



Penny-Pinching Marketing Techniques

Simply put, the idea behind Penny-Pinching Marketing is to help you **spend less, and sell more.**

Penny-Pinching Marketing starts with a plan. Determine what kind of business you'll have; how it will be structured; what its products/services will be; how they will be packaged and priced; how they will be promoted; and through what channels they will be sold.

Your plan is a living, breathing part of your business. Review it regularly. Consider setting aside one weekend each year, no matter how busy you are, to go somewhere special—like the beach or the mountains—to re-evaluate your thoughts. This lets you dig into your plan in a major way, without the interruptions of your day-to-day routine.

Throughout the year, base decisions and activities on the re-thought plan, referring to it frequently. As conditions in your marketplace change, adjust the plan to take advantage of your best opportunities.

The Penny-Pinching Marketing Starter Kit

Now that you have your plan and refer to it frequently, you'll need to develop what I like to call your Penny-Pinching Marketing Starter Kit. Your Starter Kit will take care of most of your marketing needs for about the first year. You can, of course, get a lot more exotic, and spend a great deal more. Penny-Pinching Marketing assumes you're really starting off with more ideas and hope than money.

Here's what you'll need:

- 1. Business Card.** The single most important marketing tool you can buy. We'll do an entire column on your business card in the next issue. For now, here's what you need to know to use your business card most effectively:

Your card should reflect the personality and values of your company. The type or lettering should be clean and readable, and you should feel good about what it says about you and your company.

Keep your cards where they are easy to get at without fumbling. Develop a technique so you can present them comfortably, confidently.

- 2. Letterhead/Envelopes.** For now you can use your letterhead for your written promotional material, as well as for correspondence and billing. In fact, to begin with, use your letterhead for all your stationery and form needs. Coordinate your letterhead, envelopes, and business cards so they all tie together to provide a recognizable identity for your business.

- 3. Postcard or Brochure.** Depending on your type of business, this could be a "next step," and may not be needed immediately.

If your service or product appeals to a wide range of potential customers—for example, if you provide window

washing, landscaping, housecleaning, or painting services—you may want to consider printing an oversized postcard. Check with the post office for size requirements and postage.

These "mini-posters" can be mailed to prospects, handed out to householders in the neighborhood where you've completed a job, posted on grocery store bulletin boards, and so on. They may well be more effective for your type of business, and probably will cost less.

If you provide specialized services to a smaller target market, or if your service or product requires more description, consider producing a brochure.

For greatest impact and cost-efficiency, make one side of your brochure a complete "sales surface." This will usually be the inside of an 8-1/2 x 11 two-fold brochure. That way, you can also quick print a supply of the sales surface on one side, and use it as a flyer or poster.

A brochure can be mailed to a targeted prospect list, perhaps along with a short sales letter; handed out at trade shows; placed on counter tops where your prospects are likely to shop—computer stores, beauty shops, auto supply stores, for example (with the merchant's cooperation!); inserted in a coop mailing or neighborhood paper—you get the idea.

4. Yellow Pages. Depending on the type of business you own, yellow pages may or may not be useful for bringing you customers, but should be

considered. A regular listing is included in your business telephone charge.

Whether you need an enhanced listing is really dependent upon how your prospect buys. Does he or she usually find your type of business by looking in the yellow pages? What does the competition do?

5. Credit Card Merchant Status. Useful for virtually any business where you sell your service or products to a wide audience, especially where that service or product is a fairly high-ticket item, and you are selling it to the general public, or to homeowners, rather than to other businesses. For example, if you are a landscaper, an interior decorator, or a carpet installer, you are very likely to pick up additional business if your customer can charge it. Essential if you sell by phone, mail, or email.

6. A website. And you will want it up on the internet as soon as possible. It is virtually impossible to succeed in your own business today without a website. Your prospects do not want to wait to receive your information by mail. They want it now – right now! Once developed, your website may serve multiple purposes, depending on how it is developed. At minimum, it will often replace a printed brochure, providing your information quickly, and in a positive medium.

So there you have it: The Penny-Pinching Marketing Starter Kit. The essentials to get you started on your way to prosperity!