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## Marketing – Why Bother? – Profile Magazine January 2007

As our industry changes and evolves, it is becoming more obvious that the focus for today's custom framer is less about being a "craftsman" and more about being a "retailer". Because we now have to compete in a consumer "retail paradise", we must recognise the fact that we simply have to professionally "market" our product & services, in order to survive in business in the future.

As an industry, we need to keep up with consumer expectations and demands for offering a product, service & experience that it relative to our consumer's desires NOW, (not what was relevant 10 years ago).

So, what's the point of marketing? Put simply, the goal of marketing is to get a customer to walk through your door. Also put simply - every business needs to do some sort of marketing.

### **"BUT I DON'T WANT TO SPEND MONEY ON MARKETING!"**

Less than 10% of the customer framers I speak actually have a marketing budget. This is because most business owners perceive that marketing "costs" money. But this is wrong.... If done correctly, marketing "makes" money. Marketing is an investment, you don't "spend" money on marketing – you "invest" money in marketing. Keep in mind, some marketing methods can actually be costless.

### **"WHO" IS MY CUSTOMER?**

The first rule of marketing is working out "who" you are selling your product to? This means you need to define your market. Who are they, where are they from, what are their similarities and what do they want? You also need to understand your demographic – What are the similar traits of the customers your business services? To work this out you need to know the answers to the following questions:

- o *What is your customer demographic?*
  - *What sex are your customers?*
  - *What age are they?*
  - *What is their income?*
  - *What is their lifestyle?*
  - *Where do they live?*

When you think about this, remember that usually 80% of your business comes from 20% of your customers.

### **WHAT METHOD OF MARKETING SHOULD I USE?**

How do other framers market to their customers? What methods are used? Broken down simply, there are three basic methods of marketing used in our industry -

#### **1. WORD OF MOUTH**

I believe this method of marketing is over-killed. Yes, it does work, but any framer that thinks they can continue to rely on this method alone is still living in the 80's. When I a framer proudly tell me that they only have to rely on "word of mouth", I

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take this as a “cop out” which means in other words “I don’t market at all”. Time will tell whether these businesses will continue to survive or not.

## **2. SIGNAGE**

Signage is important. Signs are essential ways gain attention and convey messages. Most custom frame shops have insufficient signage both inside and out. For merchandising and displays, professional signs are both inexpensive and easy to produce. Even using your home computer to print out price tags is a simple form of signage.

## **3. ADVERTISING**

This is the big one. Most people think of advertising when they think of marketing. Most of us are familiar with methods such as - Letterbox Drops, Brochures, Newspapers, Magazines, Local Newsletters, Television Advertising, Direct-Mail Advertising, Yellow Pages, etc.

When advertising is discussed with most framers, I commonly hear them say - “There’s no way I can afford to spend money on advertising, it’s too expensive!” My response to this is - “How can you afford not to?” Yes’ it’s true, advertising costs money. But it can also be far more expensive not to advertise as well.

### **SO WHEN SHOULD I ADVERTISE?**

Like a lot of retail industries, our business is seasonal - Custom framing is a seasonally orientated business. So annual seasonal celebrations are a good time to advertise, and make the most of these opportunities. Investing money in advertising when “things are quiet” is usually a fruitless exercise. I know we hate to admit this, but well all probably know that the best time to advertise is when you a flat out busy. Obviously this is because consumers are happy spending money, and the “retail wheel” is spinning. You’ll get more “bang for your buck” if you advertise while you are busy - but then again - you may not want the business? As they say - You’ve got to “make hay while the sun shines”.

### **HOW DO I MAKE MY ADVERTISING EFFECTIVE?**

As picture framers and “designers” we really should be able to create our own adverts and brochures. However there are some basic guidelines for creating a good brochure / flyer / advertisement -

- ✓ Always target you customer - who will be reading this advert and will it be relevant to them?
- ✓ Always keep it simple - don’t try and say too much. Don’t “cram it all in” and make sure you allow some comfortable breathing space.
- ✓ Always keep it visual - Show your product, show your shop, show yourself.
- ✓ Always feature your logo - branding is important
- ✓ Always offer an incentive - give them a reason to come in

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- ✓ Always put a time limit on it – a reason to come... NOW! No time limit means they have an excuse to put it off..... Forever!

### **DON'T TRY EVERYTHING**

As previously mentioned, there are many different formats and methods we can use to market & advertise our business. But if you want to see success with advertising, you should only focus on one or two methods of advertising at a time, with consistency. If you constantly change methods and try to use everything, you will probably just get "nothing" as a result.

### **CAN I SERIOUSLY SURVIVE WITHOUT MARKETING?**

Maybe? But keep in mind that complacency & mediocrity is killing our industry. Don't let it kill your business. You can do something about it - Market your business.

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*With over 15 years experience in the framing & graphics industry, Jared Davis CPF, GCF has covered the wholesale, commercial and retail aspects of the business. His previous sales, marketing & training experience gives him an understanding of the changing opportunities for retail businesses, and he offers an up-to-date approach on new methods and techniques now required by today's business owners, to be able to successfully market, merchandise and sell their services to consumers. Jared is also a featured educator at major international industry tradeshow & conventions.*