

Free Marketing Alternatives Do Exist!

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By Tracy Foote and Alyce Edrich

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Have you ever wanted to find a low cost alternative to marketing your company? Have you wanted to promote your business to thousands of people, outside of your local area, but couldn't afford the cost? Did you ever wish you could spread the word about a fabulous small business that you frequently use? Then you are going to love this co-op marketing idea.

Simply put, you join groups that agree to help market each other's materials, free of charge. There are several groups set up online for this very purpose, The Mom Pack, Mommy Mailers, DM Packs, and Tracy Packs.

Basically what happens is you send a notice to the online listserv that you are willing to accept promotional materials in exchange for distribution of your materials by the person who sends you his or her materials. Promotional materials can be anything that has your company contact information. Such as:

- business cards
- flyers
- discount coupons
- buy one get one free coupons
- pens
- pencils
- notepads
- samples of your products
- free one hour consultations
- free one-time service
- contest announcements

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- magnets
- bookmarks
- gimmicks with your promo info

Once you receive the promotional materials from others, simply place them in clear bags and seal by stapling or tying with a nice ribbon. You can even add a nice label on the front of the packet, describing the group that you are promoting. Each of the above groups have nice logos that you are free to use when promoting the packs within their group.

Once the packets are put together you can distribute the packets

throughout your area. In return, those who have received your information will distribute their packets throughout their local areas.

Distribution of packets can be as follows:

- Sent out with customer orders
- Local Family Support Center (such as those found on a military air=

base)

- Moms and Tots Groups
- Church Functions
- Day Care Providers
- Chamber of Commerce Members
- Parent/ Teacher Associations
- Craft shows
- Home Party Businesses (at the shows)'
- Doctors offices – especially OB/GYN
- Media Outlets with Press Releases
- Enter a parade. Prepare a float for your business and have your kids and their friends pass out packs to the on-lookers, while you advertise and drive your float in the parade.
- Wherever you put up or hand out your flyers and information

If you choose to deliver the packets to an organization, it is always best to speak to someone ahead of time and get their permission to leave the packets.

Start with the first person you see, as they have more time to listen to your idea and will be able to help you pitch the idea to their boss. If the person in charge is unavailable to meet with you, leave a sample packet and a promotional letter for his or her review, then make an appointment to meet and discuss the benefits these packets

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have for their customers or clients.

But if the person in charge can spare a few moments to meet with you, simply introduce yourself and your business. Then state, "I am a member of a National Mothers Group that distributes promotional packs, for FREE, to local area moms and dads. Would you be interested in offering our packets, free of charge, to your clients (or customers)?"

While you are speaking with this person, hold your best packet in your hand, dangling it ever so carefully in front of the person you are speaking with. Do not hand the packet to this person right away as you want her to be curious about contents of that packet. Also, by holding onto the packet, you are keeping her interest a bit longer. Once she asks to see the packet however, hand it over. As she looks over the packet, say, "We try to include at least one sample or treat in each pack so that the packet is not just paper.

The average packet has a minimum of one sample, but we strive to have at least three samples in each packet. (If you find that you do not have enough samples for one location, fill half the samples with hard candies and the other half with sample products.)

Once you have explained the contents of the packets and their purpose (savings and samples), offer to bring in a display that can be placed on a counter, the edge of a desk, or by the front door. The display can simply be an old shoebox decorated with nice wrapping paper and the logo of the group that you are helping to promote. The front of the display can simply say, "FREE. TAKE ONE." It can also have a second title tag that says, "Great discounts and samples for parents."

Once you get the okay to leave the packets, ask how many are needed, what is the best time to distribute the packets, and how often you can return with more packets. Finally, ask if she knows of any other programs or organizations that would benefit from the packets. (You want to ask for references whether she says yes or no to leaving the packets.)

On a final note, always work in what you do for a living and what product or service you are selling. You just never know when self-promotion can lead to something better. For instance, if you were Tracy of Tracy Trends, you could say, "I wrote a great book about potty training, which I have included information on, in this packet, everything else is from different businesses in our groups."

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In closing, you will have a better chance of getting a "yes" because you are promoting a NATIONAL GROUP, not just your individual business, and you are offering something of value... samples, discounts, and an extra perk for visiting that company or organization.

ReligionThere it is

By Dony Peter

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let me tell you something

1. God does not exist.
2. Allah does not exist.
3. Jesus does not exist.
4. Shiva does not exist.

almost 90% of the people reading this blog would not mind my first sentence, just dismissing me as an atheist,

However, #2 for Muslims, #3 for Christians, # 4 for Hindus would definitely anger these respective people, and i'm sure they would fight me tooth and nail to prove their point. Well I'm not here to debate the existence of god, just the existence of our ignorance.

Why aren't we as much angered when somebody talks about just "God" , than when somebody talks about my God. It seems that these people do accept then that there is a God, and there is my God. It also proves that 'my God' is not the real God , atleast for me because I'm not angered or incensed or even bothered when somebody says that "God does not exist".

And while I'm bothered when somebody drags "My God" into a controversy, i am a little worried for the the plain "God" who doesn't have any takers.

It also reveals that we want to ascribe to our religious beliefs in a way more than the religion itself dictates. I do feel that most of the time the culprit is not "God" who by the way was never clear about his real identity and thus created the plethora of confusion among us, but rather our very own religious egos.

The author is a person looking at the world through a different sense of vision. more are
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