

The **ENTREPRENEUR'S** Guidebook Series™

Next
Page

THANKS for selecting this guidebook! Many hours of painstaking work have gone into its creation. Send feedback or suggestions to www.patsulamedia.com. And check out our **highly rated planner / guide ...** at bp30.com



Highly Rated
Amazon.com



*It's one of the
best of its kind.*
- Alan Caruba
Bookview.com

COPYRIGHT INFO

© Copyright 2001-2007 by Patsula Media. All rights reserved. From the creators of **Smallbusnesstown™**.

No part of this guidebook may be reproduced, in whole or in part, in any form, by any means electronic or mechanical, including photocopying, recording, or by any information storage and retrieval system now known or hereafter invented, without written permission of the copyright owner. This guidebook **may not be** resold or distributed on other web sites or in any other manner without written permission from the copyright owner.

NOTE The author and publisher shall have neither liability nor responsibility to any person or entity with respect to any loss or damage caused, or alleged to be caused, directly or indirectly by any information contained in this guide. Although this publication is designed to provide accurate information in regard to the subject matter covered, it is sold with the understanding that the publisher is not engaged in rendering legal, accounting or other professional services. If **legal** advice or other expert assistance is required, the services of a competent professional should be consulted.



384 pages \$21.95

Successful Business Planning in **30 Days**™

*A Step-by-Step Guide for Writing a Business Plan
and Starting Your Own Business, 3rd Edition*

Purchase this book online at bp30.com or by calling toll-free
1-800-247-6553 (orders only, please have credit card ready).



ISBN 0967840236

**Immersing you in the language
of business to help you
think like an entrepreneur!**

INCLUDES:

- The **30 Day Business Plan**™
- The **One Day Business Plan**™
- 150 pages of **Time-Saving Worksheets** including 100 + sample passages to get you started fast and thinking in the right direction!
- A **15 page** sample business plan.
- **200 +** motivational and fact quotes, 11 success stories, and 33 profit tips!

Praise from Readers and Critics

Five Star Reviews ★★★★★

Provides an important key to writing a business plan and starting your own business.

- **Midwest Book Review**, Oregon, WI
Amazon.com review

This is a must read for anyone before starting your own business.

- **Mike Milliken**, BN.com Review.

This book has helped me a great deal in thinking about my business

- **Jason Myers**, TX
Amazon.com review



PERSONAL PLANNING

Guidebook #74:

Innovating Your Promotional Plan 5

Innovative Promotional Strategies 6

Ads in Unusual Locations 6

Annual Reports..... 6

Banners..... 6

BBSes 6

Benefit Concerts..... 7

Bike Racks 7

Bundled Packages..... 7

Clearance Sales 7

Commercial News USA 8

Community Participation..... 8

Contests..... 9

Cooperative Promotions 9

Demonstrations 11

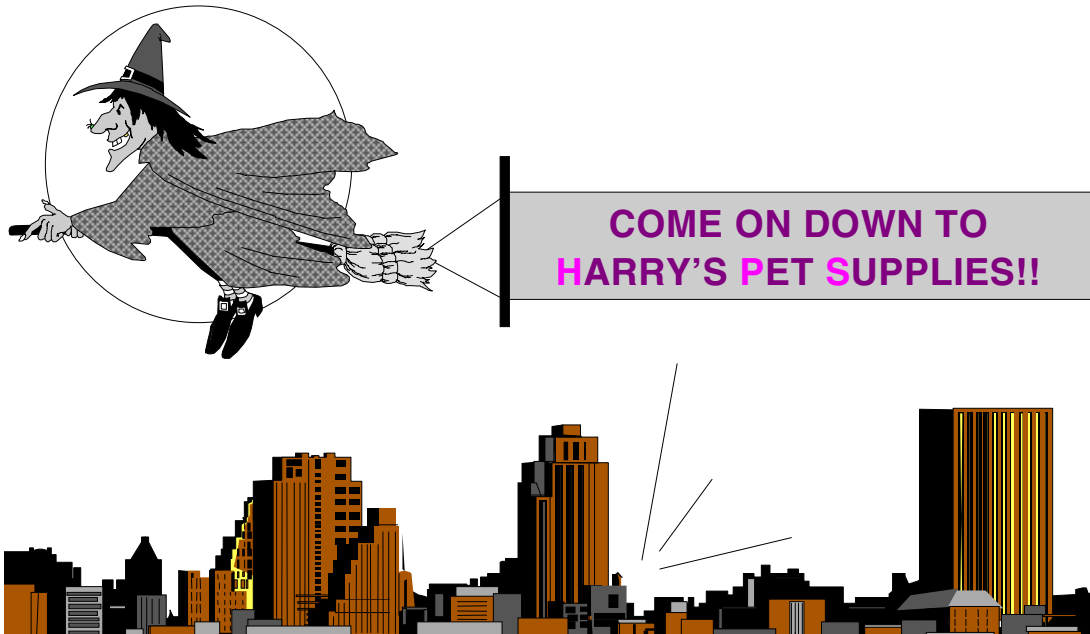
Discount Coupons 11



Donating Supplies	11
E-Mail Promotions	11
Fashion Shows.....	12
Fax Promotions	12
Floral Logo Beds	12
Free Samples/Trial-Use.....	13
Fundraisers	13
Gift Certificates.....	13
Gift of the month Club	13
Home Shopping Networks	14
Humorous Shipping Labels.....	14
Incentives to Jobbers	15
Integrated Advertising	15
Internet Shopping Networks	15
Library Book Marks.....	15
Loyalty Programs	16
Open Houses	16
Photo Album Fillers	16
Portfolio.....	17
Post Cards	17



Poster Contests.....	18
Publicity Departments.....	18
Premiums	18
Referral-Incentive Programs	18
Retail Outlet Advertising	20
Sky Writing.....	20
Slide Shows & Photo Album Displays	20
Speaking Engagements.....	21
Special Group Promotions	22
Sports Sponsorship	22
Spotlights & Fireworks.....	22
Scratch'n Win Coupons	23
Surprise Packages	23
Television Giveaways	23
Testimonial Letter.....	24
Updated Business Plan	24
Waiting Room Advertising	24
World Wide Web Advertising	24



“Can't beat the price. All she wanted was two frog legs, the eye of a newt, and some herbal tea.”

INNOVATING YOUR PROMOTIONAL PLAN

INNOVATIVE efforts should not be limited to only product and service development. They should extend beyond technology and production and into advertising and promotion.

In fact, when times get tough, don't think of ways of cutting your advertising and promotional efforts – think of ways of improving them. Supplement or replace them entirely with more effective and innovative marketing approaches.

INNOVATIVE PROMOTIONAL STRATEGIES

THIS GUIDEBOOK is dedicated to helping you come up with new activities and ways of promoting your company. Below are over 60 ways you can innovate your promotional plan.

Ads in Unusual Locations

Marketers have successfully placed ads in a variety of locations: Laundromats, rest rooms, drugstore entrances, convention programs, computer bulletin boards and hundreds of other locations frequented by prospective buyers.

Annual Reports

Annual reports are usually lavish affairs,

printed on glossy stock and featuring expensive four-color photography, sophisticated graphics and stylish copy. They are excellent for building company support but don't really motivate typical consumers. Use them to drum up financial support from investors.

Every new idea is obscure at first. It is or it wouldn't be new.
ROBERT IRWIN

Banners

Banners can be hung down the outside wall of an office building, hung across a high ceiling or added to a display window.

BBSes

BBSes are dead. They may linger around, but as a commercial entity, they're toast. Hence, the people who try to make a profit from running a commercially-attractive BBS are stuck in the 80s. There

are far too many cool, free resources out there in the Internet.

Benefit Concerts

Benefit concerts can be used to boost the image of your company in a community. A portion of the ticket sales can be used to help offset organizational and promotion costs.

Bike Racks

Bike racks can be placed near parking lots, on sidewalks and near the front entryway of stores with small billboard like signs that are in direct line of sight of anyone locking or unlocking their bike or walking by.

Bundled Packages

Bundled packages combine several

products or services together into one complete package. The combined products and services usually complement each other and if purchased individually, would cost more than the items combined. Bundled packages can be used to move old stock or new stock.

Clearance sales are necessary to remove old stock and make way for new stock.

NOTE Bundled packages are frequently used by computer software distributors and fast food restaurateurs who sell “Full Meal Deals.”

Clearance Sales

Clearance sales are necessary to remove old stock and make way for new stock. However, in addition to clearing out items they should be positioned carefully to attract customers to your regularly priced items.

Commercial News USA

Commercial News USA is a magazine published by the ITA (International Trade Administration). It circulates to about 100,000 foreign agents, distributors, government officials, and end users. Each issue contains up to 200 American products and services, with descriptive literature and black-and-white photos.

Companies participating in this international promotion medium experience 30 to 40 inquiries from a single insertion. The average dollar return is in excess of \$10,000. However, there is a charge for each insert. For all programs and services above, contact: ITA, Department of Commerce, 14th street and Constitution Avenue. Attendance at an ITA Export Seminar is also recommended.

*Every man of
genius sees the
world at a differ-
ent angle from
his fellows.*

**HAVELOCK
ELLIS**

For the next available one, call (202) 377-0300.

Community Participation

Community participation and visibility is a good way of building your company image. Start by joining groups such as your local Chamber of Commerce or service clubs. By doing this, two things are accomplished. Firstly, you are promoting your store by gaining recognition as a community orientated merchandiser or service provider and, secondly, you are increasing your credibility in the eyes of the consumer (having a Chamber of Commerce logo stamped on your letterhead will easily pay for the cost of membership). But don't stop there. Take an old company bus if you have one, paint some

company advertising on it, and donate it to special functions. Or perhaps sponsor a baseball team and buy all their uniforms with your logo strategically placed.

Contests

Foot traffic to your location will likely increase in your retail outlet if you have a contest offering major prizes of cash, merchandise or trips. In fact, consumers will often try new products or make a repeat purchase just because of a contest. Lottery type contests (guess the number of jelly beans in a jar or goldfish in a huge container) are also excellent for stimulating traffic as well. Make sure however, that your contest booths are strategically placed to bring attention to other key merchandise you are trying to promote.

Small gifts make friends, great ones make enemies.
PROVERB

NOTE Be sure to check with legal authorities for any restrictions regarding contests in your area.

Cooperative Promotions

Cooperative advertising is an effective way to decrease overall advertising costs and reach a wider audience. It is a process whereby a group of businesses share the costs for running an advertising promotion of mutual benefit. Essentially, this form of advertising can be divided into two types:

Advertising for Which Manufacturers or Suppliers Share Costs with Retailers – Many manufacturers and suppliers have built into the price structure of their product or service a small percentage for cooperative advertising. Some of that percentage

is rebated when the manufacturer's or suppliers product or service is advertised.

To get this rebate however, if the ad appears in a newspaper or magazine, a tearsheet (the full page containing the ad) must be submitted with the invoice. As well the ad must conform with the rules set up by the suppliers. The amount rebated usually depends on either a special arrangement (such as when a new product is first introduced) or a fixed percentage of purchases.

A company media rep or advertising agency can explain how to get the most out of any cooperative advertising contract.

Advertising that is Produced and Financed by a Group of Merchants in a Neighborhood Shopping District or Shopping Mall –

Co-op ads are more economical and have a larger circulation than any solo promotion.

If a merchants association exists in your neighborhood or shopping center and has a joint or cooperative advertising program, it is definitely worthwhile to join this effort, especially if you are an independent merchant. Co-op ads are more economical and have a larger circulation than solo promotions. The concentration of many special sales, all at the same time, and the use of a great deal of advertising at a low cost to individual co-operators, attracts more customers from a wider territory. Attractions of one store rub off on the others, and vice versa.

NOTE Co-op advertising in itself is a good reason for leasing space in a shopping center.

Demonstrations

Demonstrations should always be of high quality and interest otherwise there is little point in having them. For a demonstration to be effective and attract attention, it must have a charismatic demonstrator and be of high visual interest.

Discount Coupons

Offering discount coupons for a product or service can be an effective way to generate consumer buying action, and is a strategy that can be used by service providers, manufacturers and retailers. Discount coupons usually come in the form of inserts or clip-outs redeemable by consumers when they purchase an item or service. Essentially, they work by encouraging people to peri-

odically pay more attention to the advertising.

Donating Supplies

Donating supplies (especially old stock you can't sell) to newsworthy causes is a good way to get cheap PR. Pet stores for example can donate supplies to their local Animal Humane Society. Office supply stores can provide supplies and surplus equipment to schools, churches and other goodwill organizations.

Donating supplies (especially old stock you can't sell) to newsworthy causes is a good way to get cheap PR.

E-Mail Promotions

E-mail promotions are DM promotions, without postage, envelope and insert costs. However, although extremely cheap, they have a limited market. Only people

with computers and modems can be solicited. Furthermore, many people are quite offended by this form of marketing, and thus most e-mail service providers take great pains to restrict e-mail promotions (SPAM as they call it). The key to success here is to get hold of a highly targeted mailing list directly related to your promotion.

Fashion Shows

A fashion show set up in front of your business, on a street with lots of foot traffic can attract attention to your retail location and products inside.

Fax Promotions

Unsolicited faxes can leave a bad impression in anyone. While E-mail can be

deleted with the stroke of a key, faxes waste your prospects ink and paper, something which can irritate them. In many states unsolicited faxes are against the law.

Press releases announce your message to the news media, which in turn will (you hope) disseminate it to the public.

POWERPOINT

Floral Logo Beds

Imagine having 1000 geraniums, other assorted brilliant flowers and thousands of multi colored rocks carefully shaped into a brilliantly designed company logo. Imagine this logo spread out across a huge grassy slope on a major highway leading into your city. One such company in Canada that specializes in this form of advertising is *Macdonald & Macdonald Outdoor Advertising*. Currently they charge corporations anywhere from \$2,500 to \$4,500, with the city getting a 20

percent cut. In addition, they pay local city workers to do the maintenance.

Free Samples/Trial-Use

Giving away free samples, is a promotion strategy often used by manufacturers to get consumers to try new products, such as convenience foods, household products, skin care and hair care items. If selling to businesses, especially those who need to constantly re-order your product, you might offer them free use of your product for a trial period in the hopes of stimulating further sales.

Fundraisers

Fundraisers are often organized to raise capital for worthy or charitable causes but

have occasionally been used to save businesses especially those residing in landmark buildings in need of renovation. Participating in a local fund raiser related to your product, can also give you access to a list of potential clients.

NOTE You will collect far more money in a fund-raising effort if you ask for a specific amount from a benefactor.

Gift Certificates

Gift certificates can be given to your customers to be used towards other purchases.

Gift of the month Club

Used by mail order companies, a gift of

Loyalty programs and membership cards work, because they are full of traps that entice shoppers to overspend to get something for “free.” People overspend because they like to pretend they’re getting something for free.

SUPERTIP

the month club sends a new gift each month to a member. The gift is usually old stock that needs to be cleared or “newer” overstocked items.

Home Shopping Networks

TV shopping is growing fast. Proof of this is the phenomenal growth of QVC and HSN two televisions networks dedicated to nothing else but selling products all day long. QVC began in 1986 and crossed over the billion-dollar mark six years after its debut. Its nearest competitor, HSN is hot on its heels. Both want preadvertised merchandise. They don't want new products. They want proven, heavily advertised products. Shopping networks like QVC and HSN are always looking for something new to offer their viewers.

Some businesses put advertising on their labels.

HSN – In 1993, The Home Shopping Network had sales of \$1 billion.

QVC – QVC (Quality, Value, Convenience) is the world's largest electronic retailer, with 4 million home viewers who are always in the mood to shop. In 1994, QVC did \$1.2 billion worth of business representing 56 million orders from viewers. It is interesting to note that this amount was equal to the amount of the entire infomercial industry.

Humorous Shipping Labels

Some businesses put advertising on their labels. Others put humor. The people who handle your products and distribute them are the targeted market.

Incentives to Jobbers

Give jobbers (representative for stores who display your product) incentives to entice them to set up your displays well. For example, give the jobber free goods for a snap shot of his or her display.

Integrated Advertising

Often it can be quite difficult, for example, to present your full message in the limited space of a newspaper ad. Through integrated advertising, you'll attempt to use advertising in one medium to draw attention to advertising in another, more expansive, medium. Integrated advertising gives you a double whammy. It allows you to present an introductory message to the general public and an in-depth message to your most likely prospects at a

Through integrated advertising, you'll attempt to use advertising in one medium to draw attention to advertising in another.

low per-unit cost.

You might, for instance, use a conventional print advertisement to promote a cable television show which will, in turn present your product in more depth. Or you might use a print advertisement to entice readers to obtain a copy of a brochure you recently published.

Internet Shopping Networks

Computer shopping networks are growing dramatically on the Internet. Check out the following shopping network on the Internet:

<http://www.shopping.com>

Library Book Marks

To remind library users when to return their books, paper bookmarks with due

dates stamped on them are often provided free of charge. The backs of these bookmarks, are often left blank – a perfect spot for a mini advertisement. Inquire with your local library, you may be able to arrange such a promotion (perhaps if you donate money for new books).

Loyalty Programs

Loyalty programs in the form of membership cards are growing. The main purpose of starting a loyalty program or membership card is to try and discourage customers from shopping for the best bargains. Club Z is one of the best-known consumer-loyalty programs with their “Lowest Price is the Law” slogan. Sales grew from \$1.8 to \$3 billion a year in 1987 when Club Z was launched.

The main purpose of starting a loyalty program or membership card is to try and discourage customers from shopping for the best bargains.

NOTE Just about every credit card on the market has some kind of gimmick. VISA has *Ford Visa Cards* and offer \$3,500 off a brand new car, providing you charge \$70,000 on your Visa card over five years.

Open Houses

Open houses allow a chance for community members and family members of employees to take a look inside your offices or manufacturing plant. For this to be a real success though it should be well publicized.

Photo Album Fillers

Contact a local album or photo frame company and ask if you can place an advertising filler where normally a generic picture would go. Your offer must

normally complement the album or photo company's public relations philosophy.

Portfolio

Put together a portfolio, a representative sampling of your best work and if applicable include a first-rate demonstration of your services to show potential clients. Use photographs of your product or service. List the advantages of doing business with your company as opposed to the competition. Describe and show in detail what it is you do. Include a resume.

Post Cards

Desire filling (dream vaca-

The Importance of Innovative Advertising

ADVERTISING IS OFFENSIVE, expensive and in America and Canada more intrusive than in any other industrialized nations. Advertising has made consumers cynical because in their eyes it amounts to nothing more than paid-for propaganda that is neither trustworthy nor memorable. In fact, according to market research studies, only nine percent of television viewers can name the brand or even the product category they saw advertised one moment before. In other words, only nine percent of the viewers can remember if they saw an ad at all. To make matters worse, even if an ad campaign generates significant name recognition, this may or may not affect sales. The Edsel, for instance, was the most advertised product of its time. Every one remembers the Edsel, but no one bought the car.

tions) or humorous cartoon type post cards can be mailed to potential buyers to arouse curiosity. A few days later, they can be followed up with a sales letter and order form.

Poster Contests

To promote a new product, have a contest for the best poster, best name or best new slogan.

Publicity Departments

Setting up a publicity department can help you consolidate your advertising efforts directed towards creating referrals, press releases, talk show interviews, seminars, open houses, sports sponsorship, community activities, club memberships, and speaking engagements.

Sometimes doing too much for the consumer makes them think your trying to hide something.

SUPERTIP

Premiums

If your product is small enough and inexpensive, use it as a premium. Sell it at a discount or give it away free to large companies such as gas stations who will then also give them away free or at a discount whenever a customer buys a full tank.

Referral-Incentive Programs

Assuming you offer high-quality products or services, your existing customers represent your best source of future business. They've experienced the benefits of using your products or services, thus their recommendations carry more weight than perhaps a dozen direct-mail campaigns or cold calls combined.

To take advantage of this, set up what is

called a “Referral-Incentive Program.” This is where you offer product, discount or extra-service incentives to your existing customers to refer you to new customers. The exact nature of the referral program you develop will depend on several factors, including the nature of your business, who your customers are, and how urgently you need new business. A few common referral programs are described below:

Referral Program Brochure – To start a referral program, design a brochure that explains your products and services as well as your referral program and how and when you will reward your customers for referring new business to you. Possible rewards include future discounts, free products or services, a referral fee, or gifts.

Excellence is to do a common thing in an uncommon way.

BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

NOTE Before you jump into your own program, be aware that referral incentives may not always create a win-win situation. They can backfire if you overstep professional boundaries or put any pressure on your existing customers to send new business to you. An incentive program tends to work best when you never directly ask people to sell for you.

Referral Program for a Wholesaler – Print 3.5-by 8.5-inch postcards promising your current retailers, “Our company will reward you for your effort if you help us get the word out.” The card, which includes spaces for the names of the referring and ordering parties, explains the system: “Existing retail customers get one free T-shirt for every 12 ordered by the account they referred.” When the new client places an order, our

company will send the referring party a coupon redeemable for the merchandise. In this system, your customers win because they receive free merchandise, and you win because new customers come looking for you.

NOTE Referral cards can be placed in each order you ship, so you don't have to invest one postage stamp.

Retail Outlet Advertising

Never lose sight of the fact that your retail location is one of your best source for advertising. You can use interior and exterior signage, window displays, point of purchases displays, and lighting to inform and attract attention.

Slide shows can quickly become boring if longer than twenty minutes. Keep your presentation short.

Sky Writing

Hire someone to fly a plane and write your advertising slogan or message in the sky.

Slide Shows & Photo Album Displays

If your product lends itself to sales by the use of color photography, a slide show can be a useful tool. One relatively inexpensive way of doing this is to take photographs of your product to be shown to prospective clients while you deliver the oratory. If your budget allows, consider adding music and a voice overlay. However, always allow for moments when you can speak spontaneously. This helps create a more personal presentation and allows you to interject opinions as the

show proceeds.

NOTE Slide shows can quickly become boring if longer than twenty minutes. Keep your presentation short.

Speaking Engagements

Volunteer your services to speak at different functions (this is an especially useful strategy for consultants). Good public speaking skills can go a long way to drawing attention to your company.

To become a better public speaker:

- add appropriate stories and humor
- don't memorize your talk; practice speaking about your subject in a natural

The fear of forgetting is the foremost fear in public speaking. By extracting key words from sections of a talk and linking them together visually, you can give a speech without using notes.

way

- dress conservatively
- know your topic; over prepare
 - relax your mind the day of your speech; breath deeply several times before beginning your address

When actually making your presentation, be sure to stay well within your time limit. Make your point without exhausting either the topic or your audience.

TIP The fear of forgetting is the foremost fear in public speaking. By extracting key words from sections of a talk and linking them together visually, you can give a speech without using notes.

Presentations – Speaking engagements can be supplemented with single-projector slide shows, dual projector slide shows, filmstrips, videotapes, films, and multimedia computer presentations. Whatever you choose, whether a single or combination of strategies, remember that audiences love visual events and have grown to expect them. If you don't want to use electronic gadgets to spice up your presentation, use props. If you want to rip something up to demonstrate a point, rip it up. If you want to burn something, burn it. Don't leave everything up to your audience's imagination.

Special Group Promotions

Offer special rates if customers buy in groups.

To help get your name more recognized in a community, consider sponsoring a softball team.

Sports Sponsorship

To help get your name more recognized in a community, consider sponsoring a softball team. Make a deal with the captain or coach to bring in other team members to a Friday Night Function. Offer them a cut of the profits to help with their fund raising. This strategy is particularly valuable for small restaurants and lounges.

Spotlights & Fireworks

Just like moths are attracted to lamplights so are people. Nightclubs often use spotlights to attract attention to special events.

NOTE Make sure you check to see if you need a permit to use a high-powered light source. The renter of such equipment can usually help you find out this information.

Scratch'n Win Coupons

Scratch'n win coupons have become quite popular with fast food chains, having prizes that range from trucks and campers to extra cheese on submarine sandwiches. Department stores have also used them during surprise sales to offer extra discounts from anywhere from 5% to 30%.

Surprise Packages

Surprise packages can be used to move obsolete or overstocked items e.g., a selection of products worth \$25 can be sold in a non-transparent bag for a price of \$10.

Television Giveaways

Write to a television show or company and offer to give away

free whatever it is you are selling e.g., bed, car, lawnmower or running shoes, in exchange for some free publicity or advertising.

Advertising on the Internet

WORLD WIDE WEB information services will not be able to feature extensive original material until they figure out a way to present advertisements on-line. Nobody likes commercials, but the fact is advertising pays the bills and satisfies the profit motive in every successful information medium. Without advertising, the reader has to bear the brunt of production costs, so they end up paying ridiculous prices such as \$2.50 for reading the full text of a computer magazine article from a magazine that costs \$2.95 at the local drugstore.

Testimonial Letter

Ask customers to write down any positive comments that they have about your business, products or services and to address specific issues like: why they decided to hire you or buy your product and what their results were?

Asking your customers or clients for this information can achieve three objectives: **First**, writing an endorsement of your business strengthens the customer's commitment to you (they now have a vested interest in your success). **Second**, they understand you are in the market for new customers and may decide to refer you to someone. And **third**, you have ammunition when seeking new accounts.

If the information in your business plan is getting rather old, update it with some new material.

Updated Business Plan

If the information in your business plan is getting rather old, update it with some new material. This is especially true of your income and balance statements. It is also wise to copies of this business wherever you go. You never know when you might bump into a potential investor.

Waiting Room Advertising

Your office waiting room can be used to display numerous promotional materials including stationary and business cards, annual reports, signs, portfolios, brochures, photos hung up on walls and even video displays.

World Wide Web Advertising

Like bees to honey, business are, in-

creasingly, attracted to the Internet, and taking advantage of a potential audience of millions. Of the possible resources on the Internet, the World Wide Web has attracted the most attention. In fact, as the Internet matures, it won't be long until its becomes a primary tool of the advertiser. A single web site can receive hundreds of inquiries a day. Web sites are excellent for giving potential customers a snapshot of what your company has to offer.

NOTE If you lack the technical tenacity to figure out how to create your own Web site, there will likely be an ISP in your area who will do absolutely everything for you, for a fee of course. However, before placing your trust in their expertise, ask for the Web site addresses of other businesses they have

Any word processor or text editor capable of creating plain text files can serve as a quick-'n'-dirty HTML-authoring utility.

created Web pages for and then take a look at these Web sites yourself.

How To Set up a Web Site? While it is beyond the scope of this book to provide

detailed instructions on how to set up a web site, here's the basic process in four simple steps:

1. *Read up on HTML and basic Web page design.* If you can turn on a computer, install software and teach yourself how to use most software packages, then understanding the basics of HTML won't take much longer than a few evenings. A good place to start is to get hold of a copy of: *Teach Yourself Web Publishing with HTML in one Week*, by Laura Lemay (Sam's Publishing).

Another great way to start learning some neat HTML tricks is to use the “View Source” function on your Web browser.

When you find a Web page you like, click the “Edit” menu on Netscape Gold (for example) and click on “View Source.” Your browser will display the HTML codes (or formatting tags as they are sometimes referred to) that makes the Web page look the way it does.

However, before you get too carried away mastering HTML you should be aware that recent innovations in Web page design actually discourage users from entering HTML codes. New generations of “WYSIWG” (“what you see is what you get”) Web development tools let

people who don’t know an HTML tag from a game of tag create Web sites. You can now design pages visually, by pointing and clicking with your mouse, instead of typing in HTML codes.

NOTE HTML tutorials, Web tools and design information are available at the HTML Writer’s Guild at:

<http://www.hwg.org/resources/>

2. *Design your basic Web page using a HTML editor.* Any word processor or text editor capable of creating plain text files can serve as a quick-’n’-dirty HTML-authoring utility.

Windows *Notepad* is sufficient. However, more robust HTML-authoring solutions include Adobe’s *PageMill* (for

In September of 1994, Compaq went on-line with “Compaq Support,” a direct electronic link to the company’s support staff, who respond electronically to customer queries. Thirty per cent of Compaq’s customers use the on-line query service.

FUNFACT

the Macintosh), Microsoft's *Internet Assistant* (free with Word97), Microsoft's *FrontPage* (\$150), and Netscape's *Communicator* (\$100).

TIP Try and keep your page as clean and simple as possible so that it is quick to load.

Corel Web.Designer – Includes easy-to-use WYSIWYG Web design tools and most notably Corel's Web.Gallery CD-ROM, which contains about 8,000 images, including buttons, bullets, lines, and transparent “.gif” files, as well as about a hundred page templates.

Microsoft Front Page – Although *Front Page* is slower than other packages, has only a few templates and not as many graphics as Corel's *Web.Designer*, in addi-

tion to its HTML editing functions, it can also function as a Web server and development tool with which you can design, build, and maintain an entire Web site. For this reason, it may be your perfect solution.

It also has Microsoft's famous “wizard” functions as well as a feature called “Verify Links” which allows you to analyze every link you've created to make sure they all work.

Netscape Communicator 4.0 – Communicator comes complete with a WYSIWYG HTML editor built in. Although, it doesn't have the power of other packages, if your needs aren't too exotic, or you only want to do quick edits to your existing pages, it may serve you well. Perhaps its greatest asset though is its low price and the fact that trial versiond can be downloaded for free from

In the '70s the pickup line was, “Hey baby, what's your sign?” Now it's, “Hey baby, what's your URL?”

FUNQUOTE

Netscape's Web Site. Highly recommended if price is a major consideration.

SoftQuad Hot Metal Pro – *Hot Metal Pro* has oodles of features, lots of power but compared to the other packages a rather steep a learning curve.

3. **Add additional media.** The Internet supports a variety of other media in addition to the text and graphics “traditionally” viewed via a web browser. What’s more is every week it seems somewhere some developer has just created a new tool or technique to add pizzazz to a Web page. Below are some of the additional media Web pages can now support:

Forms – If you want Web surfers to send you feedback via your Web page, you’re

going to have to learn the forms component of HTML.

Graphics – GIF-format images, and the smaller JPG images are standard add on for most graphic-based Web browsers.

Image Maps – Image maps are graphics with clickable regions. They are a very nice feature to add to your Web page.

Sound – Sound can be added using helper applications such as *TrueSpeech* and *RealAudio*.

Java Applets – Java is a programming language invented by Sun Microsystems. It allows Web designers to create games, animations and multimedia applets and insert them on their Web page. Advanced programming experience is needed

Java is a programming language invented by Sun Microsystems.

to write these applets.

AVI & Quicktime Files – AVI and Quicktime files can be added using for example *ShockWave's Macromedia Director* (\$800 US).

Animated GIFs – A recent innovation allows Web-designers to meld several GIF images together to make animations. This is achieved using a piece of shareware software called the *GIF Construction Kit* by Alchemy Mindworks.

VRML – VRML (Virtual Reality Markup Language) authoring tools, such as Caligari's *Fountain* (free) and Paragraph's *Home Space Builder* (\$50 US) can be used to create “virtual environments,” where users can explore models in three-dimensions.

In real-estate, success is location, location, location. On the Internet, its' content, content, content.

SUPERTIP

NOTE To save money, learn a little bit of HTML so that you can insert text into your Web pages and do basic Web page design using an HTML editor. Then hire a pro to make it beautiful and handle the more technical components.

4. *Upload your page onto a ISP server.* Find out how much your Internet Service Provider (ISP) charges for hard-disk space on their servers (typically server space rents out at \$10 to \$30 per month). Assuming that the price is acceptable, armed with your account name and a password to gain access to your allocated portion of the ISP, upload your files using a FTP (file transfer protocol) program such as **Fetch** for the Mac or **WS_FTP** for Windows. Once posted to

the site, users from around the world can now access your pages simply by specifying your URL (uniform resource locator) address. An example of such an address is shown below:

<http://www.yourprovidername.com/yourname/yourhomepage.html>.

A more specific URL, like www.yourname.com, can be obtained by applying to Washington-based organization InterNIC. Registration costs \$100 US for the first two years and \$50 US per year thereafter. Check with your Internet Service Provider to find out if they can host your registered domain name or help you register one.

NOTE Instead of renting space on a server you may consider buying your own server

at a cost of anywhere between (\$3,000 to \$20,000 and up). However, small companies with on-line “billboards” describing their products may generate only 30 to 50 hits a day (or even less), and thus

shouldn't bother purchasing a Web server. On the other hand, a company like Ziff-Davis Publishing's which hosts the *Computer Shopper Web Edition* and several other magazines, gets an average of 1.3 million hits a day (<http://www.cshopper.com>).

A more specific URL, like www.yourname.com, can be obtained by applying to Washington-based organization InterNIC.

