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Starting Small Business Promotional Campaigns

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Small Business Failures Don't Have to Happen

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**Article Body:**

So you're starting a small business. You figured out what you wanted to sell or do and went out and got it all set up, had your DBA framed and on the wall and now all you need is for someone to buy your product or use your service. Right?

How are you going to go about getting your public to know you even exist?

**Promote! Promote! Promote!**

Well that all sounds simple, but say you're a financial specialist, a boat builder or llama farmer. They probably didn't teach the basic principles of starting small business promotional campaigns in boat-builders' school. So what do you need to know, and how do you go about it?

Let's start with the *"Basic Principles"* of promotion:

**What is Promotion?**

Promotion (pro•m&#333;&#8242;•shun) *n.* Anything, as advertising, public appearances, etc., done to publicize (get the attention or interest of the public) a person, product, event, etc. *The New Webster's Concise Dictionary* 2003 Encyclopedic Edition

**Why do you promote?**

The purpose of promotion is to make sure people know you are in business. You promote because if you don't, you won't make it in business. You promote because it is communication that you need to engage in in order to survive. You

promote in order to expand and get the attention or interest of the public for your products or services. You promote because if you don't, no one will know you exist and no one will buy from you and...well, you get the point.

**How do you promote?**

There are more ways than you would ever think. Have you ever heard someone say, "I never promote and I am always busy" OR "I don't have to promote, all my business comes from word-of-mouth"? They may not be aware of how they're doing it, but I promise you they are promoting somewhere. Maybe they just go around telling everyone they talk to, that they don't promote. (Sound funny? It's still promoting.) Maybe their larger-than-life running water faucet in front of their store attracts so much attention that they don't need to do anything else. Well here are some ideas you can do "knowingly" to drive in the business.

- Greeting your customers with a smile is a great place to start.
- Calling your customers after they have had a chance to use your product is a good way to promote that you care about their experience with your organization. It can also create an opportunity to make more sales.
- A neatly packaged product, the shipping label on straight, promotes that you take pride in what you do.
- Always keep up-to-date brochures or catalogs about your business in your reception area for people to see and take with them.
- If you have customers coming into your business, make sure they are greeted pleasantly, professionally, and immediately.

Anything that gets the attention or interest of the public for the company, its employees, its products or services (in a positive way) is promotion. But how do you go about promoting to the masses?

Here is a story that could save you thousands of marketing and promotional dollars, as well as months or years of experience.

"I was working as the Communications & Promotional Director in a medium size business. We were fortunate enough to have our own commercial printing press, that put out lots of very fancy letters, catalogs, brochures and other promotional items, and oh yes, envelopes to put them in. My full time pressman and his helpers, spent several days each week getting everything printed, cut, folded and sent over to the mailing house."

"There, they had machines that automated all the stuffing, sorting, addressing and stamping. All in all everything was going very well. We were sending out about 40,000 pieces per week at a cost of about \$10,800.00, and getting around 120 to 140 good leads per week. This generated an average of 2 new sales per week for a product that cost around \$12,000, and re-sign income of around \$45,000 more. We weren't growing very fast, but we were making money."

"THEN...911 hit. "

"Suddenly, nobody wanted to open envelopes. Our leads were dropping to nothing. We were heading toward our own disaster like so many other companies did. I knew I needed to promote, but what good did it do if nobody read it!"

"I was talking to the owner of the mailing house and he suggested the use of POSTCARDS instead of letters. So we decided to give it a try. Unfortunately, I had much less money to allocate towards promotion, so I started by sending about 20,000 postcards weekly. The total cost-per-piece, needing only one day on the presses, half the labor at the mail house and a substantial decrease in postage, was reduced by about 60%."

What was the result? Try 120 to 140 leads per week!

Why?

- You don't have to open a post card!
- You see it right away, the bright picture is not hidden from view by an envelope.
- The message leaps right out and you can't ignore it or throw it in the trash unopened (the fate of many bulk mail pieces).

Postcards are the best medium to reach new customers when starting a small business promotional campaign.