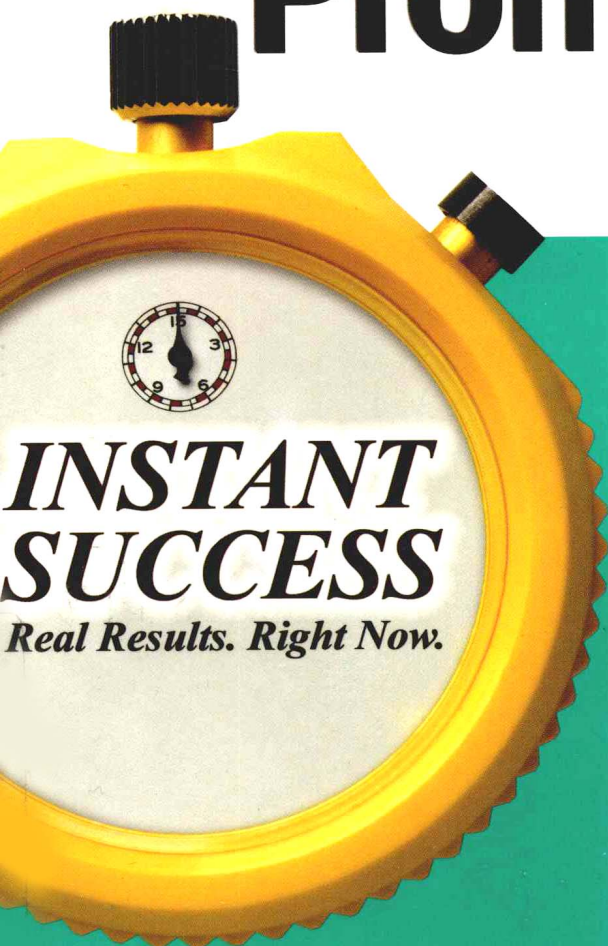


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- Capture more customers and watch your business grow

Bradley J. Sugars

Founder and Chairman of *Action International*,
the World's No. 1 Business Coaching Team

INSTANT PROMOTIONS

BRADLEY J. SUGARS

McGraw-Hill

New York Chicago San Francisco Lisbon London
Madrid Mexico City Milan New Delhi San Juan
Seoul Singapore Sydney Toronto

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1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 FGR/FGR 0 9 8 7 6 5

ISBN 0-07-146665-7

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Sugars, Bradley J.

Instant promotions / Bradley J. Sugars.

p. cm.

ISBN 0-07-146665-7 (alk. paper)

1. Advertising campaigns. I. Title.

HF5837.S84 2006

659.1'13—dc22

2005025417

**To all *Action* Business Coaches,
leaders in every sense of the word.**

■ Introduction

Have you heard the saying; “Build a better mousetrap, and the market will beat a path to your door?”

It’s rubbish.

Many years ago, when we were still well and truly in the industrial age, manufacturers thought all they had to do was to produce a great product and it would sell itself. They thought people would stampede to get their hands on it.

That was before they understood anything about marketing. You see, they had yet to discover the secret that true business success occurs in understanding the needs and desires of the market. Of consumers. Or to put it more plainly, of people.

Business leaders and thinkers then worked out that if they were to identify what it was people needed, then concentrated on producing just that, they would have a ready market.

But even doing this didn’t guarantee them overnight success. It wouldn’t necessarily result in consumers’ falling over each other to get to the store to buy.

Why? Because if they, the consumers, didn’t know the product was available, and if they didn’t know where to go to get it, how could they clamor for it, even if they had the money?

Of course, we know they couldn’t. And so did the smart businesspeople at the time.

They knew they had to *promote* the product and their business.

This is still the position we are in today. How can you expect people to buy from you if they don’t know about you or what you sell? It’s quite simple, isn’t it? In fact, I’d say it’s rather obvious. Yet how many businesses in this advanced technological age—this age of information—actually devote any of their resources to *promotion*?

Sure, they might place a small ad in the local paper, or they might do a mailbox drop of the local area from time to time. And they might have a flashy visible presence, a good-looking shop with a nicely sign-written window, but is that enough?

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Understand this: The key to successful promotion is consistency. You need to develop promotion strategies that promote your business in a consistent, deliberate manner and on a regular basis. That could be every day, every week, every month, or in some situations, all the time. It's a planned activity. It's not something that just happens.

The greatest businesspeople and marketers are not necessarily the smartest or the most innovative. Most simply understand the concept of testing and measuring.

When you are testing and measuring, there is no failure (except the failure to record your results and analyze them). Every step brings you closer to the right formula, and the right approach. If you approach your marketing expecting everything to work the first time, you'll be bitter and disappointed when you discover it doesn't. You may give up before you should.

Remember this: Marketing has certain rules, but it's still largely a matter of trial and error. You give it your best guess, and then find out for sure. It's essential that you meticulously record every result. It's extra work, but you'll be glad when you have a marketing strategy you know will produce results. That confidence comes only from testing and measuring.

There's one more concept I'd like to introduce before we go much further. That is the concept of the *relationship*. It's important that you understand what relationships can do for your business. You see, one of the powerful results promotional campaigns bring to any business is the relationship that develops between the business and its target market. If you enjoy a good relationship with your customers, they will trust what you say to them. They will be more likely to take the advice or recommendation of your salespeople than if the relationship was nonexistent or poor.

There's another very important aspect of the concept of relationship. If you have a good relationship with your target markets, you'll find it very much easier to run promotional campaigns. You'll find your promotional campaigns will become reiterative. They will be easier to repeat. This, in turn, will result in still better relationships with your target markets, in better brand recognition, and in better acceptance in the marketplace.

A little dubious, you think? Not at all. Just look at the big players. Take Coca-Cola, for instance. Do you think this company really needs to invest the millions it does on promotional activities even though the product probably enjoys one of the highest levels of brand recognition anywhere in the world? Of course it does. If Coca-Cola were to back off just a little, the company would lose vital ground to its opposition. It's all about top-of-mind awareness. And because Coca-Cola is a well-recognized company, it enjoys a very good relationship with various target markets. This makes it far easier for it to generate good publicity. Coca-Cola's press releases aren't tossed aside by journalists quite as quickly as those from other lesser-known companies.

Companies like Coca-Cola have been doing this for a very long time, too. And the company does it in a systematic way. Its promotional machine has developed momentum, but the company needs to keep it rolling. If it were to slacken off, it would lose momentum. Of that you can be certain.

So what then does the term *promotion* actually mean? What areas of business are covered by it?

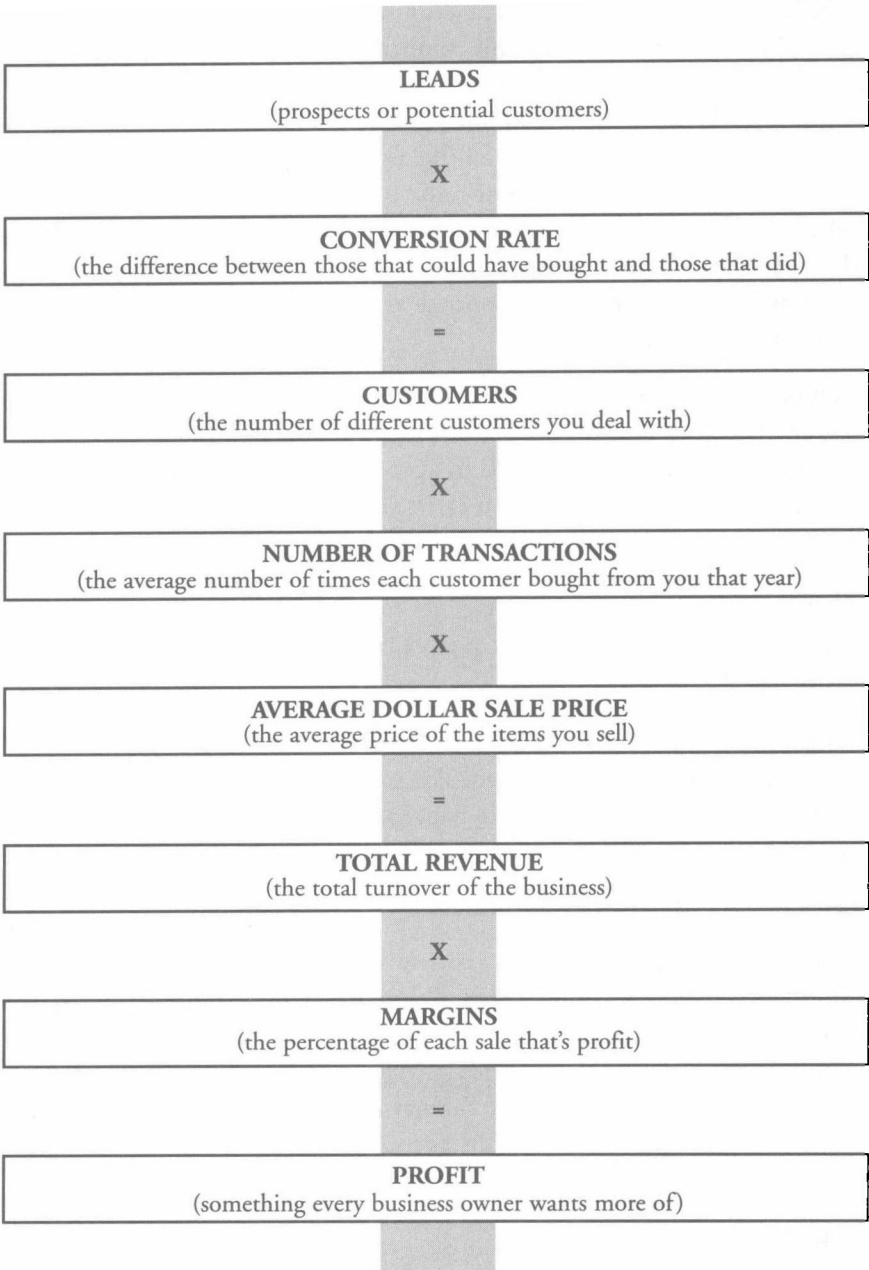
According to the dictionary, the word "promote" means to "help the progress of." Isn't that interesting?

With this in mind, what business activities does this cover? Well, a whole lot actually. But before I mention them, I'm going to remind you first of another very important concept. This is the concept I call the Business Chassis. (Read more about this in my book *Instant Cashflow*.)

Refer to the Business Chassis diagram on the next page.

Promotion works on the first part of the Business Chassis—the leads. Promotional activities are those designed to bring in leads. They involve activities like PR and advertising, and I'm sure most of you will be familiar with these, at least in general terms. But there are other, less obvious, activities that are just as important when it comes to promoting your business. Things like sponsorships, in-store signage, window displays, network functions, and seminars, to mention but a few.

You'll learn all you need to know about these different promotional activities through reading this book.



So, congratulations on deciding to take proactive steps to promote your business. By concentrating on first things first, you'll set in motion a chain of activities that will generate more leads for your business. I personally guarantee it.

This book is designed to give you the inside track on everything you need to know about promoting your business. It aims to provide you with an *instant* guide on how to produce the various promotional items just like the professionals. Once you've read the book, you'll know precisely what it takes to successfully promote your business.

This book is the next step in your marketing success story. From this moment on, you won't have to dream about the day when you're recognized as a leader in your field. You'll know precisely what to do to make it a reality. You'll also know exactly how to go about generating more leads for your business.

■ How to Use This Book

This book is divided into different parts, one for each of the major promotional tools I'll be discussing.

Pick the part that interests you most, jump right in, and begin working through the steps outlined. Each step covers an important aspect of the promotional tool being discussed. You see, there are things you must give careful consideration to before getting carried away doing the “fun” things involved in promoting your business.

Of course, there are certain elements that are common to all the promotional tools being discussed, so these will be handled in detail in Part 6 towards the end of the book. Read them in conjunction with the various parts of the book that deal with particular promotional tools.

You might decide to implement the great ideas explained in this book all at once. Or you might decide to implement them one at a time. But whatever you decide, the important thing is that you'll no longer be blundering around in the dark, unsure whether what you're doing has a chance of bringing in more business or not.

We'll begin by catching up with my mechanic, Charlie, who decided it was time he began promoting his business. Now those who know him will know that he's no business tycoon. He doesn't even have a business head. But he soon realized the need for promotion. Follow his experiences and learn as he did about the role promotion can play in any business. You'll discover, like he did, the power of promotion and how it can turn your business around.

You might also be surprised at how much this exercise will reveal about your business. It may get you thinking about important issues that have never crossed your mind before. If some of this information is new to you, don't be concerned—there's never been a better time to start promoting your business.

Make sure you make notes as you go along. When you come to designing your own promotional tools, you'll find it useful referring back to them. You'll find proven examples and ideas that, when combined with your new knowledge, will bring results.

Now it's time to get started—there are customers out there waiting to deal with you. All you need is the right form of promotion.

■ Charlie Learns the Power of Promotion

Over the years I had gotten to know Charlie, my mechanic, very well. He had always done an extremely good job on servicing my cars, and as far as I was concerned, his mechanical knowledge was first-rate.

Being a satisfied customer, I'd always been quick to refer my friends and acquaintances to him. And I've every reason to believe other satisfied customers would be doing the same.

I watched with more than a little interest as his business grew. He now employs four mechanics who are also beginning to gain something of a reputation for themselves.

However, over the last few months, Charlie has begun to talk frankly with me about matters other than cars. He started hinting that all was not quite as well as he'd like as far as his business was concerned. Then, one day when I was having new tires mounted on my car, he began asking me what he could do to improve the viability of his business. I responded by taking him to visit a few of my clients, the intention being that he could see for himself what others are doing as far as managing their businesses is concerned.

The end result was that he asked me to become his Coach. I agreed and began by exploring various options he had to increase his number of leads. Read about this in my book *Instant Leads*.

Charlie was delighted and couldn't wait until our next session, which would focus on promoting his business. And neither could I.

So it was with more than a little excitement that I pulled up outside his garage, parked the car, and headed for the office door.

"Good morning, Brad," he shouted. He had heard the rumble of my car's engine as it idled.

"Good morning, Charlie. How are things?"

"Good. Come on in. I can't wait to get started."

His small office had been prepared for my visit—the usually cluttered desk

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was clear, two chairs were waiting on the same side of the desk, and coffee was boiling.

“You’re eager to get started this morning,” I quipped as he showed me into the office. I could tell he wasn’t going to talk cars first, and I wasn’t sure whether I was glad or sad. I always looked forward to visiting Charlie precisely because he was a fountain of knowledge when it came to cars, and I really enjoyed our discussions. However, I was beginning to sense he now looked forward to my visits for a similar reason, although now the subject was business, not cars.

“Brad, I’m now really eager to step my business up a gear. What are we going to work on this time?”

“It’s now time we think about promoting your business, Charlie. You need to put in place strategies aimed at letting as many people as possible know what you can do for them.”

“Great. I’ve always liked the idea of promoting my garage. I think I’ll be good at that too. What’s it take?”

“It’s a little more involved than that. But don’t worry, I’m going to help you right from the beginning. You see, there’s nothing mystical about promoting a business. It’s pretty straightforward and logical, once you know how. But first, can I ask you what your competitors are doing that you feel is effective?”

“Let me think—Johnny’s Servo produces a newsletter that he drops in the glove box of every car he services, and that seems to work quite well. Customers of mine have mentioned it to me. Then there’s the Tire and Mechanical guy down the road who always seems to be distributing brochures. They look good and customers like them for the special offers he advertises.”

“That’s great, Charlie. Now, do your competitors affect you directly, or is there enough business out there for you all?”

“I guess there’s never enough business, Brad. You know, I’d sure like to have a bigger slice of the pie, but how would I cope? Then on the other hand, I never know from one week to the next how busy I’m going to be. If I could just get a better handle on that, I’d be making huge progress. But the bottom line is, sure, my competitors do affect my business. I know when they’re running special deals, and I don’t get their advertising material—my workshop is my barometer!”

“OK, Charlie, what I want you to do now is tell me what three things come to mind when I mention the word ‘clients.’ What springs to mind?”

“Money, work, and being able to meet my obligations. Is that what you mean?”

“Yeah, that’s just fine. Now, some of the clients I’ve worked with have been limited by the type of marketing they can do. For example, optometrists can’t by law advertise to their past customers to get them to come back for an eye test for a period of two years. Is there anything that you can’t do in relation to advertising and marketing?”

“No, nothing like that, Brad. The only thing limiting me is my lack of business knowledge.”

Even though this line of questioning would probably be thought of as boring and mundane to Charlie, I could tell he was not losing interest. But I could tell he was beginning to wonder where all this was going.

“OK, Charlie, I’m nearly done—with this process anyway. Last question—do you have any unconverted prospects?”

“What do you mean, Brad?”

“Sorry, I should have explained. Unconverted prospects are people who made contact with you, for a quote or an idea of what might be wrong with their cars for instance, yet never came back to have the job done. They’re the people who you never did end up doing business with.”

“Oh yes, I have plenty of those! But don’t ask me how many or who they are. I wouldn’t have a clue.”

“Well, this is your next major lesson in marketing, Charlie. *Always* keep contact details of all your prospects. You see, by doing so you’ll be building up a fantastic, and priceless, database of people who are interested in what you can do for them. It’s a resource many businesses pay good money to get ahold of. And it’s something you can base your entire marketing effort on.”

“How do I do that, Brad?”

“There are no hard-and-fast rules. You can do it any way you feel comfortable

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with. Start by drawing up a simple form that has headings such as name, address, telephone number, make of car, registration number, nature of initial inquiry, date, outcome, and date of initial and repeat purchases. This can be entered into your computer or it can be stored alphabetically in a file—whatever suits you best. But whatever you do, start collecting details *right now*.”

Charlie was beginning to enjoy himself. I could tell he wasn’t feeling as insecure now as when I when I first arrived. He could follow the logic of what we were discussing.

“I never knew business could actually be fun, Brad. I’m beginning to enjoy myself already.”

“That’s the whole point—it *must* be fun. Why else would you get involved? Far better to just get a job if you weren’t going to have fun running your own business. So let’s get right in and have some fun. What do you say, Charlie?”

“Now you’re talking. I sense that you’ve got something up your sleeve, Brad.”

“I do. I’m now going to show you, step-by-step, how to actually go about putting together various publications that will bring you in more business. And on top of that, they’re fun to do.”

“Sounds great, Brad. What are they?”

“I’m talking about press releases, direct mail, brochures, flyers, and office stationery. But don’t be alarmed—they’re easy to do, and you’ll have a great deal of fun putting them together. And no, they’re not the sort of things only professional graphic design gurus can do! You can and should do it yourself, and I’m now going to show you how.”

INSTANT PROMOTIONS

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Part 1

I Press Releases

Charlie, the first thing we'll look at today is a marketing tool called a press release. Some call it a media release or a news release. It's the same thing. Got that?"

"Yeah, man. No worries. But isn't that something those fancy PR-types need to do?"

"Not really, Charlie. Once you know how, it's very easy. Not only that, they can be a really effective way of getting expensive publicity for your business, for free."

"Yes, I realize how powerful they can be. That's why I always assumed they need to be produced by expensive PR firms. And I never really had the money to pay for that."

"There are lots of businesses that have the same idea, Charlie. And that's why when you begin producing your own, you'll gain an important advantage over your opposition. So, let's get started, shall we?"

What Is a Successful Press Release?

Simply speaking, any press release that first gets published, and second leads to increased store traffic and sales, is successful. But press releases aren't just used to increase business. They play a very important role in helping to change perceptions or counter negative publicity a business may have suffered.

Used properly, press releases are incredibly powerful promotional tools, and every business should make use of them.

Your aim, when writing a press release, is to get free publicity. Whether you're moving to a new location or launching a new product, if you can generate free media coverage, it's well worth it.