

Report Number 33424

100 Ways To Increase Your Business

Know who your customers are.

- a. Describe the person most likely to want or need your product.
- b. Why should they want to buy your product?
- c. When you know the motivation, you can target the product to the correct customer base.
- d. You can't sell a product until it is defined and positioned.

Note: A pharmaceutical company shelved a cold medicine because they couldn't correct the drowsiness it produced. Someone renamed it NyQuil and sold it as a bedtime cold medicine. It became the largest selling cold medicine on the market. Just because your product is good doesn't mean it will sell. It must be positioned correctly. That's what marketing does.

2. Promote with postcards.

- a. First Class Postcard Postage is .20¢ (1¢ less than bulk mail - 20.8¢) This will be changing in January 1999
- b. Postcards convey a sense of urgency to the customer. They may not read your letter but they will turn your postcard over. (You have 3 seconds to get your message across. The average time people look at an ad.)
- c. Postcards will keep your mailing list clean (Address Correction Requested), First class returned and corrected free of charge by the Post Office. (Bulk Mail letter correction cost

.32¢ each).

d. With a postcard, your message is out in the open. Other potential customers will see it too, not just the person it's addressed to.

3. Create A Survey

a. Mail a survey to customers to find what motivates them to buy.

b. Where do they work? What magazines do they read? Age Group?

c. This information will tell you where and how to reach your targets.

d. Offer a gift or discount for completing the survey.

4. Use A Two-Step Approach

a. Offer complimentary business related information to potential customers.

Step 1: Offer a free "fact sheet" to customers that shows your expertise.

Step 2: Add these customers to your mailing list and mail to them often.

5. Say "Happy Birthday"

a. Mail greeting cards to your customers (dates from your survey #3)

b. Include a coupon or special offer or tell them about your product that they should give themselves as a gift.

6. Team Up With Another Business

- a. Share advertising costs with another company.
- b. Sharing costs makes high-quality printing and larger ads affordable.
- c. Can your product be teamed with another product? (Motor Oil packaged with your new funnel invention.)

7. Be Consistent and Committed

- a. Research shows a message must be repeated to be remembered.
- b. Send multiple mailers to the same people.
- c. If you advertise, do it where you can afford to do it often.

8. Use The Telephone

- a. Test a new idea by phone before you commit to costly promotions.
- b. Response from 100 phone calls will be similar to 1,000 pieces of mail.
- c. You'll receive faster results, it costs less, and you'll generate greater input and feedback.

9. Raise Your Prices

- a. Has your competition raised their prices? Maybe you should too.
- b. Higher prices separate you from the crowd, and implies your product is better, and deserves a premium price. BMW does not compete with Yugos.
- c. Be careful in this area. The customer must see the value of the higher price.

10. Promote Trends or Current Events

- a. Can you tie your product or service to the environment, Olympics, World Series?
- b. Gain valuable credibility and interest by association with known groups.

11. Add Personality to Your Business

- a. Use photos of you and/or your staff in your promotional materials.
- b. A quote from the person pictured conveys friendliness and builds confidence in your company.
- c. Responses to seminars and programs are dramatically higher when photos are used.

12. Use Deadlines

- a. Make sure you put a time limit on promotional materials.
- b. Watch your expiration dates. (What day does your offer end?

Are you losing an extra weekend of business?)

13. Fear Of Not Having Your Product

- a. For products that increase personal security, personal safety or health, fear can be an effective business-boosting tool.
- b. If they don't buy your product now, they will miss something. A discount, premium free gift, etc. Fear of loss is more powerful than expectation of gain.

14. Use The Media

- a. Send letters covering topics related to your business to local publications.
- b. Connect your product or business to some current event that is making news.
- c. Your name and business name will probably be used if your letter is printed.
- d. You will be perceived as an expert in your field.
- e. You are holding this information because of an Internet site or a local or national promotion.

15. Make Advertising last

- a. Buy ads that last months, not minutes. (Yellow pages)
- b. Magnetic signs for car or van. Don't forget the back of your vehicle. Put signs on truck tailgates and rear windows. Most customers don't drive alongside your vehicle and copy down the phone or address. They are more apt to do it at a stop sign.
- c. Use clever bumper stickers or T-shirts.

- d. If you're printing an expensive color piece, ask the printer to quote the price of his house paper.
- e. Design the outside of the brochure to be permanent and the inside for future changes. That way you can print up large quantities (5,000 or more) of the outside only and have the printer keep them on hand. Then as your message changes you only have to print the inside.
- f. You will save by doing a large run in the beginning. You will also save by only printing what you need as your company changes. Avoid outdated brochures.

16. Examine Promotional Materials

- a. Make sure business cards, letterheads, brochures and packaging materials are first class. This is not the area to spare expenses.
- b. What types of materials is your competition using?
- c. If you can't afford 4 color brochures use 2 or 3 color. Use of color increases response by 26%.
- d. If you can't afford 2 color... use screens. (See Below)

Note: Screen is another word for shade (darker) or tint (lighter). For example: A florist wants red flowers around the borders of his brochure and black ink for the text. That's two colors. Pink is a 50% tint of red, it is not another color. You can have some pink flowers and some red flowers with little or no additional cost depending on how your printer handles screens. This process will give the appearance of three colors; red, pink, and black. Use gray (a tint of black) and presto, a 4 color brochure (red, pink, gray and black) for a 2 Color price. It looks expensive but isn't.

17. Make a Memorable Business Card

a. Make your business card a mini-brochure. If you need a map, or other information, use the back of the card. Your card is there long after you are gone.

b. One thousand two-color business cards run around \$30.00 - \$60.00, and it's worth it.

(Use shades - See #16 above and have 3 or 4 color business cards.)

c. What do your competitor's cards look like? What message do they convey to you?

d. Give several cards to business associates who might be able to promote your business. Give a card to everyone you meet, and put one in every letter (even bills).

Note: Joe Girard, the famous car salesman, used to throw handfuls of business cards, like confetti, out of the upper deck at football games, onto the expensive seats below. On the back of each card was a discount on any car bought the following Monday.

18. "Thank You" - Magic Words

a. Thank customers with a special offer.

b. Thank anyone who refers business to you with a personalized thank you card, phone call, discounts, flowers, dinner or even a commission.

c. Thank your reliable suppliers with a letter and increased orders.

d. People will remember your kindness.

19. A Business Card for All Employees?

- a. Counter people? Drivers? Yes. They're important enough for this tiny investment.
- b. They'll be proud to leave their card with every customer and every prospect.
- c. They'll use the card with friends and relatives and your name will be in many more places.

20. Do What The Winners Do.

- a. Is there a company you admire? Analyze its marketing strategies.
- b. Adopt the ones you can use and improve on them.
- c. Use what works. Collect advertising that attracts your attention and adapt it to your business.

21. Throw a Party

- a. Invite clients and friends to your home based business or store, serve refreshments and plan an interesting demonstration of your product or service.
- b. Make it EASY for customers to buy or order your products or services. Accept credit cards, checks, eliminate long complicated credit forms, etc.
- c. Alert the media. Let the business editor know something special is happening. They love to cover the unveiling of interesting new products.
- d. Be friendly and outgoing. If this is not your personality ask a friend to be a greeter.

22. Give A Gift

a. Offer a specialty item that's useful enough to save and that also serves as a reminder of your business. Letter opener, coffee mug, paper weight etc. Look in Yellow Pages under novelties.

23. Three Secrets of Marketing

a. You must be committed. Commit the money and leave it alone. Plant the seeds that will grow later.

b. You must be consistent. Why does McDonalds advertise every day on every channel? Is there anyone in the USA who hasn't heard of McDonalds? The marketing message must be constantly reinforced. Your customers will forget you if they don't hear from you.

c. You must be confident. Most marketing plans take at least 60 - 90 days to produce even minimum results. Be patient, your efforts will pay off in the long run.

24. Don't Try To Make Money

a. Offer customers genuinely useful products or services that make you and your customers happy.

b. Do what you love and the money will follow.

25. Establish A Board of "Champions"

a. Every quarter or so, put up a dozen of these advisers (friends, family, business associates whose opinions and judgment you value) into a room and allow them to critique every aspect of your business. For the cost of a nice lunch this "board of advisors" can give you a different look at yourself.

b. Don't be "thin-skinned", they may be hard on you or your product, but that's the purpose. They may see problems that you don't. Grow from the experience.

26. Use A Dipstick Now And Then

a. When explaining your product or service to customers, stop every 30 to 45 seconds and ask a question to see if your message is being received. If they ask you to continue or ask to take notes you know you're on the right track.

b. You can't sell it if your message is not being received.

27. Never Assume

a. Never assume any of the following:

1. The customer can't afford it.
2. The customer won't buy it.
3. The customer doesn't understand the product.
4. The customer won't buy more than one.
5. The customer won't price your competitors.
6. The customer won't like you.

b. On the other hand, don't assume the opposite is true either.

c. Have confidence in your product or service and the need it fills.

28. Take Little Bites

- a. Eskimos eat whales, and tiny termites eat mighty houses the same way.... a bite at a time.
- b. Starting a company or introducing a new product is a monumental task if you approach it as a done deal. General Motors didn't start at its present size, its doors opened on the first day of business with no customers just like yours.
- c. Good management, a good product properly positioned, and a "never give up" attitude.
- d. Even with small bites the meal may become more than you can swallow.

NOTE: In the September 1992, issue of Success magazine is the story of Herb Vest. He started a company that was against CPA regulations in every state. He financed his business with personal credit cards. At one time he was \$400,000 in debt and had judgments filed against him. The bank repossessed his car. But he never gave up. "I always knew I'd succeed." he said. Nine years later 9 states had changed the rules and Vest is CEO of a \$36 million company. This is the kind of determination, drive and attitude it takes to be successful...Do you have that kind of determination, drive and attitude? (See #38 -39)

29. Use the Public Library

- a. The library has more information on business than anyone can possibly read.
 - b. The librarians will research and find the information you need. A real time saver.
 - c. Look the books over for two weeks and buy the ones you want to add to your business library.
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30. Use One Media to Direct Your Customer To Another

a. If the best way to reach your target market (i.e., Teens) is with radio, but you have a long story to tell, use your radio spot to tell them about your big sale ad in the paper.

31. Invite Complaints About Your Business Or Product

- a. Make it easy for your customers to complain about your business. Call them after the sale. Send a post card "Was everything OK?" "How're we doing?" etc.
- b. If your product has a problem how will you know about it? Isn't it better to get complaint feedback right away rather than wait until you have hundreds of unhappy customers?
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32. The 100% Perfect Problem (Or the 90% Done Problem)

- a. If you continue to work on an ad, brochure, mailer long enough, eventually you will get it perfect. This is false.
- b. The reality is that no communications project is ever more than 90% perfect. There's always something that could be revised and improved.
- c. It is better to accept a 90% perfect project and finish it so it can begin to do its work, rather than keeping it caged while chasing the elusive 100% perfect goal.
- d. If you have a new business or product, the important thing is getting some kind of message out there. You need customers or clients and you need them fast. Every day you delay the better chance your competition has to reach your customers. Your materials will go through several evolutionary changes over the years and you will never be totally happy with them.

33. Start a "Swipe File."

A swipe file is a collection of ads and brochures that copywriters and artists collect, or swipe from other artists, for those times when they are stumped for a good idea. Don't copy them exactly, but many good ideas can come from what the guy down the street is doing. And if they're doing something, so should you.

34. It's Important to Us, So It Must Be Important To Our Customers

- a. Just because issues are important within an organization they do not automatically have relevance to your customers.
 - b. This is a by-product of "fuzzy-thinking" and the problem points to managers that lack experience.
 - c. When you consider any project look at it from the customers point of view, not the company. The rule is "take care of the customer and he'll take care of the company".
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35. Give Your Customers More Than They Expected

- a. Instead of the 101 business tips you expected, you will get an extra 13 you didn't expect.
 - b. What small thing can you do for your customers that will surprise them?
 - c. Good service generally goes unnoticed, and does not receive a comment. Exceptional service does; so does exceptionally poor service.
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36. Use Suppliers and Vendors For Information

- a. Talk to your suppliers and salespeople who call on you, they know more about your competition than anyone else. Sometimes in the course of casual conversation they may, unknowingly, give you important information about your competition's future plans.
- b. If your competition is a public company, buy stock. As a stockholder you will receive all their annual and quarterly reports.

37. Pay Attention to People with disabilities.

They are becoming a big market. If you can serve some subgroup of that market effectively you may be able to capture a loyal and lucrative customer base.

38. Know The Demographics of Your Sales Area

a. Demographics are the breakdown of the area you live in or plan on servicing. How many Whites, Blacks, Hispanic etc. What are the income levels? Number of homeowners, etc. This is important information because if the area can't afford or doesn't want your product then you're out of business before you even start.

Demographic information is available from the following:
(These are not the only sources).

1. Local Newspapers - Ask for an advertising rate kit.
2. Local Chamber of Commerce
3. City planning commission
4. Public Library - Ask the librarian for assistance.
5. Local TV and radio stations

39. Subscribe To Industry Magazines

- a. Keep up with changing events in your industry by subscribing to trade magazines.
- b. Lists of all available magazines are available at the library.
- c. Many of these magazines do surveys of their subscribers that answer questions such as:
 1. How much should I spend on marketing, advertising, insurance, etc. each year? How much should I charge for my product?
 2. What age group buys the largest amount(s) of my product?
 3. What is the most successful advertising medium to promote my product? TV, Radio, Direct Mail?

40. Subscribe to Magazines That Help Your Business Self-Esteem

- a. No matter what the state of the economy is people are always starting businesses. People are still running successful businesses every day of the year. Look for magazines that deal with positive business messages. There are plenty of them out there. Here are a couple to start with:
 1. Success - Positive messages to keep your spirits up.
 2. Inc. - The Magazine for Growing Companies.
 3. Entrepreneur - The Small Business Authority.

These are available at most grocery stores, newsstands and the library.

41. Join Organizations That Can Help You

a. Most industries have organizations that support that industry.

For Example: Your local video store may be a member of the V.S.D.A. (Video Software Dealers Association).

b. I wonder where we can find a list of these organizations. The library, perhaps.

c. Talking to people in the same industry can give you a good idea of what to try and not try in business promotion. There is always someone at these meetings who can help you succeed. The organization exists to benefit your business or product.

d. Many organizations have conventions that are closed to the general public. The Video Software Dealers have one of the largest conventions in Las Vegas every year (sorry, Video Dealers only). Conventions are a gold mine of good information.

42. What If I Can't Match A Competitor's Offer?

a. If your competitor is offering 50% off over a four day weekend and you can't afford the extra inventory or the mark-down for that long, what can you do?

b. Offer a better deal for a shorter time. Try offering 60% off on Saturday only. You will still drain off a lot of his customers on a busy sale day and you will be perceived as a better place to do business.

43. Track Your Clients Special Needs

a. Create a form to keep track of clients' requests for special services and products and whether you can meet these requests.

b. By studying these forms periodically, you can track interest in new products or services that you should offer.

44. Make Sure Your Clients Can Reach You.

a. Print your company name, address, and fax number on all materials including, packing slips and invoices.

b. Provide customers with business cards and Rolodex cards.

c. Customers who have to search for your number may come across your competitor's number first.

45. Learn More About Your Customers

a. Learn more about customers than just the business they're in.

b. Pay attention to local newspapers and let customers know you read about them.

46. Be An Expert

a. Offer seminars, establishing your company as an expert on the subject.

b. Seminars help cement relations with current customers, attract prospects, and increase your company's exposure.

c. Choose a topic with broad appeal among your client and prospect base.

d. Follow-up with attendees by mail or in person.

47. Write Sales Letters

- a. With e-mail, fax machines and cellular phones most of us don't write letters any more. But they are an effective means of communication and unlike phone calls, almost always reach the intended audience.
- b. Letters enhance a company's professional image, help avoid misunderstandings and often make a sale.
- c. Write letters explaining your company's services, detailing how your company helped another well-known client or thanking a customer for an order. Hand write "Personal" on the outside for better response.
- d. Keep a library of well-written letters for employees to use as models.

48. Listen To Your Customers

Pay attention to questions new customers ask you. They may be telling you about an unpleasant experience they had with a previous company. If they ask about service, exchanges, return policies, etc. Have an employee meeting and go over some of the phrases that might be "red flags" to watch for. Armed with that knowledge you can let these customers know that you will solve the problem with no hassles or problems.

49. Use Personalized Post-It Notes To Promote Your Company

- a. Every office uses these little "sticky notes" and they stick them to everything. With Personalized Post-It notes everyone from the CEO to the receptionist will see your company name almost every day.
- b. If they have a problem you can solve, your name and number are right there stuck to the page.

50. Rate Your Customers For Surprising Results

- a. Assign customers a category such as "A", "B", "C", "D", etc. based on several criteria. Include profitability; time spent handling orders and special requests.
- b. You'll quickly realize that some high-volume accounts are not contributing significantly to the bottom line.
- c. Develop a plan to inform all employees who the most profitable customers are and who should receive the best efforts of the company.

51. Marketing is not a battle of products it's a battle of perceptions.

- a. Campbell's Soup is number one in the United States but not in the United Kingdom.
- b. Heinz Soup is number one in the United Kingdom but not in the United States.
- c. It's a matter of perception. Would you buy Pennzoil Cake Mix? Why not? Because we perceive Pennzoil to be a motor oil. They could make the best cake mix in the world and it would still be a very tough sell for most people.

52. The best way to succeed is to ignore the competition.

Too many people worry so much about their competitors that they forget what they are doing. If you're confident in your vision, don't worry about your competition.

53. Be tenacious in your vision

Don't be discouraged by setbacks. They aren't failures. Failure is simply failing to persevere. Whatever you are doing, if you are getting any kind of results, persevere.

54. Tips for magazine advertising. (Also see #55)

- a. A two-page spread attracts about one-quarter more than a one-page ad.
- b. A full-page ad attracts one-third more readers than a half-page ad.
- c. People respond better to illustrations or photos showing the product in use rather than those that show the product just sitting there.
- d. Ads with people in them attract more attention than those without.

55. Is bigger better?

- a. Should you use your limited advertising budget to create larger, more visible ads that restrict you to advertising less frequently, or smaller, less visible ads that you can then afford to run more frequently?
- b. The Answer: smaller ads more frequently. Most people even those who are likely candidates for your products typically don't respond to ads the first time they see them.
- c. Prospects may need to see the ad a number of times before they take action.

56. When emotion and reason come into conflict, emotion always wins!

While people like to believe they react rationally to offers, etc., the truth is they react emotionally and then look for the rationale to confirm their decision. So, the smart marketer will acknowledge the motivator and the need to rationalize in presenting his/her product or offer. Have you ever bought a CD just to get one song? Have you ever considered the color when buying a car? Is that logical?

57. Look outside your industry for the best in-class examples.

What firm has the best billing system? The best sales force? The best customer service? If you only measure yourself versus your competition, you'll only be as good as or a little better than they are. But is that that you're competing against? No. Your customer is experiencing those best in-class processes from someone and they are measuring your delivery against those someone's.

58. The two basic tenants of selling.

- a. People buy from other people more happily than from faceless corporations.
- b. In the marketplace, as in theater, there is indeed a factor at work called "the willing suspension of disbelief."

Who stands behind our pancakes? Aunt Jemima. Our angel food cakes? Betty Crocker. Our coffee? Juan Valdez. It's all myth but the myths are comforting.

59. The most important order you ever get from a customer is the second order.

Why? Because a two-time buyer is twice as likely to buy again as a one-time buyer.

60. Catalog rule #1 Best seller in the upper left?

Turn the page of any catalog and the first thing you look at is the upper left hand corner of the spread. That's where to place your best seller, your bread and butter, right? Well, what if your best seller is a visual dog? What if, for instance, your mainstay is black shoes? Kill the rule, raise another flag. Put a pair of wild socks in the upper left for stopping power and direct your reader to the old tried and true elsewhere on the spread.

61. Know your audience. Then write to one individual within that audience.

Don't address the sea of 500,000 nameless and faceless people who will receive your info. In your ads, brochures, mailings etc. pick one customer you know and like and write the copy to that one individual as though you were sitting down and having a conversation about your business.

62. Get on the ball

Be ready to be where your customer wants you, when your customer wants you, with what your customer wants. Just-in-time marketing is crucial as people become spoiled by 24-hour, seven-day-a-week customized products and services.

63. Beware of the negative

Make sure you deal with all your customers in good faith and with integrity. Negative word of mouth, especially on computer bulletin boards and systems like the Internet, can cripple your business even more than positive public relations can help it.

64. Focus on the smaller market

For every trend, there is at least one counter trend. It's sometimes better to focus on a smaller market one nobody is serving because they're all off catering to the bigger trend.

65. Direct Mail

Pick up any business book, by any author, and they will tell you there is no other way to sell a product that is cheaper and more successful than direct mail. PERIOD!! Forty-six per cent of all Americans have purchased something by direct mail. If you think of it as junk mail, think again. It's Solid Gold mail.

Here's a simplified version of how it works:

1. A full page ad in Time magazine is approximately \$80-\$90,000 and reaches 2 million people.
2. What if we could have two pages, three pages, eleven pages to tell our story? Could you tell the story of your product on 11 pages?
3. However, not all of the 2 million readers of Time have a need for our product. These people go right past our ad without a second thought. The money we've spent to reach these people is wasted.
4. Wouldn't it be nice if we could only have our 11 page ad delivered to the Time subscribers who were interested in our product?
5. The answer: A mailing list and direct mail. A list of people who should buy our product based on our product position and their past buying behavior. If we sell baby products, wouldn't a mailing list of prospective new mothers be nice. How about first-time mothers?
6. Now we can send our eleven page ad for substantially less than the Time ad, we don't have to compete with other ads in

the same magazine, and our message is reaching a target audience that has demonstrated that they have a definite need for our product and a history of buying it.

66. Newspaper Specials

Each year newspapers often do special inserts or sections on topics of local interest. Bridal Fairs, Real Estate Home Shows, Craft Fairs etc. These sections usually have a larger readership than the regular newspaper and your ad can generate more business. Note: Look at last year's edition and check with advertisers and see if the response was worth going in these sections. In many small towns, it is.

67. Newspaper Placement

Where your ad appears in the paper can have a dramatic impact on how successful it will be. Many people, even if they don't believe in it, read their daily horoscope. Depending on your product, being near the horoscope will increase your ads exposure.

68. Newspaper Ad Design

When running newspaper and /or magazine ads the salesperson will sometimes recommend they do the design of your ad as a money saving option. This is usually a bad idea. Not because they can't do it, or don't have the ability, but because newspaper designers are under a deadline to create many ads in a short amount of time. In most cases your ad won't receive the care and attention to detail it deserves because of the time constraints.

If you doubt this pick up almost any paper and proof read the ads or look for corrections and retractions of past incorrect ads. Even though it may cost a little more, have a professional design your ads.

69. Save with the professional designer

When doing newspaper or magazine ads have your designer create pieces of advertising. Your logo, text for upcoming events, etc. You pay one fee for all the pieces and assemble the pieces needed for each ad you place.

70. Some tips to remember when using photos in the newspaper

1. Make sure the photos are not too dark or too light.
2. Take the photo to a print shop and have a PMT (Photo Mechanical Transfer) made. The printer can lighten and darken each photo as needed. The cost is about \$5.00 each in most markets.
3. If the photos are similar in lightness and darkness, the printer can "gang" the photos. He can shoot several photos on one page for one price.
4. If you need to make a "head shot" for the paper, ask the photographer to use a light background instead of a gray or black background. Your photo will show up much better.
5. If you're using photos of your building, keep in mind the image you want to project to the reader. Does your business look open or closed? Are there cars in the parking lot? Does the business look prosperous?
6. If you are using a photo of your employees, the common mistake is to take the photo from too far away. For some strange reason people feel we must include the full body in the shot and the faces of the employees are lost. Arrange your employees in two or three rows with the back rows standing on curbs or boxes. Move in so the bottom of the picture hits the bottom row of employees about chest high. This way the

reader can see everyone's face clearly and the ad will be much more effective.

71. Look like news in the newspaper

Make your ad look like a news story complete with headlines and columns. The newspaper will require the word "advertisement" at the top of your ad but if you use a catchy headline and an attention grabbing first paragraph people will quickly forget they are reading an ad.

72. Service business and home based businesses

Many small town papers have a service or business directory. This is the section people often turn to for plumbers, landscapers, and computer help.

73. Use Scan Ads

Every state has a State Newspaper Association and offer what are called "Scan Ads". A scan ad is a small classified ad that is placed once with a member paper and appears in hundreds of newspapers in that state. For example, in Montana scan ads run about \$100 dollars for 100-120 state and local papers. In California scan ads are in the \$400 - \$500 range but appear in papers with an estimated readership of several million people.

74. Use the service organizations you belong to.

When news of your business is published be sure to send a copy to any trade organizations you belong to so they can include the news in their magazine or newsletters.

75. Say thanks for the memory

If you do get an article printed about your business, be sure to send a thank you card or letter to the reporter. Let them know you would be pleased to be a source in any future articles on your subject.

76. There is always two sides to any story

If your paper prints a story regarding your business or industry that is negative, prepare a press release that shows the positive side of the story. If the topic is controversial it may spark a positive article with your company portrayed in a positive light.

77. There's more than one paper

Just because you're in a small town doesn't mean your local town paper is the only print option. Many people and businesses subscribe to papers from your states larger cities. In Bozeman, MT we have the Bozeman Chronicle but many people also subscribe to the Billings Gazette. If you're doing business throughout the state this may be a better advertising option. Get the subscription numbers for these papers in your area. They may be more economical and reach more customers.

78. Walk a mile in my shoes

Reporters have no idea what your average work day is like and how your business works. Invite them to spend the day or part of a day with you so they can write the story from actual first-hand observation.

79. Make it easy

Most of us want our lives to be easier and less complicated. If your product or service saves time or makes life easier, that

may be more important to some customers than saving money. For example, cheese, sliced and individually wrapped in cellophane, for more money. Imagine the first response to that idea. Nobody's too lazy to slice their own cheese. It'll never sell.

80. Weekly Info

Contact your local radio station if you have daily or weekly information people need. We live in ski country and three different resort areas deliver snow reports on one of the radio stations. A stock broker reports on the market numbers daily.

The Net

81. How to get serious shoppers to visit your virtual sales room.

Most valuable Web content features:

- 1.) 71%-Easy to navigate.
- 2.) 64%-Updated information
- 3.) 57%-New product information
- 4.) 53%-Links to other sites
- 5.) 41%-Local dealer locations
- 6.) 40%-Graphics
- 7.) 25%-Java Applets

82. Users go off-line to ring up high ticket sales, but the web is where they make up their minds.

These people are not just "window shoppers".

- 1.) 71% bought at least one high ticket item they researched on-line (up from 46% last year),
- 2.) 79% shopped for computer products, 46% purchased retail
- 3.) 70% researched airline ticket prices, hotels or car rentals; 46% made reservations off line.
- 4.) 44% shopped for a car, 26% bought.

83. Make your page fast

Slow downloading time is the most frequently cited reason for leaving Web sites.

50% of on-line users have 14.4 modems.

84. Why do customers go to Web sites?

Netsmart found the primary reason consumers go to commercial Web sites is to be informed (97%), not to be entertained. They are on a mission. They go to your site to find out more about your product or service.

Eighteen percent of high ticket items go on-line first when planning a purchase,

69% report Web site info is a crucial factor in their final purchase decision, and only 15% go on-line to compare prices.

85. Don't overdo the technology

Don't let "hipper-than-thou" Web site builders throw your marketing know-how out the window. Avoid the hot new technologies like VRML, Active X, Java, etc., unless you are targeting a true high-tech audience.

86. Bring' em back for more

Provide valuable added extras that will enhance your image as the industry leader. Make your site a must-visit for the latest breaking news and update it frequently. If there are no new products lined up, provide industry updates, gossip, trends and forecasts. This will bring visitors back and motivate them to spread the word on the Internet grapevine.

87. Use Banners and Links to get noticed

- a. How to get folks to use your banner? Include the words "Click Here", this is a banner for "newbies" and is a psychological call to action.
 - b. Netsmart survey found 41% discover new sites through banners and links.
-

88. Put your Web site address everywhere.

Your Web site address should be on every piece of material your customer will see. Business cards, brochures, postcards, flyers, ads, signs, delivery vehicles consider a tattoo?

Well, let's not go overboard.

89. Can you animate your ad?

In evaluating the performance of some 30 ads over the last five months, ZD Net of Cambridge, Mass., found that animated

ads generated click-through rates at least 15% higher than static ads, and in some cases as much as 40% higher.

90. Copyright your web page.

Make sure you include the (© 1998 Your Name) on all your Web pages. This will protect you if some one else decides to download some of your graphics and use them on their site. The web is protected just like any other visual publication.

91. Search Engines

Register your Web site with as many search engines as possible. In fact, do a search *on* search engines. You will find several hundred. The largest, Yahoo! (www.yahoo.com), and Lycos, (www.lycos.com) will register your site by contacting them at the sites shown. There are also sites such as Submit-It at www.submit-it.com that gives free registration to many websites.

One important point, you can't rely completely on search engines to publicize your web site. You must advertise it whenever and wherever you can. Business cards, brochures, *all* your advertising must include your website address. I had a sign made for the rear window of my automobile with my web site address. www.smalltownmarketing.com.

92. T's and C's

Also known as "terms and conditions". If you are going to sell or market products on the web, it is important that your site have certain legal positions spelled out in legal language.

For example, you may want to notify customers about your site security if you are using credit cards. What actions are you liable for and what are the risks the customer takes. Spelling

these out in advance and posting them as part of your site can head off legal problems down the road.

93. Include a Guest Book

When people visit your site ask them to sign your guestbook. Why? Here are a couple of reasons:

1. Demographics - what cities and countries are your hits coming from?
2. Future advertising on your site. If you know the demographics of your site you can then provide this information to other companies who may pay you to post a banner on your page or a paid link to their page.
3. Keep track of frequent customers and big spenders and ask if you can e-mail them with any special sales or promotions you have planned.

94. Update your site often

The only reason people return to sites is for new information. People will stop returning to a site after a few times if there is no new information. Update weekly, daily if possible, and be sure to note on the first page the date of the update.

95. Ads and Banners

Before you decide to place an ad or banner on another Web site monitor the site for about a month. Look for changes and how often the site is updated. (See Above) If the site has nothing new to offer the traffic will slow and your ad will become ineffective.

96. On-Line Publications

Many publications like Time or Newsweek have an on-line presence. See if your industry publications have a web site. Check their web sites for past articles on your business or industry and contact them via e-mail about your page.

97. Holidays and Special Events on the Web

Change your page to reflect what's going on in the world. At Christmas time decorate your web site just like you would decorate your own storefront. The nice thing about this is once you've created the decorations they can be reused year after year.

98. Surf The Web

Start setting aside time to surf the Web for pages about your industry and see who is linked to who and where the links go. What you're looking for is a community of sites within your industry that have linked together for the good of all. Once you find them see if you can join the community.

99. Expect Criticism and welcome it

Criticism will come from those who want you to improve your site. Don't take it personally. Treat it as valuable research and listen to the majority. If you don't fill the void for the browsers then they will stop coming to your site. Expect feedback and welcome it.

100. Intellectual Property

Intellectual property on the net is defined as: software, patents, books, videos, music, photographs, trademarks, fictional characters, copyrights and Web Pages. Protect your web site and the information there.

Keep in mind copyrights don't apply to ideas or ways of doing things. Probably the best example of this is clumping cat litter. The guy who invented clumping cat litter just had a good idea that he couldn't protect. Pet supply companies called down to research and development and asked how many formulas they could use to make clumping cat litter. Answer: maybe 10,000 different kinds of ingredients and formulas.

Last But Not Least

101. Don't Forget The Kids

There may be times when you have a special project that requires temporary help. A clean-up campaign, an in-house mailing or help moving the business to another location. Instead of hiring part time workers from a temp agency check the local high school or university. There are always groups of responsible and dependable youth who are raising money for some school project. When you do this two things happen: 1. No payroll taxes. 2. A tax deductible donation (check the cause and with your accountant) for your business.

102. Sponsor Teams

One great way to get involved in the community is to sponsor a sports team. The parents of the team members will certainly frequent your business. We have a local hockey team that's doing well and many businesses associate themselves with the team. Don't forget to add your web site address on any team literature or signage.

103. Uneven workloads

Some businesses are under real strain during certain times of the year. Sometimes they overstaff with too many full time employees. Hire part timers at higher pay for fewer hours. Savings result from not having to pay benefits to part timers coupled with the need for fewer full time employees. Result: higher quality part timers who remain with the company longer.

104. Make sure employees see the Big Picture

It's hard for small, growing companies to pay people as much as some larger companies. The cost of insurance and other benefits are high and employees usually don't understand the cost of keeping them on the payroll. Make sure when you hire an employee they know the score. If their base salary is \$25,000, let them know with insurance and benefits the total package may be \$36,750.00. When raises come around, an 11% increase may amount to 4% salary and 7% increase in benefits. This way the employee is more in touch with the actual earnings and the sacrifice made by the company.

105. If they helped, pay `em

Many companies seem to feel that they shouldn't pay any type of bonus to part time employees. Keep in mind that these folks helped with customers, production, delivery, and talk about your business in their private everyday lives. If they're on your payroll they are necessary and should be made to feel so.

106. Student Bonus

Tie salaries to grade point average for high school and college students you hire. Give a progressive bonus if the student excels in the classroom. In most cases you will find more responsible disciplined workers who will enhance your business.

107. Respect your customers' time

1. E-mail First
2. Fax Second
3. Phone Third and last resort

Customers are busy too. Their time is valuable. Most will read the e-mail and look at the faxes in a timely manner. Be patient.

108. Special Customers

Each day call five of your best customers and offer them a special deal that is only for them and only today. They may not buy but we all like to know we can get something special that someone else can't.

109. Use a motto

"Winston tastes good..." Can you fill in the rest? Most people can... "Like a cigarette should!" That campaign hasn't been used in 25 years but it's still a powerful advertising message. "When you care enough to send the very best". Hallmark has used this motto for years and has made sending Hallmark cards a measure of how important the card recipient is.

110. Create a bulk mailing package

If you are on a downtown block, contact all the businesses on your block and see if they would be willing to package a postcard ad campaign with you.

Five or ten businesses would send postcard packages by bulk

mail and share the mailing cost which will be cheaper than each store mailing out their own individual postcards.

111. Use last year for this year

If you've been in business more than a year you have some idea of what to expect in year two. Use last year's information to plan this year. If you have five years its even better. Keep in mind business forecasting is like the weather. Just because there was a storm on this day last year doesn't mean it will happen again this year.

112. Five and Ten Philosophy

Every business day try to contact ten new customers or clients. From the 10 get at least 5 referrals of other potential customers to contact. You will never run out of potential customers.

113. Look how we did it

If your business solves people's problems a powerful method of advertising is using testimonials. Letters from people who used your service or product and their lives are better for it.

Since many companies may be reluctant or won't take the time to do this, I sometimes offer to write the letter myself and have them OK the wording and sign it. Many customers are so pleased with your service they will often agree to do this for you.

114. Advisory Boards

If you have created your "Board of Champions" (See #25) ask them to allow you to use their names on your stationary as an

Advisory Board. This will give your business a certain amount of credibility.