



Moving Your Business Forward: Acquiring New Clients by Telling Them About You!

By Steven Berner, president

How often has the following question crossed your mind: “*Where will I find new clients... how can I reach potential clients?*” You’re certainly not alone with these thoughts. If you’re not making a regular and sustained effort at capturing new business, you’re probably not seeing the revenue growth you’d like. You’re in business to make money, right?

Odds are, you most likely don’t have a lot of time to develop advertising and marketing campaigns to connect with potential clients. Your business just requires so much attention to your staff, technology, and your current clients. You bring in experts for your equipment needs, so why not bring in advertising and marketing experts? With your input and supervision, an advertising agency can put together and execute a solid campaign that will help you reach new clients.

The process is simple: Meet with the agency. Identify a budget for advertising. Have the agency understand your business and your goals. Let them come back a week later with a thoughtful campaign that reaches your best prospects, represents your business in a realistic and positive manner, and stays within the budget number you gave them. Then let the agency do its stuff, but be sure to stay posted on their progress.

If the agency has done its job, they will have identified the most cost-effective media to advertise on. Maybe it's using radio commercials on stations that most likely have as listeners the type of person you want to reach. The agency can give you a snapshot of stations' demographics to illustrate why they are right for you. A well done jingle that sings your business's name and allows for you or an announcer to "sell" your story should not be out of the question! Make it fun...maybe funny...but always with integrity and purpose.

Same goes for cable television. Most cable companies in the areas you cover let you choose from 40 or more cable networks to put your commercials on. Need to reach CEOs and decision-makers in Springville, USA? Maybe some commercials on a network like CNBC or CNN and only appear to cable subscribers in Springville would be beneficial. Your ad agency will be able to help you pinpoint the most efficient networks and geographic regions for you, sometimes even right down to a particular program or a particular section of your area! Ad agencies are often adept at creating a TV spot within the budget limitations you've outlined. Most cable advertising sales offices can produce a commercial for you too.

Your agency can place a series of print ads that reflect the rest of your advertising vehicles in the proper print media, like the business section of your best local newspaper, a glossy upscale local magazine, a chamber of commerce newsletter, and so forth. Reach the right decision-makers via the places they are most likely to see your ads!

An advertising agency will also help you develop brochures and direct mail efforts. Leave one of the panels blank so you can put the addresses of a very specific list and mail out the brochures. The agency can easily purchase an appropriate list of potential customers for you. Send 'em out!

The ad campaign should coordinate the "look" of your particular business. Your brochures, print ads, TV ads, website, and direct mail should all have the same look and feel. Your radio spots should have the same theme and sound as your TV spots. My agency calls this "conceptual continuity" – the same basic message and look should flow through everything you do, including your stationery and business cards!

"What's it gonna cost me?" is another thought that's probably flown through your mind. You can look at this question two ways. One, your time is better spent running your business and doing the tasks, making the big decisions, and planning for the future. The time you take away from those things is time better spent doing them! Using an ad agency to take most of the advertising and marketing effort off your shoulders lets you both do the work you are best at. It lets the experts do the work they do best. Two, when you identify an advertising budget and let the agency work as hard as possible with the budget, you are looking at capturing new clients. And that's the point, right? Businesses like yours often devote three to five percent of its annual gross revenue to advertising. Radio and cable TV spots can range in cost from just a few dollars each to hundreds of dollars each. Your ad agency will negotiate the prices so you bet the most cost-efficient

“buy” and little or no wasted dollars on people who will never use your services. Figure the advertising percentage out for your business.

Stick to the plan! They probably won't be beating on your door the first times you ads run. Be patient! Your potential new clients probably use one of your competitors. But when it's time for them to renew or if they are unhappy with them, they will be more likely to call you if you've made them aware of your services via consistent advertising. Stay top-of-mind with potential new customers by reminding them week in and week out of your abilities. Tell them how when they sign up with you they'll improve their business. You can do this via the media!

The ad agency also can take a lot of paperwork off your desk. Instead of receiving the various media bills and ad production bills, you can have them sent to your agency. The agency will then send you just one invoice that you pay directly to the agency. The agency then pays all of your bills for you. Again, this allows you and your staff more time to devote to your business!

Keep in mind that working with an advertising agency is a collaborative endeavor. The agency needs you to make them understand your business and its goals. You need the ad agency to come up with a thoughtful, workable program that puts you in the minds of potential new clients and asks them to take action and contact you.

Anyway, here's hoping you'll sleep a little better and not have to think those “*where will they come from*” thoughts in the middle of the night. And if they continue to cross your mind in the wee hours, you can probably find a friendly voice at a call center near and dear to you.

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