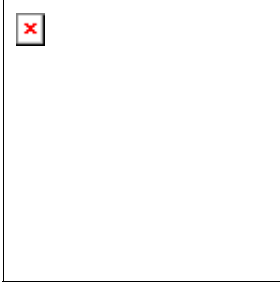


Perspectives Dallas Chapter of ASTD Membership Newsletter - September 2006 << [Table of Contents](#) <<

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## Marketing – It’s a Jumble Sale of Options



By Shirley Lee, VP Communications

Have you figured out yet how you are going to market your consulting or training business? There are several small business owners in Dallas ASTD looking for ways to market their business, so you are not alone. This year through Dallas ASTD there have been a few opportunities to get information on this topic. The [Coaches and Consultants SIG](#) has had meeting topics that included website design, sales and marketing strategies, and business planning. At the [Southwest Learning Summit](#), a presentation was available on using the web to increase your visibility with personal or business PR.

Since I am a consultant, I too have been attending these sessions and researching marketing alternatives. In the following paragraphs I plan to share a little about what I have found regarding common methods for marketing. Please note that I have included some interesting or informative links to various websites. Some may have advertising on them and others may not be “live” the next time you try them, therefore I give no guarantees related to using them in this article.

Also, I will not cover networking, other face-to-face events, testimonials and word-of-mouth, which are the best methods. However some of the items below may help get you to those. And of course, I won’t hit you up with telemarketing – after all you may be reading this during dinner!

### **ELECTRONIC**

#### **E-mails**

Email is a great way to connect with existing and potential customers.

However, if it is not an HTML based

**[Dallas ASTD Consultant Directory](#)**

email with graphics, you need to keep the email short. Most busy people delete anything that can't be read in a matter of seconds, unless they have asked the sender for the specifics. If you have a lot to tell the customer, alternatives to a long email are great looking attachments (see marketing materials and newsletters below) or a URL (website addresses) where they can save the information for reference later.

Email marketing tips at:  
<http://email.about.com/od/emailmarketingtips/>

## Websites

All businesses should now have a web presence. This is the easiest and fastest method for your potential customers to find out about your business. When designing a website yourself or with a consultant, keep it simple – flashy stuff looks good but slows things down. Most business people go to the web to get information not to watch moving art and video. Also, give them as much as you can free online from your website by making text easy to read, marketing materials and information can be printed or downloaded, and be sure the site is kept up-to-date.

Learn to use keywords so search engines are more likely to find your site and let other sites link to you if related to your area of expertise because this will increase traffic to your site.

Use it so T&D and HR professionals can find you easily! For a limited time, the Dallas chapter is offering one FREE listing to members.

### **Advertising Options at Dallas ASTD**

- Banner Ad on website
  - Column Ad in newsletter
  - Email and Program Sponsorships
- Use these to target T&D and HR professionals for your products, services, and events.

### **Other Marketing via Dallas ASTD**

- Rent Membership Mailing List
- Write an article for the monthly newsletter
- Present at [Special Interest Group](#) meeting

### **To find out more about all the options and prices see:**

<http://www.dallasastd.org/advertise.htm>

Website tips for small business at:

[http://www.smallbusinessbible.org/dos\\_donts\\_websitedesign.html](http://www.smallbusinessbible.org/dos_donts_websitedesign.html)

## **PAPER-BASED**

### **Direct Mailings** (Letters/Postcards/Etc.)

This is the process of sending information to potential customers using the postal system. To do this you must have a list of customer names and addresses, someone to stuff envelopes and/or prepare the materials, software or service to address items using mail merge, and of course postage. You may be able to purchase mailing lists from associations, city chamber of commerce, or create your own using a contact database.

In their book *Getting Business to Come to You*, Paul and Sarah Edwards suggest that these can be quick sells using postcards or longer, more detailed items using letters and inserts. They indicated that if you target your mailings and personalize the message to your reader's needs, the chance of getting a customer is about 7%. Also, not all results are immediate. Some readers will not need your service or product tight away and will fill your information for reference. Then when they have a need, they will pull out their reference information and begin making inquiries.

Direct Mail articles at:

<http://www.allfreelance.com/smallbusinessresources/marketingpromoting-tips/directmailmarketingtips/index.html>

### **Marketing Materials**

This are typically professionally created materials that are left with customers after meetings are sent to them through the mail. There are printing costs, but often the design cost is the biggest portion of expense here, so reprints end up costing you less than the original did – always ask for quotes on various quantities to determine the best deal.

Before going to the print designer, check out what others have done in their brochures, leaflets, and flyer to get ideas. To save money, you may create your own in a digital or print format until

you are sure what you want to have a marketing professional create for you.

Create your own using tips from article at:

[http://www.dallasastd.org/news/NewsArchives2003\\_2004/www.dallasastd.net](http://www.dallasastd.org/news/NewsArchives2003_2004/www.dallasastd.net)

## **EITHER/OR**

### **Advertisements**

Use either print or electronic advertising in magazines, newspapers, specialized newsletters, on websites, and in other publications to create an awareness of your company or your products and services. Consider the audience for the methods you are considering. If your target audience does not use the publication or location you are considering, you will be wasting your money

Make sure your advertisements look great and communicate what you want them to say – they are an extension of your professional image. You may want to consider getting professional assistance if you do not have excellent graphical and marketing skills. For advertisements to be effective, they should be repeated using a 3X model (1<sup>st</sup> time = introduction, 2<sup>nd</sup> time = recollection, 3<sup>rd</sup> time = recognition). Think of your ad as meeting someone new, you are introduced, then the next time you meet may not remember their name but you recollect the face, by your third meeting you won't forget the name. In their book *Getting Business to Come to You*, Paul and Sarah Edwards suggest that if you have several things or points to sell, purchase multiple small ads using "power words" for items in each ad rather than crowding it into a single ad.

Giving a toll-free phone number, email address, or website offers the reader the option of contacting you for more details than is in the ad. Depending on size of ad, providing a discount coupon or free offer may also increase the potential of the ad to get desired results. These two customer-care options also may allow you to track the effectiveness of your ad.

Let's simplify the message here. In his book *Selling the*

*Invisible*; Harry Beckwith says two things about advertising: "If you want publicity, advertise" and "If you want more publicity, do more advertising."

Advertising tips at:

<http://advertising-notes.com/>

## Directories

If you have a business phone, you most likely have a yellow page listing. However, this may not be under a distinct category that makes it easy for your potential customers to find you. There are other types of directories available that target specific industries, user groups, and association members. Some are free to members and many require a small fee to be included. These may be a paper-based directory published once or twice a year or an on-line directory that is updated more frequently. In their book *Getting Business to Come to You*, Paul and Sarah Edwards suggest being listed in trade or specialty directories that will reach your target audience.

To find out about these directories, check the websites and publications of organizations where your target customers may be to see if they provide a directory option. If there isn't a directory on-line, call the organization to see if they provide a print version and what you need to do to get in their directory.

Directory tips at:

<http://www.homebizpal.com/directory-submission.html>

## Newsletters

Publishing your own newsletter or providing articles for other newsletters is often a very effective method for getting information out to potential customers and increasing visibility on your area of expertise. Costs for printed and mailing newsletters may be reasonable or if the target group is large an electronic version may be an alternative. Electronic version may be sent as an HTML email, an email attachment, or a URL link in a one-line email. An additional benefit of electronic newsletter is that archived issues or articles can be made available via your website.

One thing to remember about newsletters, if you want them to be read they must provide interesting and relevant information the reader can use. If they are primarily advertisements being called newsletters, eventually the reader will realize this and delete the email before reading, which defeats your purpose for sending it and causes a loss of trust in you or your company. However, this does not mean you can not provide news about what is going on in your company, upcoming training events, or other stories related to your or your company. It just means you have to plan your communication better.

If you are a writer, then go for it. If you are not a writer, but want a newsletter – you have three options.

1. You can hire someone to create your newsletter.
2. You can reprint articles that noted as such on the internet. Do a search for “free articles” and read the republishing/reprinting guidelines carefully.
3. You can invite others to contribute articles that are relevant to your readers for your newsletter.

If you decide to do a newsletter, you need to determine how frequently it will be sent to readers, what size it will be, the delivery method (paper or electronic options), and the standard design layout for the newsletter. Your newsletter should match your other marketing materials and your website. This is another way to help build your image, enhance visibility, and increase recognition.

Create your own using tips from article at:

[http://www.dallasastd.org/news/NewsArchives2003\\_2004/www.dallasastd.net](http://www.dallasastd.org/news/NewsArchives2003_2004/www.dallasastd.net)

## **Go forth and market!**

In closing, I want to advise you to consider all your options. One option may work best for you or a combination of options may get you the result you seek. Before spending any money or clicking on all the links I’ve provided, you might want to read Michele Schermerhorn clever article titled *Seven Commandments of Marketing* at: <http://www.ezinearticles.com/?The-7-Commandments-of-Marketing&id=8876>

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**About the Author:** Shirley Lee is a consultant/facilitator who helps organizations increase employee, communications, and system capacity to produce results. She has been a member of Dallas ASTD for five years and currently serves as VP of Communications. Shirley designs and facilitates a variety of team building, problem solving, and productivity improvement events. Her programs include managing time, facilitating meetings, project management simplified, workspace or group organization, the problem solving process, and team-building. More information on her is available on her website: [http://www.geocities.com/slee\\_rightfit/](http://www.geocities.com/slee_rightfit/) or by calling her at 214-457-5736.