

Learn from another's success

by Donna Messer

I wrote a book a few years back that included a number of sales and marketing tools that I thought might be worth sharing. I have found over time that there is nothing new; merely an old idea shifted a little to compliment the generation, the demographic, or the current situation. September 11 changed the way many of us are doing business—in my mind the ultimate sales techniques are those that are tried and true. We merely do a little R & D—in this case, it's not "research and development," it's "rob and duplicate." I don't suggest you steal the ideas, merely transform what has already been done, so that it will work for you and your products or services. Enjoy the stories and use them if they can work for you.

The stories below are from my book *"Effective Networking Strategies."*

TAXI CABS—THEY'RE ALL THE SAME!

No way! Here is a story that guarantees food for thought. Everyone knows that you cannot improve or change the cab industry. A cab driver in New York decided to improve his service. He looked at his client base and decided he wanted to upgrade. Here is what he did. He did a little "R & D." He asked his passengers a series of questions. What he wanted to know was what they felt were the attributes of a good cab driver. When he had their list, he studied the results and determined that he would put into effect all that were possible.

He had his "mission statement" printed on a plastic coated business card. When he arrived to pick up a customer, he handed his card first, then asked if the passenger was ready to allow him to be his driver. When the passenger got into the car, he found several "new" marketing concepts: the driver offered a choice of newspaper, a bottle of water, choice of radio station—all at no extra charge! According to the story, this cab driver has increased his business by over 500%, and now has people making reservations!

Can you improve your product or service and generate this type of business increase? Do a little research; find

out what people want and give it to them. Don't try to sell, find out what people want to buy.

ETHNIC CHALLENGES—AN EXCELLENT MARKETING OPPORTUNITY

Canada is a melting pot, we are a diverse society, and we tend to try to support each other. A Spanish gentleman started a computer repair company. He wanted to help people buy both computers and software. His problem was that he had a heavy Spanish accent, and at times was difficult to understand. Unfortunately, when people called for information on his products and services, many hung up, not taking time to listen to his message that was pre-recorded on his voice-mail. He was not getting the business, yet his products and services were excellent. What could he do to turn a negative into a positive?

What he did was to take advantage of his ethnic background. He changed the name of his company to Computador, (like matador) and developed brochures and a Web site that showed the Computador waving the computer (instead of a bull) through the cape. On the bottom of his brochures and on his Web site, was the statement. "Computer service guaranteed—no bull!" His business increased dramatically by using the ethnic "hook" humorously. When people called, they expected to hear an accent and took the time to listen carefully to someone who promised to deliver without any problems.

Can you apply this marketing strategy to your business or service? Who you are, where you come from, is a plus. Turning negatives into positives requires creativity.

WORD PROCESSING SERVICES ARE ALL THE SAME

A young woman named Irene, wanted to start a computer/data processing/desktop publishing business from her home. She wanted to do all the computer jobs that no one ever has time for. Her problem? She had lots of competition. She decided that she would market her services through the mail and she had a promo-

tional piece made that listed "jobs to be done." She had the marketing tool laminated and at the bottom of the page read, "Wipe the slate clean, call Irene!" She found that many people need the alliances of others in their own field for those bits and pieces they never find time for. It was a good marketing strategy where everyone wins. Her business is flourishing. By using her name in the brochure along with a slogan, she made it easier to remember and find her when needed.

Can you develop a marketing strategy that will work for you using this idea? Strategic alliances are a valuable source of increased business. Look at the competition as an added resource, a new source of business potential.

SOUP KITCHENS—CAN YOU CHALLENGE CAMPBELLS?

If you have a story, a product, a service that can be connected to a cause, a concept, or a particular group, you may get free publicity. For instance, if your product or service is geared to seniors, you can use the senior citizen centres, involve them in a research project, a product launch or a testing, let them get the article written for you. Local papers are always looking for articles on seniors and their interests. Many seniors' groups have columns in weekly newspaper.

A friend of mine was a good cook and was famous, as far as her family was concerned, for the soup she could make! The soup was low fat, high flavour and oh, so

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Donna Messer is an international speaker, trainer, facilitator, and author. Founder of ConnectUs International, the company designs, develops and delivers business-training programs. ConnectUs also offers a unique matchmaking service, which links businesses to opportunities around the world. Her book Effective Networking Strategies is a Canadian best seller and is available on her Web site.



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good... With the encouragement of her husband, an accountant, and her advisor, she decided she would start a business, using her talent for soup making. Her target market? Selling soup to seniors. Her research told her that seniors like soup; it's good, nourishing, and easy to digest. She held soup parties at senior citizen's apartment buildings in her neighbourhood. She used friends of her grandmother as her first contacts. Soon she was delivering twice a week and had more business than she could handle. Word spread through the senior network that she had a good product, an excellent price, and she delivered!

Does your product or service help seniors, kids, special needs—what's your target market? If it's kids, involve the daycare centres, the schools, single parents. Go any-

where that your target market can get the publicity and your product or service will get more exposure.

Can you use these types of sales and marketing ideas? Lateral thinking, winning combinations, and a little creativity will generate and maintain sales targets!

For more sales and marketing stories visit the Web site at www.connectuscanada.com and purchase the book, "Effective Networking Strategies." Networking is not just exchanging business cards, it's building relationships and that builds business for everyone. **SBCM**

AD REMOVED

"Imagin-ate..." continued from **page 13**

brainstorm of ideas. Step well outside the box. How far can you push it? Go for quantity and then make choices. Dare to be different, pursue a wild idea. You will be remembered.

3. Frame everything in the positive. Use the "Yes...and" technique. Use every question as an opportunity to restate your message. Honour and acknowledge a question and reframe it in a positive, productive way. You will close your deals.

4. Develop a team to work with and demonstrate the value to the client. Big things happen when people build on each other's ideas!

5. Know how to go from imagination to action. Be familiar with the creative process and work it daily. Imagin-ate (generate as many ideas as possible), allow time to Hatch (some ideas will naturally develop further), Decide (make your choices) and Action (grow it, develop it, offer it to the world).

"Man's mind stretched to a new idea, never goes back to its original dimensions," Oliver Wendall Holmes recognized the dynamic potential and transformative ability of the human mind years ago. The fact is, all of us have hidden reserves that go untouched. These are un-mined treasures, if tapped can unleash success in all its forms. Allowed to flourish, this vast resource will lead us, as it did Alice when she stepped through the looking glass, to places beyond anything we can imagine! **SBCM**

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