



**Small Business Development Center
at Volunteer State Community College**

A public service program of the Division of Continuing Education & Economic Development

October's Newsletter:

The Secret Behind Marketing: Do Something!

Now before I establish myself as either condescending or rude or both, let me clarify. I am not saying that you have been lazy or just going through the motions. I am saying that I am seeing several business owners go into hiding, hoping that when they emerge from under their rock, that the economic sky will quit falling. This is not a good plan. The economy will turnaround, but it will not be tomorrow, the next day, or even the next month. We may have to wait a year (probably longer) to see sustained growth. That means, in the meantime, business owners have to work harder than ever before to make money. Let me go back to the previous point. I fully believe most small business owners have been working very hard, but when it comes to marketing, several business owners are just bewildered at the next step. Their revenue is down, so how can they step up the marketing budget when they are having a difficult time making the mortgage payment? How can they take time to create a marketing plan when the owner has to do two or three jobs already just to get the product or service ready that they just sold? It almost seems like a never ending cycle.

I don't promise to have all of the answers here, but I can tell you what the successful business owner is doing right now. They are doing something! It might not necessarily always be

Quick Links

[TSBDC](#)

[Workshops](#)

[Counseling](#)

[Blog](#)

[Business Tools](#)

[Contact us](#)

October Workshops

Sign up at www.tsbdc.org

How to Start a Small Business

Tuesday, October 13, 2009 4:00 PM to 6:00 PM - FREE

Getting Found a Google

Thursday, October 22, 2009 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM - FREE

Networking/How to Work an Expo

Thursday, October 29, 2009 3:00 PM to 4:00 PM - FREE

knocking on more doors; they are taking advantage of email marketing; they are going to every networking event they can find; they are having sales and screaming about them from the rooftops. If your reaction to each of these statements sound like this "knocking on doors doesn't work for my business; email marketing just ends up in junk email folders; networking only takes up time; I had a sale once and lost money" then things are only going to get tougher.

What I propose is to create a short-term marketing plan and make it happen. If you already have a long-term plan implement it, but most small business owners don't, so a short-term plan will have to do. Here is a quick, short-term plan that you can execute.

1. Review your expenses and make room for a marketing budget

I know that is easier said than done, but it has to be done. Too many business' marketing budget is whatever is left over and unfortunately that is the type of results you get; leftovers.

2. Find out who you should be marketing to

Write down all of the characteristics of your best customer and try to get more people or businesses like that one to spend money with you. It is that simple.

3. Three daily tasks

Write down at least three marketing activities that you can do every day to attract the potential customer. Use a calendar, your PDA/cell phone, or a string on your finger if necessary to remember to do these three things, but the key is to do them! If you are completely befuddled as to what to do, then try any of the following activities:

- * **Knock on doors, call, email, or send direct mail to prospective customers.**
- * **Attend at least two networking events per week.**
- * **Do a press release.**
- * **Give away free samples or give away your product or service on a trial basis.**
- * **Call existing clients and ask for more work or referrals.**
- * **Put a magnet on your car.**
- * **Partner with another business, in a different industry that has similar customers, and send each other referrals.**
- * **Offer to do any type of speech or seminar on a specific topic (not a sales pitch) for free.**

4. Measure what worked and what didn't

At the end of every month, analyze what has been working and what hasn't been working. If it is working, keep doing it. If it is not working, find out why and either fix it or do something else.

This information is definitely not new or groundbreaking. The big takeaway for marketing right now for many business owners is that you should be doing something and doing it on a recurring basis. Trying anything only once, rarely, if ever, works.

Location: TSBDC @ Volunteer State Community College, Betty Gibson Hall, Gallatin, TN

The TSBDC also offers free and confidential one-on-one counseling for existing and start up small businesses. To register for go to www.tsbdc.org.

Contact information - 1480 Nashville Pike, Gallatin, TN, 37066, Phone (615) 230-4780
Email: charles.alexander@volstate.edu

The Tennessee Small Business Development Center Network is funded by the U.S. Small Business Administration and local community donors.