

My Top Ten . . . Inexpensive Advertising Ideas

By Chris Cowman

Whether you call it advertising, marketing, publicity or promotions... you need to utilize as many tactics as possible to attract customers. These are some of my favorites but don't underestimate the number of possibilities out there. Just use your imagination.

- **Bag stuffers:** Mock up a 7" wide x 3" high flier stating what you are advertising: clearance sale, charitable event, ½ off jewelry, etc. Be simple and to the point. Print 3 down on a regular size piece of paper. Take to printer. Copy 300 sheets, presto you have 900 fliers for about \$21. Use these to stuff bags and tape on mirrors and doors throughout the store. Now everyone who was in the store and/or purchased an item knows about your upcoming event!
- **Word of mouth:** This is great as long as you are doing your job correctly!! Keeping your customers happy and up to date with your procedures is the key. The loss of a customer can be VERY costly, because they tell someone and so on and so on . . . by the end who knows what the story is. Try to prevent it in the beginning!!
- **Store windows:** 24 hour FREE advertisement IF they look professional. Don't leave empty hangers or naked mannequins in the windows. Clean the windows and dust—you would clean for a guest coming to your home, well this is your 2nd home, clean up for your customers.
- **Networking:** Use your customers. Find out if Susie's brother is in the supply business or if Mike works for Channel 6. Talk to people, help them and maybe they will be able to help you. It never hurts to ask.
- **Regional groups:** Get together with the shops in your area. Network, have meetings, share ideas. Print a map for consumers to find all the resale shops in the area!!
- **Charitable events:** Give gift certificates to organizations having raffles or auctions. Have a rummage sale to benefit a certain charity—we just had our 7th annual rummage sale to benefit Children's Hospital and raised \$6,000 this year. That is a grand total of over \$25,000 in seven years. Public involvement boosts energy from customers.
- **Private parties:** After hours have a group come in to the store so you could explain how you operate or give them a bit on how to dress for under \$200. They could just have a short meeting and then SHOP. It won't cost you much, perhaps a little for refreshments and you are sure to make some money from their shopping excursion.

- **Workshop:** Present a **How to Shop Resale** seminar; what are the 10 best clothing articles to have in your closet, how to dress for less. Get involved with organizations getting people back into the workforce. Teach them to shop sensibly.
- **Schools:** Get involved by donating broken jewelry to art classes. Have a school supply drive for less fortunate schools. Donate old computers for the libraries.
- **Promotional items:** Order something with your name and logo to hand out in the store or in line at the grocery or just as give-aways.

All of these ideas are either FREE advertising or cost very little. ALWAYS carry and hand out your business cards or promotional items.

Get your name out there over and over again... THAT is smart advertising!

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