



Success Tactics

Business Plan? Marketing Plan?

Part 5

In my previous Newsletters I have spent more time on product creation. I think some of this is because I have heard so many of you say, “What can I make with my laser?” The other reason is that this is my passion, or forte. You know, it’s what I enjoy doing!

Many a current business owner might say your business plan (regarding purchasing a laser) should not be carried out until you decide exactly what products you want to make first. This is sort of like the cliché, “...put the horse before the cart.”

I’m not sure if I would characterize your products as the horse. Of course having a product line will drive you to create newer products. We will all experience the customer who looks over all we have to offer and say, “If you only had this, I would buy it.” Then you go out and create the new product so the next time that customer comes by you’ll have it. This may lead you to the point I want to make.

Is it possible that the market place is really the horse that pulls the cart? Of course, you do have to have some products to show what you’re capable of producing. A way to get someone to say, “I like that, can you make this?” But the market place could be the driving force behind the most successful products you will make.

Before I get too far ahead of myself I would like to define Marketing (as I see it). Marketing is how we get exposure. Exposure is what makes sales. For those who have been reading my Newsletters all along, please forgive me for repeating some points. In my opinion there are two ways to bring your products to market. One is retail and the other is wholesale. Your business can do both and I strongly recommend it. No matter what you start out doing you never know how your business may evolve when you’re getting exposure.

Marketing can be the most costly part of your business, easily exceeding your equipment cost over time. Advertisement, store-fronts, shows of all kinds (arts & craft, gift & merchandise, etc.) can all add up rather quickly! In part 1 & 2 of this series I discussed the give-to-get methods of exposure. These types of ideas can be the least costly. So if you do the math and understand that the hardest, most expensive part of your business is going to be getting sales, then it makes sense to keep trying new ways to get the exposure. Ever wish you had a team of marketing people who could brainstorm with you for ideas and these people would be in the same field, with like minds, and similar goals for business? At seminars I plan to have us all working together

brainstorming ideas on ways to market for less and develop ideas for products. Marketing can be costly, but the fun part is to come up with ideas that cost us less and keep on giving us exposure.

I like the “WOW” factor to get attention! I hate selling by cold calling. “WOW” factor is my creative way of getting attention. If I owned a store-front trophy shop, I think I would build a ceiling-to-floor most incredible eye catching gorgeous trophy I could dream up. The investment would be justified by hearing someone say “Have you seen the giant trophy at such & such trophy shop?” The goal I want to accomplish is to get my shop mentioned to someone else so they want to check it out. Maybe they didn’t even know I had a shop in their neighborhood. Now they do! Exposure for something that was a one-time expense and keeps people talking, is good. It may not be a large trophy, but you need something that screams, “WOW, look at what they can do!” Of course now you have to have many different affordable products for them to check out while at your shop.

We think of “WOW” factor this way. Our business is no different than any other. When we set up at a Trade Show we try to capture your attention. You’re walking down our aisle swinging your head back and forth seeing if anything perks your interest. We have mere seconds to impress you enough to come into our booth to see what we have to offer. My (lack of) good looks does nothing to lure you! ☺ What are you doing to capture someone’s attention to your business?



Every business does the same thing! As an example: Ever walk into a ceramic tile shop and see a beautiful laid out pattern of tiles that makes you want to retile something in your house? What if you designed a mural or some custom-lasered ceramic tiles for that tile store to display? You would give them a “WOW” factor for their store; get exposure for your business, and hopefully set up a lucrative wholesale relationship between the both of you.

WOW factor is not always possible in the extreme literal sense. What I mean is a large gigantic trophy is not always sensible or needed to get the WOW factor. Remember when I spoke about price points? When we create a product line for the laser we try to

make that design at different price points. The more expensive products are usually larger and definitely more eye-catching, and still sells some of the time. Point being it initially caught the customer's attention. Now that we have his or her attention, we can sell them something in their price range so they walk out with something in their hand and something in our register. Another example: If a college graduate was proud of the college he attended, could you make him a product that hung on the wall, sat on a desktop, a college ornament, or maybe a coaster for his beer mug? ☺ These are just ideas that could be used for many other products.



Products at different price points

One major point I need to make about your lasered products. Although they will sell over the internet, I believe your sales will be stunted unless you can get the exposure where customers can see and touch the finished products, first hand. We get many customers who come into our booth at a Trade Show and say “We have seen your ads and gone to your website, but we never knew the products looked like this.” If you're not convinced, go take a picture of your best product and show it to someone who has never seen the finished goods. Now show them what the actual product looks like, first hand, and watch their reaction.

If this is the case, and you're a home business with no store front, then you need ideas for exposure to show your products off, first hand. The ceramic store is one example for getting exposure. I have also given other ideas in my earlier Newsletters. Marketing has no limits on what we can dream up. Remember when I spoke about the horse pulling the cart, or actually the products pulling in the customers? Well, at times the marketplace could be the horse. Let me explain. I have a customer who uses our method of Give-To-Get sales technique all the time. He knows summer is coming, tourism is going to start and people will buy souvenirs. So he wanted to get first hand

exposure for some new products. Note: I should mention he is a home-based business that has grown to 7 employees and he only does wholesale orders. He had us do up a design for his state so he could send to all the State Parks in his area. Out of 20 packets of samples he sent out, he received 6 orders to set up a display stand of his products, at their location. Each packet he estimated cost him less than \$10.00 to make and send out. Even if the cost was higher, what does it cost for a store-front, salesman, or the gas to get to these locations? This person started in the laser business just last year and he now has over 100 wholesale locations. He never sold anything before in his life! You can do this also. You just need a bag full of ideas to try and the gumption to go out and do it!

WOW factor, retail, wholesale, who would or could sell my products? Market-place filled with events, seasons, annual one-time products that need to be made and bought. What can I create, what does the market place need, what happens each year, what happens once in a life time, what causes joy and pride, who buys for whom, statewide, or nationally? Endless possibilities for products, endless possibilities to market, endless uses for your laser, what do you need? If you understand that marketing can be your biggest cost, then getting knowledge, ideas, brainstorming with a group of like-minded people, would be a wise investment that could pay off big for you?

If you cannot attend a Trade Show or seminar, then you need to find books on marketing and see how you can twist the ideas to work for your industry. Marketing is the key to your success. Major successful franchises that prosper in most areas have also closed the doors in other areas. Why? Marketing! Even if the excuse is a bad location, that is part of your marketing strategy. The customer I spoke about above, who has over 100 wholesale locations, has some locations that are seasonal. Some have smaller sales than others, but all together he has mass exposure, similar to a mutual fund investment. When some stores are doing well, others are down and that reverses with seasonal trends to even out a steady successful business. With selling retail and wholesale, you increase your portfolio with more chances for sales and success. The more exposure, the more possible sales, and the bigger the smiles! I just love a happy successful entrepreneur! Come show us your smile.

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