

HOW TO MARKET  
YOUR BUSINESS  
TO THE TOP!

POWER  
PROMOTING

J E F F R E Y

S U S S M A N

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# **POWER PROMOTING**

## **How to Market Your Business to the Top!**

**Jeffrey Sussman**



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# **POWER PROMOTING**

To my wife and best friend, Barbara

To my mother and stepfather, Flora and Donald

To Eileen and Tom

For my niece, Katie:  
a future filled with success, fulfillment, and happiness

In memory of Peter Ramsay

# Acknowledgments

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And finally, my thanks to Tom D'Amico, mapmaker and navigator.

# Your Business and This Book

**A**re you about to start a business? Have you recently started a business that isn't doing as well as it should? Do you have a business that was once successful but is now suffering from diminishing sales and profits?

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, this book can help you achieve success and turn around a business that is failing. It will show you how to think creatively about promoting your business, and how to turn promotions into increased sales and profits. In addition, it offers lessons on becoming your own publicist: you will learn how to use publicity as a valuable marketing tool. By example and prescription, this book will help you to promote your business.

In fact, this book will show you how you can use the kinds of methods that large companies use to promote their products and/or services. While large companies spend millions of dollars on such promotions, the promotions in this book will cost you comparatively little. For years, my clients have been spending anywhere from a hundred dollars to several thousand dollars on individual promotions to market their successful businesses!

When you have finished reading this book and mastered its lessons, you will be well on your way to achieving new levels of success. Even if you have little or no training in marketing and

public relations, you can learn to be an effective promoter of your business.

In fact, if you have an entrepreneurial spirit and great business ideas, but little expertise in turning your ideas into marketing promotional successes, this book will help you to execute promotions that get profitable results.

### **WHAT'S INSIDE**

This book will help you reach your goals by explaining how to identify your markets. Both conventional and unconventional markets are targeted. Next, it teaches how to compete with others who are selling the same products/services.

Following chapters give examples and prescriptions for promoting your business. You will learn how to create provocative press releases that get results; which media to target, including both trade and consumer; and how to set up media interviews and how to conduct yourself during such interviews.

Once news and/or feature stories appear, you will learn how to market that publicity through direct mail campaigns that include reprints, solicitation letters, Rolodex cards, and brochures. I will explain how to buy a targeted mailing list. In addition, you will learn how to write, publish, and distribute marketing-oriented newsletters, and how to create brochures and solicitation letters that get results. Once the direct mail process has been completed, you will learn how to write telephone marketing scripts and make follow-up phone calls, or hire college students to make scripted phone calls.

Once new business has been acquired, you will learn how to promote that new business to get even more business. In fact, you will learn how to maintain this process for as long as you are in business.

You will also learn how to use coupons, how to cross-promote your products/services, how to participate with other businesses in joint promotions, how to create tie-ins with related products/services, how to barter for free advertising, how to create media events,

## INTRODUCTION

how to work with well-known charities to promote your business by generating charitable income, and how to put together contests that get media attention and promote sales. For example, I organized an unusual contest for my foot-care client. It was called The Most Beautiful Feet in America Contest. More than 400 women showed up at a hotel ballroom to show off their tootsies, each hoping to win a one-year foot modeling contract. The winner's feet appeared on product packages and in-store posters. Since feet had never been the subject of a beauty contest, we got a foot up in a new area. The result was an extraordinary amount of publicity that included international coverage by CNN, local and regional television news coverage, syndicated newspaper columns, national magazines, trade magazines, and dozens of daily newspapers. People were invited to send a self-addressed, stamped, #10 envelope to us, and we mailed each of them a brochure of tips for fit feet and a \$3-off discount coupon for the purchase of any two foot-care products! Not only was the media coverage dramatic, but sales jumped just as dramatically too.

No matter what you are trying to sell, there are always new and unusual ways to market and promote it!

In addition, I will explain how to put on seminars at no cost to yourself, and what kinds of trade shows, exhibits, and fairs to participate in; how to create grand openings that resemble Hollywood premieres; and how to sell items that will further market your products/services such as t-shirts, toys, and other premium incentives. I will even explain how to host a media contest for celebrity look-alikes, and how to raise money for local charities so that you will benefit from "doing good." Altogether, this book will provide you with a complete and, in some instances, adventurous blueprint for reaching the largest possible customer base.

## WHY I CAN HELP YOU PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS

In a career that has spanned more than twenty-five years, I have helped virtually every kind of business—from manufacturers to ser-

vice businesses—reach new levels of success. In addition, I have owned and operated a wide assortment of businesses, including an art gallery, a day camp, a publishing company, a book store, a health club, a gymnastics school, and—of course—a marketing and public relations firm. For several years, I have also been teaching two marketing and promotion courses at The New School for Social Research in New York City.

I feel especially qualified to help you not only because I have operated my own businesses, but because I have also succeeded in promoting the businesses of others. Indeed, my combined experiences have given me the requisite skills and perspective for helping others.

In addition, I had worked for several marketing and public relations agencies for many years before I decided to open my own agency. I decided, perhaps as you have, that I no longer wanted to work for others and no longer wanted to waste my time in office politics. Like you, I decided to chart my own course.

While working for other marketing and public relations agencies, I acquired the necessary skills to promote both large and small companies. I learned valuable lessons while working on behalf of some very large companies and trade associations: Kentucky Fried Chicken, Direct Mail Marketing Association, Hueblein, Nissan, Mattel Electronics, several movie studios, The Sole Leather Council, The Mexican Tourist Bureau, The Concorde airplane, The City of New York, various politicians (Bella Abzug and Ed Koch, among others), Bertolli Olive Oil, Ronzoni Spaghetti, Perugina Chocolates, The World Almanac & Book of Facts, Dino DeLaurentis Foods, The Neighborhood Cleaners' Association, and various others.

By the time I opened my own company, I had discovered that no other marketing and public relations agencies were specializing in small to mid-size companies. Such companies, with their limited funds, cannot afford the hefty retainers of \$3,000 to \$10,000 a month that large agencies routinely charge. I decided to keep my

overhead low, and charge retainers that small to mid-size businesses could afford.

Thus far, I have helped numerous clients attain new levels of success, and I have helped others as a teacher. Now I want to help thousands more through this book. More than half of all businesses fail within their first five years. If I can help reduce that mortality rate, I will have performed a useful service, and achieved my own kind of success.

### LEARN FROM MY CLIENTS' SUCCESSES

Here are some examples of the kinds of clients that I have helped. They represent a wide range of professional services, manufacturing, wholesale distribution, and retail businesses.

*Mr. Foot Care:* I helped a foot-care products company go from being a successful mail-order company to being one of the leading distributors of foot-care products sold in major retail outlets! In fact, after three years, my client's products were in every drugstore chain, every mass-market retailer, and every superstore—not just in the United States, but in countries all over the globe! As if that were not enough, my client was also able to capture 15% of the Japanese foot-care market! Not bad for a mid-size American company.

The president of the company contacted me in 1990, and I put together a marketing and public relations program for him. The bare-bones program consisted of sending out photos and press releases about his products to the drugstore, mass-market retailing, and chain-store trade publications. As a result of my efforts, stories about his products and/or company appeared in print every month. In addition, I arranged for business trend stories to appear.

With only one salesman to service the entire country, my client was able to make dramatic headway using the tools that I provided him. After stories appeared, I collected reprints of those stories into portfolios which the salesman would leave with the buyers of each chain store he called on. The buyers had already read about the

products, and it is obviously easier to sell something someone has read about than something about which they know nothing. The portfolio of articles served to reinforce what the buyers had already read; furthermore, the collections of articles served to impress the buyers with our growing success, and they naturally wanted to boost their own sales and profits by selling my client's products.

In addition, I mailed buyers a one-page letter every month; the letter consisted of brief paragraphs describing how well we were doing, which stores had ordered our products, and facts about the increasing market for our thirty foot-care products. The combination of monthly trade publicity and direct mail pieces reaped the kinds of rewards we were all working to accomplish: In three years, my client reached his goal of success.

The owner of the company subsequently sold the mail order side of his business for a substantial sum. While the retail business continues to operate profitably, my client has now exercised his option to pursue another dream: he designs and builds luxury double-hull sailboats that sell for about \$145,000. Once he has turned that business into another successful enterprise, he will undoubtedly turn another of his dreams into a successful reality.

*Private Eyes:* By generating a regular barrage of publicity, I was able to make Check-a-Mate Investigations of New York City the most successful premarital and marital investigation service in the United States!

Within four months of getting Check-a-Mate as a client, I got its principals on ABC's *20/20*. During that period, I also got them two major stories in *The New York Times*. One appeared in the Sunday edition, the other on the front page of the second section during the week. Within the next few years, they appeared on virtually every daytime television talk show, including *Oprah*, *Donahue*, *Maury*, *Geraldo*, *Jenny*, *Montel*, etc. They were also seen on prime-time television, including *Larry King Live*, *Dateline NBC*, *Eye to Eye*

## INTRODUCTION

with *Connie Chung*, *Prime Time*, *A Current Affair*, *Hard Copy*, and more. Dozens and dozens of magazines and newspapers also did stories, and Check-a-Mate became more successful than any of us had anticipated.

I next suggested that they begin to license others to open Check-a-Mate offices in various parts of the country. I sent a press release to *Business Week*, which ran a story entitled "When Prince Charming Has A Rap Sheet." A subsequent tidal wave of inquiries from retired police officers flooded Check-a-Mate's phone lines.

The business continues to be a cash cow, for infidelity never takes a vacation.

*Designing Women:* Through my efforts, I helped two women get a million-dollar-plus interior design commission!

In 1990, two creative women contacted me because they wanted to make the commercial world a more attractive place while also making a decent living for themselves. One cold winter morning, I met them for coffee at a diner in New York's midtown. They told me what they wanted to accomplish, as well as their individual stories. One had been a dance therapist, the other a buyer in the garment business. They had left their respective careers, having suffered proverbial burn-out. They simultaneously went to work for a commercial interior design company where they became friends. After a year, they agreed that even without formal design training, they could open their own commercial interior design company. Having incorporated a business, they utilized their contacts and were able to get some small showroom clients in the Empire State Building and a few other buildings. They designed showrooms and offices for a handbag company, a costume jewelry company, a lingerie company, and a few shoe companies.

After meeting with them and learning their goals, I put together a marketing and public relations program for them. A month later, articles and ads that I had created began appearing in print. I sent reprints of those articles and ads to a specific list of real estate

lawyers in New York City. One of those lawyers recommended my clients to a client of his, China's largest manufacturer of exported shoes.

My client was signed to remodel and design a luxurious office and showroom building that the Chinese company had purchased on a fashionable Manhattan street. The shoe company had earmarked \$1.25 million for the interior design project!

Six months after getting that commission, my client completed the project, and I arranged for several stories about their work to be published. I made reprints of those stories, and mailed each one along with a brochure and covering letter to several hundred shoe companies. As a result, my client got three additional shoe clients, each of whom required large, new showrooms and offices. Not bad for two women who had no formal training as interior designers!

Incidentally, when the absence of certain skills became an obstacle to their carrying out projects, they simply hired others to execute the appropriate tasks. Even so, they shared a sense of color, design, and proportion that was both exquisite and superbly intuitive.

*Teaching Success:* How one classroom suggestion led to \$300,000 of orders in just two hours! This inspiring example of success is taken from my college-level course, "How To Market and Promote Your Small Business." I mention it because you are a student of this book, and I hope you will enjoy the kinds of success that many of my students have enjoyed.

One of my students had been a New York City high-school art teacher for twenty-five years. He had retired and decided to pursue a second career as a designer of attractive and intelligently crafted presentation cases for photographers and architects. He brought several samples to class one evening, and we were all impressed. I suggested he take several of those samples to a photographic trade show at the Javits Center, not as an exhibitor, but as someone who could show others his handiwork.

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He returned to class the following week, and we were all eager to hear what had happened.

"I showed my cases to several exhibitors. Two of them, European camera manufacturers, placed orders for \$300,000 worth of cases. They plan to use the cases as premium incentives."

The entire class rose and gave him a round of applause. He had, after all, made more money in just two hours than during his last five years of teaching! Hopefully, this book can give you ideas on how to increase your business!

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# Identifying Your Market

**I**t's extremely difficult, if not impossible, to sell air-conditioners at the North Pole, to sell diet books to people who can't get enough to eat, to sell parachutes to submarine sailors, or to sell electric heating blankets to nomadic tribes in subtropical deserts. Obviously, one must choose appropriate markets for one's products/services.

If your promotions are to result in increased sales and profits for your business, you must identify both conventional and unconventional markets. This chapter will demonstrate, by example and prescription, how to identify those markets that are likely targets for your promotional efforts.

I hope that each of the following examples gives you food for thought, for you too can find new and effective ways to market your products and services, using creativity instead of large sums of money.

Obviously, it is essential that you identify not only existing markets, but also new markets that no one has yet thought to go after.