a smoke screen that covers the real issue.

The real issue is controlling your message. The real issue is being able to communicate with a prospect so that they understand and resonate with what you have to say. The real issue is about having the skill necessary to communicate with a prospect under any circumstance.

Prospecting by phone, introductory calling as I prefer, is a communication skill. Like any communication skill it can be learned and it can be improved upon. The idea when introductory calling is to contact a qualified prospect and entice them with your message. You have a brief amount of time on the telephone to catch and engage your prospect. If you are not able to do that, the call ends without achieving your desired result. If you have the proper skills, however, it is possible to have extremely productive conversations with prospects no matter how you choose to categorize them, "warm" or "cold."

The idea of a "warm call" is that you've had some prior contact with your prospect and that you have somehow "warmed up" the call. The prior contact might be with a letter sent before your call, it might be that you have encountered the prospect elsewhere it could also be that you have a referral.

All too frequently callers who use the "I only warm call" approach do not adequately prepare for their calls. Instead, they rely on the appellation "warm." If you are one of these callers, stop right here and ask yourself these questions:

- How many "warm" prospects have said "no" to me over the years?
- Would those calls have been more productive if I had been better prepared and more in control of my message?

Although you may have sent a letter, you have no guarantee that your prospect has read it. Although you may have met previously, your prospect may not recall that. Although you may have a referral that is no guarantee that your prospect will meet with you or have any interest at all in your products or services.

When you are on the phone with a prospect you must deal with them, where they are, at that particular moment in time. If your prospect hasn't read your letter, doesn't remember the person who referred you, or is simply having a bad day, that's out of your control. What is within your control when prospecting is to have honed your skills so that your message is clear and so that you can respond in any situation.

When you have skills, you know how to catch a prospect's attention, you know how to keep their attention, you know how to respond to questions and objections and you know how to ask for what you want. When you have those skills it's no longer about a "warm" call or a "cold" call, it's about communication, conversation and results.

*****

Wendy Weiss, "The Queen of Cold Calling," is a sales trainer, author and sales coach. Her recently released program, "The Miracle Appointment-Setting Script," and/or her book, "Cold Calling for Women," can be ordered by visiting http://queenofcoldcalling.com. Contact her at wendy@wendyweiss.com. Get Wendy's free Special Report, "Getting in the Door: How to Write an Effective Cold Calling Script," at http://www.queenofcoldcalling.com

A New Look at an Old Tool
by John Jantsch

The press release was long considered the workhorse of the public relations trade, now smart marketers are breathing new life into this tool.

It used to be that PR folks would create tightly formatted press releases to distribute a your company's story to the media. The hope was that these releases would catch the attention of a journalist and spark a mention or interview.
While PR firms still pump these documents out, they no longer have the impact they once had. However, smart marketers have discovered new ways to breathe life into the press release and use it a way to communicate directly with prospects as well as journalists.
Most journalists will tell you that they go online when researching story ideas and looking for sources to interview and quote. Creating press releases with an eye on search engine optimization has become a powerful way to get your story told while enhancing your overall web presence.
The trick to employing the press release as a search engine tool is to focus on creating quality content that features basic optimization techniques.

Why Optimize

A press release that focuses on your company's primary keyword phases can often bring page one search results for very little cost. Press releases distributed through the right channels can bring your web site hundreds of back-links in a very natural fashion (very important factor for the search engines). Targeted press releases can bring very targeted traffic to your site when done on a consistent basis.

Tips for Formatting

1. Create strong, keyword rich titles and subtitles for your release - don't get spammy with this keep it strong and short

2. Keep it short - aim for somewhere around 500 words tops

3. Cover the most important details in your lead paragraph

4. Add quotes from customers or executives and write in 3rd person

5. End your press release with a concise paragraph about your company an don't forget contact information

6. You can use my free Instant Press Release tool to walk your through this and format the release for you.

Tips for Optimizing

1. Make sure you have your list of important keywords and phrases

2. Try to work a phrase into your title, subtitle and several times in the body of the release but make sure that it looks natural - consider saying it several ways

3. If you link to a page on your site, use the keyword phrase as your link text instead of click here - this is very important for long-term effectiveness

4. Create an RSS feed (you can create a free WordPress.com blog and write your releases and use the RSS feed) and repost the content back to a page on your site.

5. Make it easy to bookmark your release by adding social bookmarking tags

Now that you've created a well written, well-optimized press release it's time to get it out there on the Internet and in front of some journalists. (Don't worry if you don't get a call from the New York Times, the real value is what doing this on a monthly basis can mean to your web presence - if you get a story or two, that's great.)
There are many press release distribution services such as PRNewswire, MarketWire, and BusinessWire, but I think that PRWeb.com is the best small business tool.

For $80 PRWeb will distribute your press release to thousands of journalists and with its Online Visibility Engine much of the task of SEO and adding social media tools is done for you. The $80 level assures that your release makes it to Google and Yahoo News.

*****

Related article - Minor PR Story Starters~ ~ ~John Jantsch is a marketing and digital technology coach, award winning social media publisher and author of Duct Tape Marketing. He is the creator of the Duct Tape Marketing small business marketing system. You can find more information by visiting www.ducttapemarketing.com

Prospecting Success
by Wendy Weiss

I spent my formative years in ballet class. While other kids went out to play, I went to ballet class. In high school while others attended after-school activities or hung out together, I went to ballet class. By my mid-teens I was taking class five or six times a week or maybe even more. This was a habit that continued till injuries sidelined my professional dancing career.

This habit of taking a ballet class every day was not mine alone. Every dancer, professional or those seeking to become professional, take class every day. It's a habit, it's a reality, it goes with the job. It is impossible to dance professionally without taking class. Even the stars, Baryshnikov for example, take class every day.

In my late teens I had some personal crises that stopped me from going to class everyday. At one of my rare appearances in class, my teacher asked where I had been. I told her what was going on in my life. She said to me, "That's no reason not to take class.

You have to take class everyday, no matter what."

Sounds harsh doesn't it? But she was right. Not taking class only gave me something else to feel bad about.

When I started my sales training business, I used that same "no matter what" approach to prospecting. I prospected every day. I started out with absolutely no corporate or business connections.

I was a ballet dancer; I only knew other ballet dancers. I did, however, know how to prospect. On and off for years my "day job" had been telemarketing. I began to prospect the same way I learned to take class, every day, no matter what. Five years later I have a thriving business. Even today I continue to prospect every day, while perhaps not for as many hours. Every day brings some prospecting activity, no matter what.

So how does the busy entrepreneur, busy owner or sales professional find the time to prospect every day no matter what?

The answer is simple, put it in your calendar. Schedule time in your calendar every day for prospecting activity. At the scheduled time put aside what you are doing and prospect. Do not take other calls, do not work on other projects, do not allow interruptions. Simply prospect. When the time you have scheduled is over, stop prospecting and go on with your other tasks.

Schedule appointments with yourself to prospect and keep those appointments. We get angry and upset when prospects miss appointments. Ask yourself: Why is it all right to miss an appointment with yourself?

Prospecting success (just like learning to dance) comes over time. In order to keep your sales funnel full you must constantly be on the lookout for leads and prospects. By keeping your funnel full you avoid the boom and bust cycles that so many entrepreneurs and sales professionals experience. To be successful you must engage in some prospecting activity everyday, no matter what. It's a habit, it's a reality, it goes with the job.
(c) Wendy Weiss

*****
Wendy Weiss, "The Queen of Cold Calling," is a sales trainer, author and sales coach. Her recently released program, "The Miracle Appointment-Setting Script," and/or her book, "Cold Calling for Women," can be ordered by visiting http://queenofcoldcalling.com. Contact her at wendy@wendyweiss.com. Get Wendy's free Special Report, "Getting in the Door: How to Write an Effective Cold Calling Script," at http://www.queenofcoldcalling.com

Does Your Business Card Get Noticed?
By Biba Pédron

Having a professional business card helps to portray your image and make you stand out from the crowd. When you meet somebody, you have less than 10 seconds to make the right first impression, so along with your elevator pitch, make sure that people will remember you.

Your business card is your first marketing tool. But are you using it in the most effective way?

Many small business owners spend hours and hours trying to find the best way of marketing their businesses. But when it comes to their business cards they don't follow the same rules. Most people just include their basic contact information and don't realize how this little piece of paper can say a lot about their businesses.

When you place an ad in a newspaper or a magazine, don't you try to write the most effective text to attract clients so that people call you or buy your products or services? So why not pay the same attention when designing your business card.

Your business card is your first marketing tool. Every time you give it to somebody, it's a chance to communicate something about your business. Your business card is very often the tool which will help people to decide whether they want to work with you or not, since it is an extension of your business. When you meet somebody for the first time they will judge you on your appearance, your clothes, the way you act, the way you speak and your business card. If the whole package looks very professional they will be willing to continue the conversation with you. If it doesn't look professional they will not waste their time and will find somebody else to work with.

We used to say that we shouldn't judge a book by its cover, but unfortunately this is not true. So put all the chances on your side.

Here are the 10 indispensable keys which need to appear on your business card:

First on the front of your card:

1. Your name – this sound obvious for everybody, but make sure it is easy to find. People have to see your name as soon as they receive your card so they will be able to associate your face with the name on your card. This will help them to remember you.

2. Your title – if you work for a corporation, your title is always mentioned on the card, so if you are a solo-entrepreneur or a small business owner, it is also very important to mention if you are the founder, the CEO, the president, the marketing manager or other. Again, make it easy for people to remember you and what you do.

3. The name of your company – even if you are a one-person operation in your business, it is very important to have a business name. Using only your name if you are a sole proprietor or if you are an independent representative of a company will give the image of a part time activity and not a business image to your prospects. The same as when you introduce yourself and say, "I am a consultant" vs. "I have a consulting company", people will not pursue you in the same way. Even if your consulting company is only you, this will not have the same impact.

4. Your email address - the big No/No in a business card – once again if you want to be considered as a business and have a professional image, don't use an email with Yahoo, AOL, or hotmail, etc… but have a professional email with yourname@yourdomainname.com. Today it really doesn't cost a lot to buy a domain

name, so please invest in the $5 to $10 to buy one and use it on your business card. You can have a Yahoo, AOL, or hotmail email to sign up for newsletters to avoid spam, but for your business card, this shows a lack of professionalism. Plus it is much easier for people to remember your name and your company name than a strange email with your nickname or number on it.

5. Your phone number – personally I think that too many phone numbers are confusing and take up too much space. So I recommend that you use your main number, even if it is your cell phone because it is the most convenient way to reach you.

6. Your website - having a website will help people to learn more about your business later. Your business card can't say everything, so give them the opportunity to get the information they are looking for. Use your business card to bring traffic to your website.

7. Your logo – it is as important to have a logo as it is to have a business name for the same reason, because this will give you a professional image. Using a regular white card, with no logo, just your name, phone number and email, will not help people to remember you. Some people put just a clipart on their business card and think this looks like a logo. In people's minds this is definitely not the same thing. If you are not ready to invest in yourself, how do you expect people to invest in you?

8. Your tagline – a tagline ensures that people associate your company name with your product or service. That is a short sentence which describes your business' mission and makes you unique. That is usually the only thing people remember after you have met. So that is why it is important to really choose your words carefully when creating your tagline, in order to hook your audience and be memorable.

Just because you are a solo-entrepreneur or a small business owner, it does not mean that you can't use the same strategies as the big companies. Make sure you use all the marketing tools which are available to promote your business. This is called 'branding'. Using an effective logo & tagline are one of the most effective ways to successfully brand your business.

Take a look at most of the business cards that you have collected from people and you will notice how few of them have taglines. So stand out from the crowd, make sure to have the key elements on your card and that they are memorable.

When I work with a client and help him or her redesign their business card, I always encourage them to use the back of their card. Remember what I said earlier, "When you place an ad in a newspaper or a magazine, don't you try to write the most effective text to attract clients so that people call you or buy your products or services?"

So why are you wasting all of this precious space on the back of your card?

Again, remember that your business card is a marketing tool. Use it to attract potential clients and not only to provide your contact information. Use it to pass on your business message.

On the back of your card – very few people use the back of their cards, so here is an opportunity for you to make a difference.

9. Describe the benefits of your product/service or the benefits of working with you. Use bullet points to emphasize the purpose of your products and services. Show how you can be a problem solver to others. Encourage people to ask you questions about your business so that they want to learn more and visit your website later.

10. Tell people what to do next. Don't assume that people will contact you for more information – tell them what to do. What we call "The call to action."

Do you want them to: go to your website, sign-up for your newsletter, call you, buy your product? Tell them clearly. Offer them an incentive to make sure that they will take action.

Let's say you are a coach or a financial advisor, no doubt, you have a lot of competition. What makes you unique and special? When people see your card, they will probably say, "Oh, another one!" But if you mentioned your specialties on your card, it will make a difference immediately.

What's in your Business Card?
Take a look at your card now; does it include the key elements to give a professional image to your business?
Does your card stand out from the crowd?
Does your card give you the results you are expecting?
Does your card say what you want it to say?
Does your design work with your company image and the rest of your marketing materials?
If you have a different design for your business card, your website and your brochure, how do you expect people to take you seriously?

Order professional business cards

Avoid the cards that you print yourself on your printer. It doesn't cost a lot to print professional business cards, you can order a thousand for $40 to $60 online and it doesn't cost more to print on both side of your card, but it makes an incredible difference and has a greater impact on people.

Use the same logo and colors as your website, brochure or flyer. Having a consistency on your marketing materials will help people to recognize you wherever they see you. And the more they see you or your logo, the more they will remember you, and the more they will keep in touch with you. Try to always be at the forefront of their minds.

Your business card is an extension of your company just like your logo, letter head, brochures, flyers, website and any marketing tools. They must have the same message and design.

Never leave home without your business cards

Wherever you go—to a networking event, to the dentist, to the movies, to a party, always bring your business cards with you. You never know where you will meet an interesting new contact, and you don't want to miss the opportunity to exchange cards. Writing your telephone number or email address on a piece of paper or a paper napkin definitely doesn't look very professional.

*****

Biba F. Pédron, also known as The Connection Queen, is a marketing consultant, founder of Biba4Network, which specializes in networking for small business owners. Biba helps entrepreneurs to maximize their networking results so that they can grow their businesses faster.

Biba is the author of "Start Your Dream Business Today! The Proven 11 Steps to Start and Grow Your Own Business". http://www.startyourdreambusinesstoday.com

For more information or to receive free tips like this one, please visit http://www.biba4Network.com

Take Note: 8 Key Ways to Say "THANK YOU" to Customers
by Andrea Nierenberg

Good salespeople strive to be in front of customers as often as possible. When we think about it, our clients and prospects give us many opportunities to stay in their minds in positive and non-threatening ways. Yet, we very often overlook these opportunities.

One of the easiest and most effective ways to stay in touch is with the power of the personal note. In research I've conducted in my consulting, I ask the question, "How many of you send out personal notes to people?" I also ask, "How many of you receive personal notes from clients or business associates?" The response indicates that few people take this practice seriously. As a follow up, I ask, "Has anyone received notes of appreciation, and how does that make you feel?" I trust you know the answer to this last question.

Here are eight opportunities to send a "thank you," and when and how to do it effectively:

1. When customers do business with you, every time. Write a short, personalized "thank you" on an interesting card, letterhead, or even a postcard that says, "I appreciate your business, thank you." You can never say thank you to someone too many times. We all appreciate the fact that people go out of their way to make us feel important and recognized.

2. When they compliment you. When a client compliments you about something, it's an opportunity to jot off a little note of thanks, saying, "Thank you for taking the time for making my day. I appreciate it." Compliments are given so rarely, so take the lead to say thank you when you get one.

3. When clients offer comments or suggestions. It's a wonderful gift when your clients give you a suggestion or comment on how you might do something better or different. They're also giving you an incredible buying signal. They might really be saying, "If you make that change, your product or service will be more attractive to me." Here's how to start this type of note: "Thank you for your suggestion on how I can better serve you. I'm in business to do exactly that. And you make my job easier and so much more enjoyable when you provide input."

4. When customers try something you recommended. When clients buy into something new, solely based on your suggestion, they're going out of their "comfort zone". They're putting trust in you and your product. This calls for another special note that could read, "Thank you for your trust in me. I value your business."

5. When customers recommend you. This is the best form of advertising you can ever get. It's so easy to take the time and go back to our advocate, and say, "thank you for referring me to —–. I will keep you posted and informed on what develops. It means a great deal to me to know that you're willing to recommend me. I appreciate it." This type of "thank you" might include a small gift as well.

6. When customers are patient, or not so patient. Our clients help us when they give us time to learn how to best serve them. Often this requires their patience. On the other hand, they give us a "wake up call" when they ask us to hurry up. When this happens they might really be saying, "Hey, remember me? Keep me in mind, or I just might get swept away by the competition." In either case, pull out a note card again, and let them know how important they are to you. Perhaps say, "Thanks for keeping me on my toes. I appreciate how you help me keep your business."

7. When clients say "no" to you. You've just pitched an account and you didn't get their business, this time. It's still an opportunity to write a short note. Thank them for their time, their consideration and their honesty. Keep the door opened by being friendly and courteous. Research I conducted in the last four years shows that almost 20% of my business comes from prospects that said no the first time. People remembered the notes I sent and it made a difference. Such a difference that I got referrals, even from contacts who were not able to use my services themselves.

8. When customers make you smile. I have one client who e-mails me jokes all the time. Another one will call up and just give me some good news. Whatever it is, it makes me smile, and I want clients to know that they've made me feel good. I'll send them a note with one of those little smile faces stickers. This technique always gets noticed and remembered.

Finally, here's my bonus note to you:

Dear reader,

Thanks for taking the time to read my article. I know that you're busy. As a "thank you" gift, I want to share what I call my "Power of Three".

Every day take 15 minutes at the beginning or end of the day and write three short goodwill notes: one to a prospect, one to a client and one to a friend. Just say hi, send an article, or say thanks and make it specific. When you do this, at the end of the week you'll have made 15 "goodwill" contacts, and at the end of the year, 750. Think of the "business seeds" you'll have planted. Some of this could germinate into additional business. And if you like this article, drop me a note.

*****

Andrea Nierenberg, "a networking success story" (The Wall Street Journal), is the author of Nonstop Networking: How to Improve Your Life, Luck and Career. Ms. Nierenberg works with leading companies to improve interpersonal communications for management and staff. She offers keynote addresses and custom-designed programs on motivational techniques, networking tactics, and presentation skills. To contact Andrea Nierenberg, write to The Nierenberg Group, 420 E. 51st Street, Suite 12D, New York, NY 10022. She can be reached by phone at 888-605-5911 or by e-mail at info@mybusinessrelationships.com, web address: www.mybusinessrelationships.com.

Why Do You Network?
By Biba Pédron

After spending the last four years organizing business networking events, I still don't have the answer to why some people go to them.

The only goal for most people who attend networking events seems to be to collect business cards. They have the feeling of a great event if they come back home with 30 or more business cards.

How many of you follow up with everybody after each event? How many people who you met follow up with you?

When I train people on networking, either one-on-one or in a group and ask those two questions, I usually have the same answer.

"Oh yes I follow-up, I send an email the next day". My next question is, "What do you do after this email?" and the usual answer is, "Well, nothing, because I don't know what to do next".

So what is the purpose of spending two to three hours at a networking event and pay $20 to $50 each time, if it is just to go and say hello to some people who you will never contact again. Repeat the process two to three times a week, and this is a big waste of time AND money.

I recently attended a business expo, and, of course I met a number of people. I didn't take everybody's' business cards, only the ones I had an interest in. I also spoke with the owners of two different booths, because they had a product I was interested in purchasing. I asked all of my questions, explained why I needed the product, gave them my card, and asked them to contact me to close the sale after the expo. This was a very easy sell for them, but guest what? None of them followed up with me or even returned my e-mails. Well, they both lost a sale, because I didn't find them to be very professional.

I guess that if they didn't follow-up with me, chances are that they didn't follow-up with other people either. So what was the purpose of having a table at this expo?

What is your goal when you attend a networking event? Are you trying to get new contacts to buy your product or service, or do you give the opportunity for people to get to know you, as the first step of your networking system?

People are always surprised in my training when I say that I never try to sell anything during an event. One of my secrets is that my business card mentions, "The Connection Queen", which usually gets me lots of comments and questions:

"How do you speak with strangers?"
"How do you introduce yourself without being pitchy?"
"How to you leave people if you are not interested in what they are doing?", and so on.

My only purpose is to listen to people, see how I can give them a contact, a resource, or some advice. It shows them my expertise without selling anything, but offering them to participate in my free e-course, "15 Ways to Maximize Your Networking Results", to get the answer to all of their questions. Offering them my free e-course is a way to get them to sign-up for my weekly newsletter and get a chance to know me, trust me, and later, buy my product or service when they are ready.

I attend networking events to build a long-term relationship with people, not to collect business cards or to sell anything.

So why do you network?

Try to think of your strategy for a moment. Test different approaches; stop selling and start implementing a follow-up system. You will get much more results and will attract your ideal clients, and only your ideal clients, the ones who really appreciate your services. Clients who like and trust you, clients who respect your knowledge and experience, and, very importantly, clients who will work with you in the long term, will refer you to people like them. This means more ideal clients.

Still struggling to develop your follow-up system? Check out my program, "Power of Networking Secrets" where I reveal my proven Seven-Step Follow-Up system. http://www.powerofnetworkingsecrets.com

*****
Biba F. Pédron, also known as The Connection Queen, is a marketing consultant, founder of Biba4Network, which specializes in networking for small business owners. Biba helps entrepreneurs to maximize their networking results so that they can grow their businesses faster.

Biba is the author of "Start Your Dream Business Today! The Proven 11 Steps to Start and Grow Your Own Business". http://www.startyourdreambusinesstoday.com

What Do People Really Buy and How Can You Deliver It In Your Marketing?

By Jeri Quinn

Many people in large and small businesses sell many products and services. But in essence all our customers are buying the same thing. It doesn't matter if the buyers are called customers, clients, patients, or partners. What all these buyers are buying is our 'promise'. They buy our 'promise' that our product or service is worth the value that they are being asked to pay. What they really 'buy' is the fact that we are trustworthy vendors of a trustworthy product or service.

So what is marketing? It's the positioning of your product or service so that it has the best likelihood of being purchased. Who will value the 'promise' that you're making? That's your target market. How can you make your 'promise' more valuable than your competitor's? That's your unique value proposition. What activities communicate your 'promise' the most effectively to potential buyers? That's your marketing plan. So let's see what else affects and markets your 'promise.'

Before a sale is made, your 'promise' must be credible and earn the trust of the buyer. So how can you increase credibility and, therefore, earn trust? After all, the trust bonds you earn from each prospect must be strong enough to overcome the risk each prospect must take to buy from you that first time.

M.R. Covey in ***The Speed of Trust*** talks about the four cores of credibility.

1. Integrity
2. Intent
3. Capabilities
4. Results

We're going to look at some concrete ideas for each. But first let's develop a framework thanks to a metaphor I've modified from my friend and colleague Jerry Houston.

A business owner/sales person has a pocketful of credibility coins. Every time he does something to build his credibility and it is favorably received by the prospect, the coin is accepted into the prospect's trust pocket. Every time something happens that destroys trust, the prospect takes a coin out of his pocket and throws it away. When the prospect's trust pocket gets full enough, he buys. When it is emptied, he is no longer a prospect. No amount of persuasion or personal appeal will be able to turn him around. Once lost, respect and trust take years to regain. You can use your own judgment to determine the values of the coins for these types of trust-building and trust-destroying activities. I'm sure you can think of many other examples as well.

1. **Integrity** - doing the right thing, honesty, keeping promises, having confidence in yourself because of your values and accomplished goals, walking your talk, courage to act on your beliefs and values.

- Transfer a credibility coin to the prospect's trust pocket for:
  - Showing up for an appointment on time
  - Keeping promises, following up
  - Being honest about bad news, for example: price changes, unavailability
  - Telling a prospect he doesn't need your product or service when he really doesn't
  - Respecting your competitors
  - Explaining mistakes and apologizing immediately
  - Having accurate brochures, website content, etc.

- Remove and throw away a credibility coin from the prospect's pocket for:
  - Missing an appointment
  - Overselling
  - Acting overly confident and egotistical
  - Making the sales process all about you and your products
  - Lying or 'fudging' the truth, in person or in written material
  - Explaining mistakes and apologizing only after being caught

2. **Intent** –your motives and agenda, motives are straightforward and your agenda is mutual benefit to all involved parties, the opposite of being suspicious about a hidden agenda

♦ Transfer a credibility coin to the prospect's trust pocket for:

- Being transparent about why you're pursuing the prospect
- Really having the prospect's best interests in mind
- Listening and agreeing to the prospect's timetable
- Sharing something valuable to the prospect that has nothing to do with what you offer, especially something for someone in his family

♦ Remove and throw away a credibility coin from the prospect's pocket for:

- If you say you want a long-term client, but you're trying to rush the sale
- If you're only considering your own best interests
- If you try to confuse the customer through confuse and conquer tactics.

3. **Capabilities** – talents, attitudes, skills and knowledge, ability to grow and stretch, abilities that we have that inspire confidence

♦ Transfer a credibility coin to the prospect's trust pocket for:

- Engaging in activities that show you know your stuff, for instance, use your product or service with a non-profit while working with your prospect (Example; a pediatric eyeglass store working with the Parent Teacher Organization at the local elementary school)
- Writing an article; including your knowledge in your newsletters
- Giving information-packed seminars
- Letting your prospect buy small things from you before expecting a big purchase so they can experience your capabilities without incurring large risks to start
- Informing your prospect about your efforts to learn new things about your field
- Promising some form of 'get your money back if you're not satisfied'
- Doing work with or sharing leads with credible strategic partners

♦ Remove and throw away a credibility coin from the prospect's pocket for:

- Failing to set up realistic expectations with your prospect
- Never providing them with something of value before the sale
- Getting negative about yourself and others
- Not believing in yourself enough to inspire others to believe in your capabilities
- Partnering with an unreliable strategic partner (It rubs off on you.)

4. **Results** – track record, performance, getting the right things done, reputation of being a performer, of being a producer

♦ Transfer a credibility coin to the prospect's trust pocket for:

- Presenting case studies
- Having reference stories sprinkled throughout your sales cycle, your brochures, your website, and all marketing materials.
- Collecting written reference letters from each client and presenting them in a ‘brag book’ or on your website or on social networking sites (Linked In, for example)
- Knowing all the stats and measured outcomes from your best engagements so you can be confident, convincing and persuasive when talking with network contacts and prospects

♦ Remove and throw away a credibility coin from the prospect’s pocket for:

- Having no customer stories to tell (If you’re just starting out, give away your product or service so you can get some stories, use colleagues’ stories)
- Not reassuring the prospect that you can do a great job for him based on your experience with others
- Having ‘fuzzy’ accounting of actual results, making things up

Take away. None of the ideas are new here. However, the spin is a little different. If you ask yourself every time you have a choice to make, “How does this affect the ‘promise’ I’m selling to my client?” you will make better choices. When you are formulating your marketing plan and you ask yourself “How can I better get across my ‘promise’ to the best potential buyers?” your marketing plan will be more effective. Many of the items that engender the most credibility and trust don’t necessarily have the highest price tags. They reflect your values and your sincerity. That ultimately is what the customer is looking for.

Jeri Quinn is the owner of Driving IR (Improved Results) She has 35 years experience developing people’s potential and has owned and sold small businesses. Currently working in New York City as a business coach, she focuses on helping executives and sales teams in professional service firms achieve their goals on a regular and consistent basis. www.drivingimprovedresults.com jeri@drivingimprovedresults.com

The Keys to Power Presentations
by Andrea Nierenberg

Have you ever wondered how some people seem to “improvise” almost perfectly when giving a presentation? Everything seems to flow as if they knew exactly all the circumstances they would be facing. Those people seem to have tapped into some “secret” knowledge on how to spontaneously provide a cohesive sales message.

Often it's our presentation skills that can make or break a sale, regardless of the quality of our product. The good news is that we all can possess the keys that will give us access to the presentation skills that will close sales.

If you feel you could improve on your presentation skills, think back on a young man who actually stuttered when he spoke. During one key speech, he fainted. Yet we all remember Winston Churchill as one of the greatest orators of all time. What was his secret?

After analyzing presentations I have made around the world, I have discovered the "secrets" that have made my presentations a success. Let me share them with you:

- Begin strong. Grab them right away. As a salesperson, we only have those first few critical seconds to make a lasting impression. Perhaps start with an impressive statistic or a rhetorical question. When I teach presentation skills, sometimes I'll ask my group, "How many of you want to make more money?" Then I allow a little time to go by, and say, "Fine, stick with me for the next hour and I'll help you learn how to ask for it."

- Have one theme. The mind can take in only so much information at one time. Make sure not to give your audience information overload. Develop a structure, with up to three main points, and back them up with support that revolves around one central theme.

- Use simple, action-oriented language. Simple is not elementary; what you're doing is making it easy to understand and digest. Keep in mind my acronym E.A.S.Y.:

  E — Enthusiasm and Energy are key; be alive and vital when you present.
  A — Articulate your message. Clarity is essential.
  S — Simple, Short and to the point. I believe in the K.I.S.S. principle–keep it short and sweet.
  Y — Your audience–focus on them. This also helps take the focus off your nervousness and inhibitions.
- End with emotion, appeal to what matters most–hope, pride, love, profit–paint a word picture that your audience can see by the words you draw.

Keep in mind that it's not always what you say, it's how you say it. Probably the most neglected aspect of a person's image is our voice, yet the quality of our voice will have a profound effect on how we're perceived.

Research tells us that when we present, several things are taken into account by the receiver. Our voice inflection and modulation accounts for 37%, our appearance 55%, and what we actually say is only 8% of our message.

When you're preparing for your next presentation–whether it's a sales call, a meeting with your team, or a presentation to your boss and higher management– keep these 10 survival skills in mind:

1. Act excited and eager to share your information. Dale Carnegie always said this was critical to taking the "stage". Plus it will come from a place of passion.

2. Use evidence and research to call for action. Know at least 150% of what people might ask. Keep extra visual aids in your bag to bring out during questions, when they're really paying attention.

3. Be animated, while being yourself. It's hard enough to remember all that you need to, so develop your own style. It's great to emulate others, just be the real you when you present.

4. Be aware of your hands and gestures. Your body is the number one visual aid. Practice in front of a mirror; watch your face and your gestures. Also, don't be a talking head behind a podium. Develop natural and graceful gestures. Maybe walk around a bit to create a more relaxed relationship with your audience.

5. Vary your voice pattern. Also use pauses to add drama, suspense, and to make a point. Watch television for examples. Even everyday news is better communicated with an effective presenter.

6. Keep your posture straight and natural. This takes practice, and the payoff is total confidence and control.

7. Know your audience. Sometimes it goes beyond basic research. For example, dressing appropriately for your audience could impress them. You'll have a more conservative look if presenting to a "Wall Street" crowd. Or you might be more casual in front of a creative group in the entertainment field. Of course, my rule is to always be professional and tasteful.

8. Relate to your audience with your eyes. It's been said that the eyes are the windows to the soul. Look at people when you present. The rule of thumb is to look at one person for at least three to five seconds, or as long as it takes to make a complete thought.

9. Be organized and prepared. As a salesperson you have a destination–to close a sale. When you have a road map, you increase your chances of getting there. It's amazing how much more confident we feel when we know our material and are organized. Prepare, and rehearse. Rehearse means to "re-hear" your presentation.

10. Know how to answer questions and objections. And do it in a non-defensive way. We must always remain, as the commercial used to say, "never let them see you sweat."

Have a positive feeling about what you're presenting and project to your listeners the value and significance of the radio station that they're tuned into all day long- WII-FM– What's In It For Me!

*****

Andrea Nierenberg, "a networking success story" (The Wall Street Journal), is the author of Nonstop Networking: How to Improve Your Life, Luck and Career. Ms. Nierenberg works with leading companies to improve interpersonal communications for management and staff. She offers keynote addresses and custom-designed programs on motivational techniques, networking tactics, and presentation skills. To contact Andrea Nierenberg, write to The Nierenberg Group, 420 E. 51st Street, Suite 12D, New York, NY 10022. She can be reached by phone at 888-605-5911 or by e-mail at info@mybusinessrelationships.com, web address: www.mybusinessrelationships.com.

Twelve Tips for Writing Marketing Emails That Make More Money

by Jodi Kaplan

Email is a great way to reach prospects and customers at a very low cost. The copy in your emails can make a big difference in whether you get a low response rate (1%) or a high one (up to 20%). Here are some tips for dramatically increasing the number of people who click through to Web site.

1. **Short subject lines work best.** Too long and it gets cut off by your readers' browsers or email application. Try to keep it under 40 characters.

2. **Personalize the subject line**. It increases open rates. People like to see their own names. And, they're more likely to open an email with their name in the subject line.

3. **Attract attention**. Ask a question. Promise a benefit. Tap into emotions, such as curiosity or hope or greed. Your readers will want to know more and will open the email instead of trashing it.

4. **Plain text or HTML?** If you're selling a product, like a high-end bicycle, visual images will help. If not, plain text is fine. Also some email providers (and users) block images, so if you use text, there's less chance your email will be marked as junk.

5. **Break up text into short blocks**. It's harder to read online, and people skim, rather than reading every word. If you use plain text, create emphasis for your bullets and headlines with asterisks and hyphens.

6. **Write conversationally.** Spell out what people will get by responding to your offer. Show them how your product can improve their careers, help them earn more money,

or become a better athlete. Don't use a lot of jargon or fancy words, just talk, as if you were telling a friend about a great new rock band. Let your passion come through.

7. **Talk about your readers, not yourself.** Or, in other words, talk about their lawns, not your grass seeds. Create a mental picture of how lush and green their lawns will be, and how beautiful the house will look.

8. **Include multiple links.** These can all go to the same place (your email service provider can track the number of clicks for each). Why do it? Some people will read only part of your email, and then want to learn more. Others will read all the way through. Either way, it should be easy to click, without scrolling up or down.

9. **Long or short copy?** This debate has been going on in direct marketing for years and years. In my opinion, length is like Abe Lincoln's joke about his legs. When asked how long they were, he said, "Long enough to reach the ground." Your copy should be long enough to do its job, get a response.

10. **Use a P.S.** The subject line, from line and P.S. have the highest eye traffic. Use your P.S. to repeat an important point, such as your offer, or emphasize that it's for a limited time.

11. **Send traffic to a landing page, not your home page**. Create a separate page that repeats the headline and main points of your email.

12. **Make it easy to respond**. Make it simple to call, click, or order, with as few distractions as possible. Don't include your usual site links on the landing page; just keep it simple and direct, without a lot of fields or steps standing between your prospect and a lead or order.

*****

Jodi Kaplan fixes "broken" marketing. She transforms ineffective mailings and unappealing Web sites into powerful revenue-generating tools. If your marketing is broken and you'd like to fix it, visit: http://www.kaplancopy.com for free articles, marketing resources, and information on marketing services.