

Small Business News & Notes

The Business Of Promoting Your New Enterprise

(NAPSA)—Once you've set up shop and hung out a shingle, the customers will start beating a path to your door, right?

Being in business means more than just *being* in business. You have to get the company's name out there, let potential customers know you exist and promote the services you provide. There are three key ways to do this:

1. Put the company name everywhere. Company stationery—letterhead, business cards, writing pads, etc.—is an inexpensive way to promote yourself. Be sure to include your company's name, phone number and, especially in this technological age, your Web site address. And, once you've got the stationery, use it!

2. Advertise on an Internet site that attracts local customers. In general, consumers would prefer to support local businesses with their hard-earned dollars. One way to get in touch with these customers is through Web sites that target your community.

For instance, local online city guides such as Citysearch (www.selfenroll.citysearch.com) are a credible source of information for consumers and potential small business customers researching a product or service before they buy. Placing a banner ad on such a site can do a lot to improve your name recognition in your hometown.

3. Charity begins at the workplace. Depending on the services your company provides, you can build awareness (and a good public image) by offering to sponsor charity events. On a smaller scale, contact community organizations to see if they need prizes for raffles,



Advertising online can help small businesses reach customers in their own neighborhoods.

fairs, etc. Not only is the donation tax-deductible, but it also shows that you care about the neighborhood where you do business.

Like many small business owners, Sherman Robinson, owner of The Carpet Guy, Inc., was looking for ways to attract a larger customer base with a limited advertising budget. After studying different marketing approaches, he followed these three basic principles and found advertising success.

"Citysearch.com let me take control of my advertising with an online customer support tool that's easy to use and allows me to keep my messaging fresh and my contact information up-to-date," stated Sherman. Robinson continues, "My business has grown substantially since I began targeted local advertising. In fact, I receive eight to 10 local leads a week, generating thousands of dollars in revenue per month. Needless to say, my advertising has paid for itself many times over."