

**SPECIAL
REPORT**

Marketing on a Shoestring

**10 STEPS TO INCREASE YOUR
VISIBILITY ON A TIGHT BUDGET**

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10 Steps to Increase Your Visibility on a Tight Budget.



Nancy Michaels is a nationally-known business development coach, author, speaker and consultant to women and minority business owners, as well as to companies that target women business owners. Her specialty is helping her clients -- both small business owners and large corporations -- to land and maintain long-term client relationships through creative, innovative and strategic sales and marketing strategies that distinguish them from their competitors and increase and develop their businesses.

Nancy is the author of several popular business books including; *Off the Wall Marketing Ideas*, which she co-authored with Debbie Karpowicz Kickham (Adams Media, 2000); and *Perfecting Your Pitch* (Career Press, 2005). She has also written articles for

numerous business publications such as, *Entrepreneur Magazine*, *US News & World Report*, *Franchise Times*, *New York Post*, *Business Week*, *Fortune Small Business*, *Area Developer*, and *The Costco Connection*. In addition, she is often invited to speak to business groups throughout the country.

Nancy began her career in public relations and marketing as publicist for Matt Lauer, current co-host of the *Today Show*, when he hosted a daily television show in Boston.

For more information regarding cultivating your business on a tight budget, visit her website at <http://www.growyourbusinessnetwork.com>. Nancy can be reached personally at nmichaels@growyourbusinessnetwork.com.

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#1 - Become Unforgettable.

Build Your Own Personalized Promotional Kit.

As small-business owners, we're always being told how to save, earn, and stretch our dollars. I'm going to tell you how to waste yours: print a brochure. Sure, the brochure is the most common type of promotional material, but it's also the most useless, especially for newer businesses that are still evolving. The minute the pamphlet comes off the press, it is outdated. Soon, you'll want to change it, and if you do, you're stuck with stacks of obsolete material.

Save money and increase visibility by ditching the brochure!

Do something different and become memorable by creating your own Personalized Promotional Kit. The great thing about creating a promo kit is that it can go on-line. It's easily adaptable and can be updated on a dime! You can save a bundle on printing by e-mailing it to prospects, the media and posting it to your website for easy access.

#2 - Speak Out.

Speaking is a GREAT and FAST way to build your client base. **Speaking will cost you time – not cash.** Use your “non-paid” speaking engagements to increase market awareness of your business, products, and services. Book yourself for speaking gigs at adult education centers, colleges, professional organizations, government & non-profit organization, civic clubs (Rotary, Chamber of Commerce), Alumni meetings and women's business organizations. Whether you're selling yourself, your brand, your newsletter or products always use speaking as a selling platform!

Remember to always give a handout and sign people up for your direct mail or email marketing list.

Another way to build your list quickly is to offer virtual tele-classes. www.InstantConference.com offers you a free conference line for up to 150 participants. I would suggest holding a free class and selling your products by providing tons of content. If you can get others to promote your class as well, now you've hit the jackpot on exponential list building.

#3 - Write On.

You can save thousands of dollars by typing your little fingers away to shout your message loud and clear. Writing also helps your prospects identify your service or product, and how it may relate to their needs. You can gain exponential exposure by writing in and submitting your articles to:

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Article Directories	School & alumni publications
Newsletters (your own and others)	Newspapers (local/regional)
Magazines	Business Journals
Letters-to-the-editor (your response to a topic)	
Op-eds (opinion pieces submitted to editorial pages)	
Specialized regularly featured columns – William Safire, Ellen Goodman	
Ask The Expert column – Ann Landers, Andy Pahr, “The Gadget Guru”	
Feature stories – human interest stories, not “hard” news	
Business articles – “Top 10” articles, how-to articles or “Question & Answer” articles	
www.Hubpages.com	
www.Squidoo.com	

#4 - Become a **well-rounded** networker.

Meet people. Shake hands. Become friends. Networking allows you to increase your professional development, generate leads and referrals and maybe most importantly – give back to the industry and community you serve. But it's important to know how to use networking in the right way.

My colleague Liz Lynch (www.SmartNetworking.com) teaches business owners how to get the most from networking and actually get results.

For social networking tips, visit relationship marketing guru Mari Smith (www.marismith.com)

#5 - Off the Wall Marketing wins.

To be memorable, you must be creative in your marketing approach.

In my book, *Off the Wall Marketing Ideas* (Adams Media, 2000), I teach business owners that the ultimate goal of an good marketer is bringing business your way by creating and establishing unique memorable experiences with your prospects and clients. Allow me to mention a few of my personal favorites:

- Celebrate unconventional holidays. (Ex: For years, I've celebrated Chinese New Year and sent out Fortune cookies. It's always a huge hit!)
- Create your own holiday.
- Give thoughtful, unique gifts to clients and referral sources. Everybody loves a gift, so keep notes about your clients and what their personal interests are -- so your gift is more meaningful and memorable! A frequent traveler might love a leather passport holder or swanky luggage tags. Remember to keep the price fairly low -- many companies have policies that limit the dollar amount of gift giving!

You can find fun ideas by browsing toy stores, joke stops, discount outlets like Oriental Trading Company and websites like www.TrendHunter.com.

#6 - Super leverage yourself.

A phenomenal way to leverage yourself, increase sales and cut costs is to join forces with another business and promote yourself together.

Pooling your resources can be a great way to save money, time and expand your marketing capacity. Choosing other businesses to collaborate with for promotions and publicity that share the qualities of your customer base can help add to the success of these programs. Offer a coupon or product giveaway.

AFFILIATE MARKETING is also a win-win and will help you build your client list.

Affiliate Marketing is like pouring Miracle Grow on your marketing campaign. They do all of the marketing. You both make money.

(Not sure what affiliate marketing is? Here's a great article: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Affiliate_marketing)

#7 - The “Evangelist” Customer.

Word of mouth marketing is what we all strive for. Do well, and let others sing your praises.

There's nothing that makes me happier than when one of my clients sings my praises. LOUDLY. It's actually much easier to **retain the clients we have** – and graciously accept referrals that come our way from current clients. I've had wild success in making friends with Fortune 500 companies and landing them as clients through my system *Getting Big Business*. Here's the gist -

Get an Endorsement from A Client:

- Ask your best client after they give you praise.
- Prepare a draft letter for your client to sign off on.
- Send out to prospects.
- Mail from the town your client is based in.

Endorsements Provide You With:

- Unparalleled credibility.
- An opportunity to touch a high-level prospect (like a CEO) within a targeted organization.
- A wonderful reminder to your client about all the good you're doing for their company.

Strike while the iron is hot – always know who your prospects are and be sure to implement a follow-up system to maintain contact.

#8 - Create a killer website.

The Internet is mind-boggling in its potential to reach huge numbers of far-flung customers. Yet its capacity to gobble up hours of precious time is just as astounding. Everybody these days seems to be publishing a web site. And the more home pages floating around in cyberspace, the greater your need to make yours stand out. You also need to remember that your page is a reflection of your business. It's easy to get caught up in the look of your page and skim over the content. Yet, it's information that draws visitors, not your flashy graphics.

DO:

- * Look good with a visually appealing design. *(Remember, your website is oftentimes your first impression. Make it a good one!)*
- * Post customer testimonials and good reviews. Use audio and video whenever possible.
- * Build your database by giving away a free product, download, class or newsletter subscription where first-time visitors can register.
- * Include contact information on each page of your site.
- * Always check your grammar. Typos and poor grammar make your company appear amateurish.
- * Submit your site to Internet search engines!
- * Drive traffic to your site.
- * Make your website SALES FRIENDLY by making it easy for your customers to buy from you.

#9 - Get teched out.

Podcasting, hosting tele-conferences, using web cams to deliver video classes or messages to your customers, voice broadcasts, creating an app for your business - all of these are inexpensive ways to make you look fabulous, drive traffic, and increase sales for YOU. Many times we can get overwhelmed with all of the new gadgets. In my program *The Business Skinny* (www.thebusinessskinny.com), I teach business owners HOW to spend their money, so it's important to always do your homework and ask yourself, "Do I really need this?"

#10 - Reach out and touch someone.

Perhaps the strongest form of marketing lies in simply being yourself and finding ways to insert YOU or YOUR PERSONALITY in to your business. It's critical to touch people at the core level to help them make a decision to buy from you. Feel the freedom to personalize your marketing. Expose yourself. Don't try and be someone or something you're not. People are smarter than we give them credit for. Of course, if you really want to take it up to the next level, connect with people one-on-one. Pick up the phone and call your customers personally. Send a hand-written note that's personalized. Make people feel like you genuinely care about them.

Be yourself and have fun because if you're not having fun how can your customers be?

In closing...

Shoestring budgets lead to increased creativity.

Oftentimes, the most effective marketing is not the most expensive, but the most creative and thoughtful. Having a shoestring budget can be a blessing in disguise because it forces us to think outside of the box and provide additional value to our prospects and clients without putting us in the poor house.

One of the most effective marketing products I ever created (after not being able to afford to purchase a costly booth at my client's industry trade show) was to produce a "survival kit" filled with necessary items you wished you had on a conference show floor like breath mints, a toothbrush and toothpaste, a highlighter, pen, paper clips, tissues and chocolate. It's become the gold standard "gift" at this conference each year now and I saved thousands of dollars by having a label made for a quart-sized plastic bag with a zip function and by going to the dollar store to pick up these items.

The key for all of us in strong economic times or less is to put yourself in the shoes of your prospects and customers and offer a creative solution that makes you stand out from the crowd.

Fortunately Yours,

Nancy Michaels,
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Grow Your Business Network
"America's Most Sought-After Fortune 500 Consultant"
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