



## Marketing Matters

### Cheap marketing tricks

Are you looking for some ways to boost your marketing that are easy and inexpensive? Al Lautenslager, the Guerilla Marketing coach at Entrepreneur.com, has some ideas that take time and energy but cost very little.

- **Do something out of the ordinary with envelopes.** Instead of putting a 39-cent stamp on an envelope, use a larger number of smaller stamps. Lautenslager suggests using 39 1-cent stamps but that might be a bit much. The idea is to make your envelope stand out so that you will increase the chances of getting attention and encourage customers to respond to your letter.
- **Give customers a chance to win a free lunch,** a tank of gas or a Starbucks gift card. Get a gift card from a local restaurant, gas station or other popular place and do a drawing. That will bring customers in the door where you can also have them fill out cards with their contact information – something you can use later.
- **Make a donation to charity for purchases.** You'll have to figure out what amount makes sense. The donation could be to your favorite charity or the charity of your customer's choice.
- **Use lottery tickets as incentives for referrals.** Market your giveaway as a chance to win money for all referrals received during a particular time.
- **Advertise using fliers.** For about \$10 you can print 500 fliers. Use them to canvass a targeted area or mail them to a targeted list. Think carefully about your message, your offer and your target. Keep an eye out for specials that office-supply or printing companies offer.
- **Partner with other businesses.** Consider teaming up with an interior designer, a building supply outlet or a furniture store to share the cost of your advertising and increase the amount of interest in your message. Look for businesses targeting the same type of client that you are trying to reach.

## Highlights

- **Nuts & bolts**
- **Working smarter**
- **Hints to make you more efficient**

## Management Issues

### A cancer in the workplace

Do you have a negative employee? One could compare negative employees to a hurricane – they leave destruction everywhere they turn. The negative employee is the one you'd love to call in sick or take an extended vacation but unfortunately, this person usually comes to work every day, is always on time and meets all performance goals.

So how should you deal with an employee who is sapping the life out of your organization?

- **Observe and quantify the negative employee's behavior.** The person may not realize the problem he or she is causing and you need a quantifiable account of the number of negative behaviors observed. When you talk with the employee, do not say the person has a bad attitude but instead focus on the negative behavior and its impact on the organization.
- **Don't expect an apology.** Your aim is to bring the employee's attention to the toxic behavior.
- **Affirm the goals and mission of your business** in dealing with the negativity. Help the person understand how their negativity is undermining the overall productivity and well-being of the organization.
- **Offer help.** Often the negative employee has legitimate gripes. Perhaps the person needs supportive listening, coaching or mentoring. Consider referring the employee to professional help if personal problems come up, but never require a negative employee to seek professional assistance.
- **Inform the negative employee that future performance reviews will include both objective and subjective measures.** Use a positive tone when discussing future performance. If the employee creates problems in meetings, make the prediction that he or she will focus on solutions, not problems when discussing projects.
- **Do not make the negative employee more negative.** Be sure you maintain your composure and keep a positive attitude when talking with the employee.

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## Working Smarter

### Back to basics – delegating

You will multiply your effectiveness if you can delegate but that is something many people struggle with. If you assume you can do something better yourself or that your employees do not want any added responsibilities, you'll never realize the efficiency and added productivity that comes from combing forces to finish a job.

What are the best tasks to delegate?

- fact-finding assignments
- preparation of rough drafts of reports
- problem analysis and suggested actions
- collection of data for reports
- photocopying, printing or collating
- data entry
- any job that is not part of your core skill set – tasks such as accounting, web design, travel arrangements or even payroll.

Create a plan to delegate so that you do not hand out assignments haphazardly. Give clear instructions that outline the objective and results but leave it to those who are taking the task to decide the best way to accomplish it.

Ask for progress reports and obtain feedback. Set interim deadlines but don't be overbearing. You might just need to ask "How is it going with that new project?" to get the information you need.

Remember, an investment in short-term training will pay off with a long-term increase in productivity. And other people may find a better way to do the task. Just be sure that you delegate the authority along with the responsibility.

## Nuts and Bolts

### Are internet phone services for you?

The ads are irresistible – call anywhere anytime for less than the cost of a traditional landline phone. Internet phone service can be a money-saver but you should investigate this option carefully because there are also some pitfalls.

Some of the web services that use Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP for short) include Vonage, Google Talk and Skype.

Google Talk is free but connects you only to others who use the same service. Vonage provides a box about the size of a small moden that is hooked up to a standard landline phone. Skype is best suited for conference calls and operates off your computer. With Vonage or Skype, you pay one fee for each web call and then talk as long as you want.

Skype is useful for international calls. The service is free but there is a charge per call which is a good option if you have business contacts or friends spread out across the country or the world.

Vonage offers free domestic calls and requires a monthly service charge which costs less than a land land phone.

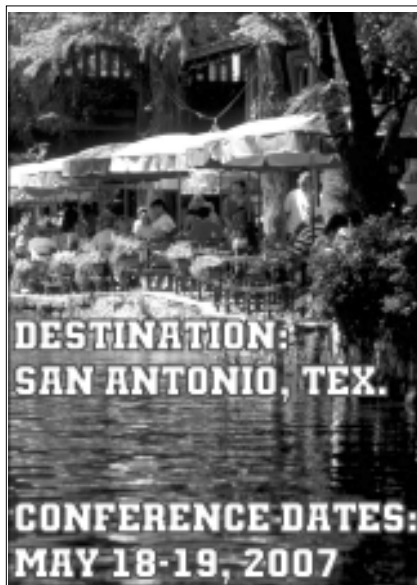
Still, it is not time for you to drop your land lines yet. Reliability remains an issue because conversations can be punctuated by a big burst of static – not a big deal if you are talking with friends but a risky way to conduct business.

Learn more from these websites:

[www.vonage.com](http://www.vonage.com)

[www.google.com/talk/](http://www.google.com/talk/)

[www.skype.com/](http://www.skype.com/)



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