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The Cocktail Wiener Strategy for Online Business

By Heather Reimer

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Don't you just love those nice ladies who stand in grocery store aisles handing out tiny food samples? Garlic sausage hot off the griddle... the latest processed cheese food on a cracker... cocktail weenies. I was thinking about those ladies and how popular they are while I pondered the marketing of my web content services.

You see, recently I decided to copy the cocktail wiener strategy and give something away for free. I had read tons of articles about the magic of "free" but for a long time was skeptical about whether it would work for me... I mean, what on earth can a writer give away free? And hasn't the impact of that over-used four letter word worn off by now?

Apparently not.

Internet marketing kahuna Jim Daniels gives away copies of his e-book precisely because free works. He says, "Offering a free manual gives me an opportunity to show off my expertise and possibly gain a few more potential prospects and customers... If you can give it away for free, people will remember you."

Well, I don't have an e-book to give away. But this is what I did and what you can do, too.

My primary means of promoting my writing services is through distributing business- and writing-related articles like this one (a freebie in itself). At the end of each one is a short

author's tag which acts as a plug for my services. This is the ONLY advertising I do. Until I had my cocktail wiener epiphany, that tag read like this:

"How can you free up more of your precious time and improve your traffic and revenues? Hire an experienced content provider to write and regularly refresh your online material. Heather Reimer has been a professional writer for 16 years. She specializes in custom web content... blah, blah, blah."

I used that tag for months with pretty mediocre results. I blamed it on the poor economy and the fact that most

webmasters have a tendency to think writing is easy and anybody can do it, so why pay?

But that wasn't the entire problem, as I discovered when I tweaked the tag by adding this line:

"Get a free content analysis report on your site when you request an estimate."

Shazzam! Serious clients started taking me seriously, overnight.

Turns out webmasters care much less about my years of writing experience than they do about the possibility of getting help to improve their sites and getting it on the house. It also gives them a chance to see if I know my stuff before they commit to hiring me.

The sex-appeal of free could work for you too. But be prepared – there will be the inevitable lollygaggers and time wasters. There will be cheapskates who use your great ideas without hiring you... who take your free samples and make a meal out of them.

It happens, it's cool, it's all part of the wonderful world of free. As those nice grocery store ladies can tell you, you have to dish out a LOT of cocktail wieners before somebody buys a package.

But the point is that even the nibblers might be back someday because your free gift left such a good taste in their mouths. And when they do, you'll have a second

chance to get your product or service into their shopping carts.

Decisions On Appetizers And Cocktail Hours

By "Amy K. Spade"

In order to have even more time to socialize or to give the married couple some time for pictures or quiet, the trend of cocktail hours has re-emerged. Of course, these aren't the only reasons that you may want to contemplate a little fun before the actual start of the reception.

For the wedding party

After the rush of pictures and the excitement of the ceremony, a lot of the wedding party can become disheveled and unkempt. By giving them a little time to get freshened up, all of the reception pictures can be just as lovely as the ceremony ones.

Of course, if the wedding party has to transport themselves to the reception hall, a cocktail hour can give them enough time to get there and get organized as well. They can put away anything that they brought with them to the hotel or to the ceremony, plus change into anything that they may have brought with them—more comfortable shoes, for example.

A cocktail hour is a great new way to have a receiving line. The wedding party can meet and greet the guests as they arrive at the reception hall, even show them to their seats if they'd like. This way, the only thing that anyone is waiting on is the bride and groom.

For out of town guests

If you just couldn't schedule the wedding and the reception back to back, then you may be in luck with having a cocktail hour. When your guests are from out of town, they don't necessarily want to go back to their hotels before heading over for the reception, so they can have the option of going for light appetizers and cocktails.

This also gives them the opportunity to mingle with everyone in a less intense setting. There won't be all the dancing and cake cutting, so it can be a lot calmer. Plus if the wedding was earlier, the guests are probably hungry, so you'll be feeding them as well. And drinks can help to liven up any bunch of people.

A cocktail hour is a great way to warm everyone up and get acquainted before the arrival of the couple and the start of the reception. And since you're feeding everyone a little something to begin with, you may also be able to have a less complicated dinner menu—if you're on a budget.

So if you're deciding on whether or not to have a cocktail hour, why not just do it? It's an inexpensive way to keep your guests from having grumbling stomachs.

Amy Spade is an expert on planning weddings, and she has written an amazing totally free minicourse on how to make sure that you have the day of your dreams, and avoid wedding day disaster! Get the free course "Your Special Day from Start to Finish" now at at



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