

Module 8 – Advertising and Networking

Advertising Your Service

Print, telemarketing, radio, television, email, and internet are all viable advertising options, depending on your market and resources.

Print Advertising

Print advertising campaigns can be more costly and at best, you can expect a 1% return on print campaigns. This type of campaign may include regular mailers or letters to a targeted area or to leads, people who have expressed an interest in your program and given you their contact information. Print campaigns may also include ads in local or regional newspapers or magazines or the distribution of a select number of flyers through one of these publications. You have the opportunity to reach more people through print, but unless you are reaching your target market, you may be wasting your money.

1. Research the monthly magazines or print publications in your area.
2. Ask the monthly publications to send you a rate card and establish whether their rates will enable you to advertise in their publications on a trial basis.
3. Research the cost of producing and printing direct mail pieces, such as flyers or postcards.
4. Contact Canada Post to establish the cost of distributing direct mail pieces via a postal walk in targeted neighborhoods.

Brochures, in either a folder format or card, as well as business cards are a necessity because there will be times when you have to leave something with a potential client, or mail information about your business. www.vistaprint.ca is a good place to start when seeking inexpensive cards and brochures.

Telemarketing

Telemarketing is probably the least appealing method of advertising to many people. Given recent laws regarding telemarketing, you are not able to contact people unless you have their permission to do so or you have an existing relationship with that person. You could make contact via telephone if you had a former client who had to stop coming for financial reasons, or a potential client who came to you to get more information about your program and decided they needed to think about it. In the first case, you would treat the call as a 'care call' to find out how they are doing, in the second instance, you might ask if they had an opportunity to think about their options, and offer to answer any additional questions they may have. These are the only two instances where it may be advisable to use the telephone as a means of generating new business.

Radio and Television

Radio spots can be costly, depending on the size of your market. If you feel confident that you could reach your target market via this method, it may be viable. In addition, you would be benefiting from the rapport the radio personality or disc jockey, has already established with his or her audience, to

sell your program because you would be writing the dialogue and they would be reading it to their audience. Another option would be to offer a radio personality a free program and part of your advertising campaign would be to have them relay their progress to the audience. Obviously, you would have to be selective about the person you chose. You would have to be confident that they are committed to seeing the program through to the end otherwise it could backfire.

Television spots on local stations may be more affordable during off times, generally late night or early morning, when many people are sleeping. Obviously, this is one of the most expensive forms of advertising, and if you choose this route, it is crucial that you do your homework and know your target market. Timing is everything because if your target market is not awake or at home to see your commercial or infomercial, you are wasting your advertising dollar. If you do choose this method of advertising, remember to use powerful before and after testimonials. The same is true of print, use before and after pictures if this is relevant to your business. A picture is worth a thousand words and that is especially true if the picture is of a person who has lost fifty pounds or more on your weight loss program.

Email Campaigns

Email campaigns are generally effective only when you have an existing relationship with the person in question or they at least know who you are and they have given you permission to contact them. Otherwise, they will see you as someone who is wasting their time with spam, and that may cause feelings of ill will toward you and your program. If they have expressed an interest in receiving information from you, take advantage of the opportunity to stay in touch. Write a quarterly newsletter with informative articles and tips pertaining to challenging times of the year, for example, maintaining your weight during the holidays, avoiding the winter blahs, finding time to exercise when the kids are home for the summer, etc. Make sure the information is of interest to your target market and you will have a reader who appreciates the information and values your expertise. Remember to entice them with program or product discounts and always offer referral incentives.

Refer to *The Voice*, Volume 2 Issue 1, for more details on developing effective newsletters.

Internet Marketing

Internet marketing can be a process of trial and error, but it is crucial, especially if your market is not defined by geographic location. Pay per click and search engine optimization may be worth considering if your intent is to reach a broad market. If you want to target *your* market, go where they would go. Which sites would they visit? If they are a SAHM, visit sites pertaining to their challenges and interests, and look for advertising opportunities. However, make sure the sites you choose to advertise with are well established, popular, and boast repeat visitors, perhaps offering popular message boards. You want your target market to see your ad so often that they think of your program whenever they think of the services you provide.

Other Advertising Options

Bus Signs

Most towns have a public transit system and bus benches may be a good form of advertising. The cost is usually \$200.00 per month and this option can raise your profile by increasing consumer awareness for your product or service. Unfortunately, most companies will require a one-year contract, so it is important to choose your location (s) wisely or negotiate the contract to allow you to re-locate in the event the bus sign is not producing the results you had hoped for.

If you choose bus sign advertising, consider your location carefully. Many people who use this option choose a bus sign in a residential area and also target members of the neighborhood with direct mail pieces to maximize their chances of securing a sale. This method has proven to be very successful for professionals such as real estate agents and insurance brokers.

Door to Door Advertising

Many people target specific areas with door to door advertising in the form of flyers or door hangers. You may choose to hire a person, offering to pay them minimum wage, and ask that they deliver a specific number of pieces each week or month. Many larger cities also have services that will do this based on a cost per piece basis, much like Canada Post. The advantage of this service is that you may choose specific streets instead of selecting an entire postal walk.

Free Advertising

There are many opportunities to get your name out there without spending a fortune in advertising, although you will have to be patient if you choose this option.

Consider exchanging services for advertising. For example, perhaps you can write an article for a magazine or you give a seminar to the advertising department in exchange for a small ad.

You may offer free seminars at local community groups, libraries, or community centers. Also, look for bulletin boards in local health food stores, grocery stores, convenient stores, dry cleaners, etc. You may also donate your services to local fundraising events to raise your public profile.

Networking – Establishing Yourself as an Expert

The average person has a social and business network of approximately 300 people. Networking groups, such as the Chamber of Commerce or B.N.I., can be a great source of referrals, if utilized. However, it is not enough to belong to a networking group; you must be an active participant.

Go to the meetings, tell people who you are and what you do. Prepare to present a brief elevator presentation to educate other members about your business. Leave your promotional material on promo tables at luncheons and always hand out business cards whenever you meet someone new, whether or not you consider them a prospective client. Even if they are not a prospective client, they may know someone who is.

When members of your networking group think of nutrition, they should immediately think of you. Establish yourself as an expert in your field and look for opportunities to offer something of value to the group. Ask permission to give presentations that may be of interest to other members or offer to contribute healthy snacks or appetizers to meetings. Your extra effort will be rewarded with an abundance of referrals.

Most importantly, give referrals in order to get referrals, and always say ‘thank you’, with a card, email, telephone call, gift basket, or floral bouquet. Remember the person who sent you the referral and they will remember to tell their friends and family about you. Don’t forget, word of mouth is the best form of advertising because it is deemed more reliable than paid advertising and it does not cost you a cent!

Action Challenge Eight

1. Develop a marketing plan. Establish your marketing budget for the first six months and based on your research, establish which options would best suit your needs. Plan to be consistent and stick to the plan for at least six months before you re-evaluate and begin to consider other marketing options.
2. Select at least three methods of free advertising you plan to pursue. Develop the support material you will need to implement this option. For example, develop a free seminar, or bulletin board flyer.
3. Establish which methods of online advertising you plan to implement, i.e. ad words, social networking, blog, etc. Note: if you choose social networking or blogging, schedule time each day for these activities.
4. Research email marketing options and establish whether it might be a good option for your business.
5. Research your internet marketing options and put a plan in place to allow you to take advantage of free marketing opportunities online.
6. Research bus sign advertising in your local area. Identify the costs and contract terms to determine whether this may be an option worth considering as part of your marketing plan.
7. Research local community groups and fundraising events where you might donate your services or offer to give a free seminar.
8. Research the networking groups in your community. Establish meeting dates, locations, and fees.
9. Develop your elevator presentation — 3-4 lines that adequately describe your business. Be sure to review this well with your mentor.