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Creating a Postcard Marketing System

By Martha Retallick

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No doubt about it, creating nice postcards and sending them out to an appreciative audience is a lot of fun. But treating your postcard marketing efforts that way probably won't grow your business.

Your cards will grow your business when you think of them as tools in a marketing system. A successful postcard marketing system consists of the following six steps:

- Step #1: Idea Generation
- Step #2: Card Creation
- Step #3: Printing
- Step #4: Mailing
- Step #5: Follow-up with Prospects and Clients
- Step #6: Cost-Tracking and Evaluation of Results

Use this system by starting with Step #1, proceeding through the next five steps, then repeating the process, over and over again. Why the repetition? Four reasons:

1. Marketing expert Jeffrey Lant is a big proponent of what he calls the "Rule of Seven." What it means is that people need to be exposed to your message at least seven times in 18 months before they're ready to buy from you.

2. Think for a moment: How many businesses do you hear from on a regular basis? Not too many, right? And inattention to customers can prove costly.

How costly? Well, according to research conducted by the Price Waterhouse accounting firm, 70% of the people who leave a supplier do so because of lack of contact, follow-up or individual attention. That's not good. But think of how easy it would be to make your business stand out from the crowd if you sent your customers a regular postcard...

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3. Another idea to ponder, and this one has actually been proven through numerous studies: It costs 6 times more to win a new customer than it does to make a sale to an existing customer. What this means that if you have a customer list, and if you send regular postcards to the people on that list, you'll build repeat sales for your business and become more profitable in the process. This leads right to our fourth and final Reason for Repetition...

4. A business that customers hear from is one that they'll keep in mind — and keep on patronizing.

Postcard Marketing - Low Cost Visibility

By Claire Cunningham

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You need to be visible to attract customers, right? But how do you get that visibility when you're short on cash? Here's an idea that's worked for many businesses. It's postcard marketing, and it's very affordable.

You can design your own postcards or hire a designer. Print the cards on 67# card stock to meet USPS requirements. Two or four cards will fit on an 8 ½" x 11" sheet so you'll have to use a paper cutter. Postage is just \$.23 a card.

Here are some ways to use postcards:

- 1) REFERRALS – Send postcards regularly to your best contacts asking for referrals.
- 2) ANNOUNCE EVENTS - Send postcards to let folks know about events like classes, seminars, sales, open houses, etc.
- 3) PROSPECTING - Send a series of postcard mailings to identified prospects to "soften them up" before you phone them.
- 4) BUILD WEBSITE TRAFFIC - Use postcard mailings to tell people your site is there and when you make significant additions.
- 5) GROW YOUR NEWSLETTER SUBSCRIBER LIST - Postcard mailings can publicize your newsletter to new audiences.
- 6) MAKE AN OFFER – Do you have a booklet to give away? Are you offering a special discount? Postcard mailings can get out the word.
- 7) SAY THANKS - Use postcards to say thank you for business, referrals, or information.

Of course, for best results you need a good list. Make sure your mailings are going to the right people. Also, you'll get a better response if you offer something of value.

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Finally, repeat, repeat, repeat! As with any marketing, repetition is critical. A single mailing may get a disappointing result. Don't be surprised or discouraged. Keep at it with a consistent look, message and audience, and over time your message will sink in.

A response rate of 1–3% is the average, but you may be able to generate significant sales from those responses. Referral mailings can yield business that's three or more times the cost of the mailing.

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