

Title:

10 Offline Tightwad Marketing Strategies to Help You Get More Clients

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Summary:

Tightwad marketing is the art of doing more with less, or using your creativity instead of your checkbook to get the word out about your business. Even though the saying, "If you build it they will come" worked for Kevin Costner's character in the movie, "Field of Dreams", life doesn't often imitate art.

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Article Body:

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Several years ago, in response to client requests for no-cost or low-cost marketing techniques, I coined the term "tightwad marketing". My definition of tightwad marketing is the art of doing more with less, or using your creativity instead of your checkbook to get the word out about your business.

Even though the saying, "If you build it they will come" worked for Kevin Costner's character in the movie, "Field of Dreams", life doesn't often imitate art. Usually the first thing that pops into someone's mind when they think about marketing is, "I've got to place an ad." Place a few ads and soon your marketing budget has totally dried up. Statistics say that someone must see your ad six times in the same publication before thinking of using your business. If it's a weekly or monthly publication, that could be six weeks to six months down the road, and you can't afford to wait that long!

In order for the public to find your field of dreams, here are ten inexpensive ways to get started:

1. Define your USP---your Unique Selling Proposition---and use it in everything that you do. Make sure your customer knows what it is that you do that is unique to you and your business. Don't make them struggle to answer the question of why they should do business with you instead of your competitor.
2. Create joint ventures with other businesses that complement yours. For

example, if you're a real estate agent, team up with a cleaning service, an interior decorator, and a personal chef to offer a nice packaged deal to a new home buyer.

3. Stress the benefits of what you do, not the product or service. There's a great story that's passed around about the world's most successful insurance salesman, who, when asked what he did for a living, responded, "I buy life assurance." Most people responded, "What do you mean?" to which he replied, "I buy life assurance for my clients at the best possible price. Would you like me to buy some for you?" Make your potential customer think, "I've got to get that!"

4. Become newsworthy! Send out media releases to announce a new service or product or sponsorship of a charity event. Create an event or a special day. Link what you do to an existing trend or news event. Talk about your personal story in the business, i.e. if you went broke and bounded back, started to create one product and ended up with another, etc. Issue an award or give something away. Conduct a survey and report the results. Write a letter to the editor.

5. Talk to your customers. Call 5 previous customers and find out what they liked and didn't like about their dealings with you, and how you might better serve them in the future. Have them write testimonials that you can use. Ask and reward them for referrals.

6. Love what you do and become a model of what you're selling. If you don't absolutely love what you do and feel passionate about it, your customers are going to see right through you and not be convinced to buy what you are offering. For example, if you're a car mechanic and your shop sits on a parking lot full of clunkers that don't run, why would anyone hire you to repair their car? Or, if you're a landscaper and your lawn is full of weeds and crabgrass, who wants to hire you to beautify their yard? If you don't truly feel passionate about your business and become a living model of that business to everyone you meet, then find another business!

7. Network, network, network! Join organizations, such as Chambers of Commerce, professional groups, civic groups, etc. and any type of organization to which your target market might belong. Attend community events like business open-houses or neighborhood picnics. Sales master Joe Girard lives by his "Law of 250", which states that everyone knows about 250 people well enough to invite to their wedding or to be in attendance at their funeral. Lesson: Perhaps the person you're speaking with isn't interested in what you offer, but there's a good chance s/he knows someone who is-250 of them!

8. Use attention-getting devices -- make yourself visible. Always have business cards on hand to distribute. Have a t-shirt personalized with your business name and wear it when you run errands. Wear an outfit or uniform that shows the world who you are. UPS has taken their identity as seen in their brown trucks and uniforms and embraced it with the tag line in their current commercials, "What can brown do for you?"

9. Talk and teach. Approach local organizations about being a guest speaker at their next meeting. Give a workshop that is open to public and is low-cost/no-cost for participants and discuss a particular aspect of your business, or demonstrate what you do. Offer them valuable information, but leave them hungry for more. For example, a financial planner might offer a free seminar called, "Planning for Retirement as a Thirty-something" or a bank loan officer might offer a workshop in conjunction with a real estate agency called, "Everything a First-Time Homebuyer Needs to Know But is Too Scared to Ask." Or, work with your local college or recreation department and get paid to teach what you know.

10. Implement 5 a day. Make a list of all the creative ways you can market your business, and implement 5 of them per day.

Remember, in Tightwad Marketing, you're limited only by your imagination!