



Creative Inks

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Promotional Times™

Information and Ideas for Improving Sales, Image and Profits

Why Marketing By The Month Should Be Your New Year's Resolution

The goal of our newsletter is to help our clients grow their business. Promotional products can increase awareness, name recognition and lead generation. Awards and premiums will improve customer loyalty, employee morale and productivity.

Winter/Spring 2012

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ROUTETO:

Surveys by companies such as Quicken confirm that getting organized is on most people's Top Ten New Year's Resolutions List, and for good reason. Most of us need someone to come in and put a different set of eyes on our workspace to see where efficiency improvements are needed and can be achieved.

Your 2012 marketing schedule is one area where getting organized can be achieved. Take the time now to sit down with your calendar to create a successful month by month marketing plan that will:

- **get your message out consistently**
- **reduce the stress of marketing in a hurry**
- **increase revenue by building loyal repeat business**

Before you call us to maximize your month by month promotional schedule, here are a few ideas to get you started:



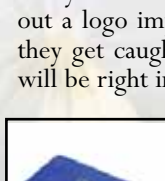
January: Since time is money, when you help your customers save time then they are saving money. A green industry, reusable imprinted shopping tote and a quick note tells your customers, "We Want You To See Green All Year!"



February: You would not be here without your customers so let them know they are "The Heart Of Your Business" with a valentine message and a biodegradable heart balloon.



March: Daylight Savings Time begins on March 11, 2012 and what better time to let your customers know that you "Save Them Time" than with a desk caddy clock



April: A practical way to remind your customers that you are here to help them weather "April Showers" is to send out a logo imprinted umbrella at the beginning of April. When they get caught in an inevitable rainstorm this month your logo will be right in front of them while they keep dry.



May: A creative way to say, "Let Us Join You In Your Success" is to send out hand sanitizer in a custom imprinted case for "Join Hands Day" on May 6, 2012.

Do not underestimate the value of repetition. A consistent message does not have to be bland but it does need to build name recognition and reinforce your strengths.

Call us today to get started organizing your creative month by month marketing plan and make 2012 the year you don't break your New Year's Resolution!

Double The Reward

One question a lot of business professionals are faced with these days is how to show appreciation for your sales force without spending a lot of money in a down economy.



On one hand it is paramount to reward their efforts, however, on the other hand, there are budget constraints. If there was a way to get a two for one with a reward to the sales force any manager would jump at the chance.

Consider the benefits of car magnets. A car magnet can be the best reward because it will be an advertising tool your sales people would not have to buy for themselves. Magnets also transform their cars from just a mode of transportation into a connection point for new business.



Magnets on the cars can potentially turn the monthly car expense into a tax deduction. Your tax professional or certified public accountant would have to give you the full regulations regarding this quirk in the tax law, but it would be time well spent to research the benefits of car magnets.

Who doesn't love a buy one get one free? Buy one magnet for a reward and they'll get a tax deduction for free, and increased sales too!

Give Them A Title & Get Them Involved

When you incorporate ideas from all your team members into your marketing campaigns you not only tap into the reservoir of their talents, but you invest them in the success of the campaign too.

First, identify weaknesses in your current marketing message and pair up a member of the team who has that strength with that weakness. Additionally, research common marketing mistakes in your field and remedy the mistakes you have in common with the assistance of your team. Some ideas to get the ball rolling to enlist your team's help:

- **The Proofreader** – incorrect use of grammar or misspellings can turn off prospective clients. Challenge your most persnickety team member to not only edit copy of printed materials, but to devise a clever promotional item that demonstrates your attention to detail. Have some fun with grammatical errors, for example the common mistake of using “your” when “you’re” should be used. Try a magnet in the shape of an awareness ribbon imprinted with, “Your Satisfaction Is Why You’re Our Greatest Cause!”



- **The Time Keeper** – enlist the skills of the most punctual member of the team to formulate a timeline of what needs to be done, who needs to do it and by when it all needs to be done. This person will have permission to send out reminders of deadlines and production times, empowered to follow-up when deadlines are not met and recognized as a driving force in your success of the campaign. Reward his or her time commitment with a leather bound calendar and to help with the reminders around the office try a greeting card that includes a calendar with the remaining ones incorporated into your marketing plan. These cards are available with standard messages or they can be customized with your message.

- **Miss Manners** – the person in your office who has a smile or kind word for everyone is the right person to combat the lack of common courtesy in our current 140 character world. It is amazing how far a genuine, “Thank You For Your Business,” can go when often the most anyone can muster is a “Thx” in an email. Emphasize good manners in your marketing strategy and your customers will feel the warmth of your sincerity.



Receiving and processing input is the ultimate team building exercise. The result is a comprehensive marketing message that is on target and incorporates the recognition of team members' abilities with their input. It is an exercise that does not have to be limited to just shaping the message but can benefit all areas in your workplace.

Lagniappe

(a little something extra)

Quotable Quotes

“My stockbroker asked me something important today paper or plastic.”

~ Jay Leno

“There is something about jumping a horse over a fence, something that makes you feel good. Perhaps it's the risk, the gamble. In any event it's a thing I need.”

~ William Faulkner

“A mentor is someone who allows you to see the hope inside yourself.”

~ Oprah Winfrey

Small, Medium & Extra Large

The Ubiquitous Pen



They may be little but their sales right now are huge! According to Promotional Products Business magazine pens have seen an increase in sales over the past two years. With a high rate of visibility, and one of the least expensive promotional products on



the market, it is easy to see why.

Choosing a pen as your next customer promotion is a wise choice. Knowing it will be a well used handout. Pens are long-lasting and come in a wide array of choices – from ink color to unique shapes – and there is one for you to choose that will make your customers want to reach for your pen first.

Give us a call today to get fitted with the perfect pen.

Stomp Your Feet

Branding experts emphasize building name recognition from “Top to Bottom.” Normally they are discussing a consistent message and level of service from the most senior in the company to the newest member on the team, but this axiom can apply to your physical place of business as well.

If you take care to have your office or store upbeat and clean then do not let a dull, gray floor mat greet your customer before you do. Instead, welcome them with your eye catching logo and brighten that walk through the front door.

Up, Up And Away

They are very visible, sure to start people talking, and can weigh up to a ton. They are giant inflatable balloons in the shape of anything from a gorilla to a hammer to your next new product.

A “Grand Opening” is not really grand unless there is an inflatable doorway to greet the customers! Or spice up your product launch or trade show booth with a custom designed piece and then reuse it at office parties, sales events or customer appreciation days.



Cut The Tension With A Laugh

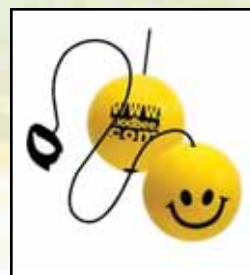
Recently a small tour industry business realized it wasn't selling just tour services but that it was selling “fun” as well. They decided to make fun an integral part of everything they did, especially anything that involved their customers.

The first experience most of their customers had directly with them was their reservation system. Since they were quite a small operation, customers often were put on hold and waited several minutes before being able to ask questions or book a package. This was not a fun experience for their customers so they took action.



First they changed their message to say, “We hate keeping you on hold but we are a small business so at times it's unavoidable. However, if you feel like breaking something while on hold please push '4' to hear the sound of glass breaking.” They recorded sound effects for their customers to have fun with but more importantly they built empathy with their customers' frustrations. They also built their business as word of mouth as their fun attitude spread.

Addressing a situation with honesty can turn a negative into a positive. So, if you have had to downsize recently and now have fewer people to do more, and it's caused some friction



with your employees or customers, acknowledge their frustration with a note of gratitude for sticking with you and a stress ball as an outlet for that frustration. Not only will it break the tension, all of you might just have a little bit of fun.

The Riddler

YOUR CHANCE TO WIN A FREE GIFT

Q: The more you take, the more you leave behind.

What are they?

Note: The first five people to correctly answer the riddle will win a free gift.

Email, call or fax your answer (see form on back).

Answer to last issue's riddle:

Halfway. After he gets halfway, he's walking out of the forest.

SONGS ABOUT WINTER...

"A Hazy Shade Of Winter" - Simon And Garfunkel

"California Dreamin'" - The Mamas and the Papas

"Baby, it's Cold Outside!" - Various Artists

"Coldest Winter" - Kanye West

First Snow on Brooklyn" - Jethro Tull

SONGS ABOUT SPRING...

"Rain Song" - Led Zeppelin

"Celtic Spring" - Van Morrison

"Some Other Spring." - Billie Holiday

"Suddenly It's Spring." - Frank Sinatra



Dear Addy,

ANSWERS TO YOUR PROMOTIONAL QUESTIONS

Q: I think it's classier for our specialty pens and highlighters to be imprinted only with the foundation name on it. My boss says we should include our name and address. Who is right?



A: Your boss is more right, but you're both missing the point. Use the pen's real estate to expound on your foundation's campaign message. Imprint it with an inspiring message that inspires donors and underscores your goals. The same goes for businesses - remind people of your slogan, not just your name. Don't forget to include your website!

Q: With the economy the way it is, we're taking a close look at every item in our budget. Are promotional products still a good investment?

A: Absolutely! In fact, a survey by the Advertising Specialty Institute found that 84% of business people remember the advertiser on their promotional products. Low-cost, useful items like bookmarks, jar openers, pot holders, can coolers, and eyeglass and cell phone wipes are always appreciated, especially when your competitors are cutting back on their promotional activity.



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