

Marketing on a Shoestring

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You hear about a marketing tip and begin to replicate it into your business strategy. However, your business cannot grow on random ideas that you do every now and then. You need a system. An effective marketing system is comprised of a number of different components that are implemented, tested, improved and fine-tuned.

■ **Continuous evaluation**

Evaluate whether your marketing system is paying dividends? Are you attending networking groups, but have yet to find a prospect for your services? Maybe something needs to be adjusted. Continuously reevaluate your time and effort along with the results. If it is not producing what you expected, then eliminate or adjust the process

■ **Business cards**

It is a big mistake to forget to carry your business cards. You never know when you will meet a potential client, supplier or referral source. Be sure to give prospects all possible means by which to contact you— mailing address, phone number, fax, e-mail and website.

■ **Power of follow-up**

Keep an organized list of all individuals who have expressed an interest in your services. Even if a prospect is not ready to buy today, you will have future opportunities to follow-up. Do not allow too much time to elapse before contacting prospects. They may forget about or lose interest in your services.

Use various follow-up methods—telephone, mail an article, send an email that directs them to your web site, invite them to a special presentation or follow-up in person. Do not misuse or abuse a new relationship by passing on information that has no relevance.

Stay in creative contact with potential clients you met at various events. Send a personalized follow-up note or card after the initial meeting.

■ **Be budget-conscious**

Stick with simple business cards and stationery for a while. As your business changes, so, too, will your image.

■ **You never know who your next customer will be**

Treat everyone as if they were a potential client or referral source. Great service creates great word-of-mouth advertising.

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