

Utilizing PR in the marketing mix

Many business disregard PR. But once the target market is defined, and the USP is defined, it is actually very cost effective to use PR. This takes a lot of creativity and is a lot of fun. There are no formulas here, just common sense and creativity. Here are some things that actually worked with some of our client. Take it from there.

Shooing the Robbers Away

A C-Store had a lot of break ins. The local police were called in, given some donuts and a plaque recognizing them)”We support our local Troopers....”) , and a photo was taken with the owners sandwiched between the cops, all hugging, in front of the police car, and right in front of the front door of the C-Store, with the sign clearly in the picture. This photo was then blown up and framed and put right behind the cash register, in the most prominent place that anyone would see. Thieves usually case the joint before breaking in, and this discouraged them.

The Neighbors Green Lawn

A lawn contractor who did applications and weed control, wanted to bring up residential renewals. It was ascertained that the “hot button” for the residential customer (usually the lady) was “what will the neighbors say”. The crews were given a small lawn ornament that was found/devised for this. It had small type (not like contractor signs that say that they did work there, much smaller). It said: We at ABC lawncare recognize a well maintained lawn when we see one..... “

This gift was presented to ANY nice lawn the guys came across, whether it was their customer or not. The result was that our client became recognized as a judge and an expert. During the “presentation ceremony” the lady was asked if she would mind if we took a photo of her receiving the gift on her lawn, a picture was taken, and she was given the opportunity to jot down a few words of thanks etc., and she was asked if it was OK to put it on the wall in the office of ABC lawncare, and to make it public. Later this photo and some text recognizing her, and stating name and address, and some quote from her, was framed, and sent with to her. It is expected that a framed recognition would be put up in a prominent place, and referred to the attention of her friends. Same for the lawn ornament. The same framed photo was put up on a “Wall of Fame” in the office. Those that agreed to share their name (and also had nice things to say about our client) were used as testimonials, and these testimonials became the backbone of all their ads, print, web, brochures etc. By the way, this client reported sales growing substantially, making him almost too busy.

The Fine Print

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The Contractors Parade of Homes

A Contractor wanted to increase his share in the hi-end market. An annual “beautiful home competition” was devised. The judges were public people, architect, art professors from local college, etc. The logistics were done by the company, but not under its name. It was named in honor of the client's father, who had been a contractor, and was presented as a public service and a memorial to him. It was publicized in the local paper for free, as an event, and anyone could easily nominate his house, or another house on the web, or filling out a simple form. There were many categories, such as “price not considered”, “3 BR homes”, “starter homes”, “fixed up homes”, “gardens”, etc.

Anyone nominated got a reply that a photographer would be there at a certain day and time, (it is also possible to ask people to send in floor plans, and photos).

The judges met for one afternoon, reviewed the nominees by category, and if they needed, visited the finalists to make their decisions. So not a lot of time for the judges, plus they got lunch, and exposure to the public.

The event was set in a local hotel lobby or similar. All participants and family were invited to the hall. Judges sat on podium, framed awards were handed out, in each category, including first, second and third places, and honorable mentions, and even “finalist in that category” so everyone was a winner and had something to hang on his wall.

The first prizes got small awards such as a credit for building materials and work for \$500 etc.

The local radio and paper covered the event and published the results.

The wife of the retired dad, who used to run the business got the job of doing this even every year, and she loved it.

The contractor got tons of exposure that helped define him and the company as experts in the area of residential beauty and style.

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