

SCORE CPA March 2011 Newsletter

People Centre'D on Diabetes Forms a Community Awareness Organization with help from SCORE

Diabetes is a rising epidemic throughout the United States. The number of people diagnosed with diabetes has increased almost four-fold in the last 25 years and the number continues to increase at an alarming rate.

Central Pennsylvania is no exception - diabetes is affecting more and more residents and placing an ever-increasing strain on patients, their families, health care professionals and community services ... but there is hope.

In the Centre Region of Pennsylvania a new organization has been formed to address the issue from a community level. People Centre'D on Diabetes (PCOD) was formed by a group of Centre County residents with a common interest in improving the lives of friends and neighbors living with or at risk of diabetes. According to its President, Sue Trainor, "Our group is composed of people with diabetes, family members of those with diabetes, health care providers and other community members with an interest in the growing epidemic of diabetes in central Pennsylvania."

Trainor pointed out that, "PCOD believes improving health is not just the prerogative of health care professionals, but must be the responsibility of all. Diabetes is a community issue and tackling the challenges of diabetes requires, needs a community effort."

As noted in their charter, community empowerment is PCOD's mission and their goals are focused on educating people about diabetes and facilitating activities in the community so individuals and institutions enable those with diabetes to live well, and help prevent others from becoming diabetic. **PCOD's website is <http://www.pcod.info>**

SCORE Central Pennsylvania (SCORE CPA) Chapter 618 assists area entrepreneurs and small business owners in a four-county area with information on managing their business challenges. SCORE volunteer counselors provide confidential, free face-to-face and email counseling. Last year, SCORE provided services to over 270 small business owners and people interested in starting a business.

John Vincenti, SCORE Chapter Chair and Counselor to PCOD said Sue Trainor and Jane McDowell applied to SCORE with the intent to develop and submit an IRS 1023 application form for a not-for-profit 501(c)3 educational organization. Vincenti said PCOD was well organized and had already incorporated within the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. "Their application was prepared by several individuals within PCOD that addressed each section by their expertise from organization issues to educational program development."

PCOD met with SCORE for several months and used several different ways to communicate, from face-to-face and email interactions and even the U.S. mail. PCOD members with SCORE reviewed each section of the IRS 1023 application until PCOD was satisfied with it and formally applied.

"With SCORE CPA's assistance our submission to the Internal Revenue Service was received, reviewed and approved within three months of application," noted President Trainor. "Without SCORE's assistance and attention to detail we definitely would not have received the approval in such a short time."

Since 1964, SCORE has helped more than 8 million aspiring entrepreneurs and small business owners through counseling and business workshops. More than 11,000 volunteer business counselors in 384 chapters serve their communities through entrepreneur education dedicated to the formation, growth and success of small businesses. For more information about starting or operating a small business, call SCORE Central Pennsylvania at 814-234-9415. SCORE CPA can be found on the Web at www.scorecpa.org or nationally at www.score.org.

Spotlight



Let's think Spring! March 20 will be the first day of Spring. After this cold, windy, icy, sleet, snow and rainy winter, SCORE CPA spotlights SPRING! A welcome change!



Free Business Advertising!

Take advantage of SCORE CPA's Business Resource Directory. Complete the on-line survey to make your business service known and available to SCORE CPA clients. To participate, click on [Business Resource Directory](#).

Business Tip Marketing on a Shoestring Budget

Article reprinted from (<http://www.e-myth.com/cs/user/print/post/marketing-on-a-shoestring-budget>) - [E-Myth Business Coach](#)

You are a small business owner and, like most of your fellow entrepreneurs, you're feeling squeezed from every side. The cost of doing business, being in business and getting more business just seems to be going up.

When you stop to consider your marketing and advertising budget, it can be distressing and one of the classic reactions in economic downturns is to "batten down the hatches." In other words, cut costs and protect your business as much as possible. Unfortunately, this often includes advertising and promotion costs. The downside to that is that it's difficult to get more business if you don't market yourself – and when things are rough is when you need business the most!

While cutting promotional activity may appear to be an inevitable consequence and an unfortunate choice that has to be made, the truth is that any business can be effectively marketed even on a limited and "downsized" budget.

They Can't Do That, Can They?

Many start-ups and "solopreneurs" take the low-cost/no-cost approach to marketing and lead generation out of necessity. But this is a strategy that isn't limited to those brave souls who have no choice. Any business (of any size) can effectively implement a marketing plan that leverages a variety of inexpensive (or even free) practices and tactics for getting the business name and brand out there.

Creativity and imagination are big pluses when jumping into the realm of low (or no) cost marketing. Does this mean you have to be some kind of marketing genius or born guerrilla marketer to make this a successful strategy? Not at all, and the success of tens of thousands of entrepreneurs is testimony of the potential any business owner has for making this approach work.

First, You Have to Have a Plan

At E-Myth Worldwide we have a very specific definition for "marketing." We describe it as the research and analysis of your customers and the formulation of strategies and tactics that will shape your lead generation activities. In other words, strictly speaking, marketing is *not* advertising or promotion – it's what you do to develop your strategy and your plan. Once you have a plan you can focus on the tactics for carrying out that plan.

Marketing your business on a shoestring budget requires the same strategic thinking and planning. Even if you are engaged in a no-cost activity to promote your company or generate leads, it will still exact a cost of time and effort. Why expend your valuable time and effort in an unfocused and random attempt to garner more business? Regardless of the cost of any given tactic or activity, it must be an integral part of a strategic marketing plan in order to generate the most return on your investment.

I had a client share with me that he had recently "done some marketing" over the previous weekend. Somewhat tentatively I asked what, exactly, he had done. Apparently he had rented a list of addresses located near his place of business and mailed a couple hundred postcards to the names on the list. I then confided to him that he had actually *committed a random act of lead generation*, but that it didn't really constitute marketing

While his intent was good, and the cost of the mailing was relatively nominal, the amount of time and effort combined with the actual cost far outweighed the response he garnered. No one called; no one came to his shop. His only consolation was that somewhere in his neighborhood there might still be a few hundred postcards of his lying about.

So what are the minimal considerations for an effective marketing plan? Here is a short list of questions you should answer for yourself when developing your strategy:

- **What is the "Big Picture"?** What are we hoping to achieve overall? How does this strategy fit into our long-term goals and objectives? How does this marketing approach fit in with our marketing mind-set and company culture? Is this a long-term or even permanent strategy, or is this simply a one-time effort?
- **Marketing objectives?** What is it that we are striving to achieve? More sales? More sales of specific products or services? Re-conversions or repeat business? Qualified leads or just any kind of lead? Greater awareness of our business or brand?
- **Who is the audience?** Existing customers? New prospects? Targeted prospects? Potential referral sources? Who are they and where are they?
- **What is my unique selling proposition (USP)?** What is our "promise"? How is our product or service offering different than the other options our prospects have to choose from? What can we do for them and how?
- **What is my brand personality?** How does our choice of tactics, or low-cost lead generation activities, reflect our brand? Is the channel, or medium, being used consistent with how we want to be seen and perceived?

With the answers to these questions you can then take the next step of determining what particular tactics and activities fit in best with your strategy and plan — and then run with it!

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Chapter #618 serves Centre, Clearfield, Huntingdon, and Mifflin Counties. Its members and clients are accepted without regard to age, ancestry, color, disability or handicap, national origin, race, religious creed, sex, sexual orientation, or veteran status. SCORE CPA 2820 East College Avenue, Suite E, State College, PA 16801 Phone/Fax/24/7 Answering Machine 814-234-9415 (Centre County). Other offices: Clearfield 814-765-8987, Huntingdon County 814-643-3126 and Mifflin County 717-2348-6713 SCORE CPA Newsletter is free to anyone interested in business development issues. Tell a friend. Give us your comments. Send them to scorecentralpennsylvania@scorecpa.org

Let the Promoting Begin!

Any business can generate some leads by randomly engaging in some type of promotion, or lead generation, activity. The results, however, will never be as comprehensive or as rewarding as they can be with a well thought out strategy and plan. But a plan is incomplete without some specific tactics designed to effectively carry it out.

The list of ideas for low and no cost lead generation activities can be quite large. We have highlighted seven that have been shown to be very effective in the real world for real businesses:

1. **Trade services** — Bartering didn't go out with the last century and it is still a viable option for many small business owners providing your prospective recipient needs, and recognizes the value of, your product or service.
2. **Offer free information** — While these days this is typically done on a company's website, providing and actively offering information that is valuable to your customers and prospective customers is a great way to not only generate interest in your business, but to position yourself as a valuable resource and authority.
3. **Share customers** — Teaming up with non-competing businesses that share the same customer base is a time-honored way to generate more business with no effort on your part. Be sure to do the same for your colleague with the same enthusiasm you expect them to exhibit for your own business.
4. **Ask for referrals** — Not exactly a stroke of genius, but this simple act is probably one of the most overlooked — or intimidating — sources of new business. Overlooked because we often assume that happy customers will recommend us without being asked; intimidating for reasons ranging from not knowing what to say, to not being confident of your own competence and value as a business.
5. **Cold call** — While we understand that not everyone is suited for this task it can be a surprisingly effective tactic for finding new customers. For many it is simply a matter of numbers: if you call a certain number of people you will generate an approximate number of leads as a result. The better your list of candidates and the better your presentation, the greater your number of new prospects.
6. **Write** — This can be done in the form of articles for trade publications read by your target audience, a newsletter sent to a list of customers or likely customers via email, or as special reports, white papers, or eBooks made available on yours or someone else's web site. The more your company name is seen and read by your prospects, the greater the awareness of your business.
7. **Create an event** — Have a client appreciation celebration in an outdoor location and publicize it beforehand. Create a "national holiday" and invite the public to participate via press releases to the local media and influential web sites. Be both creative and bold by conducting a stunt of some type *a la* Sir Richard Branson! The key here is to make sure people see it or know about it, and that they are the right people.

While it is critical and crucial to develop your strategy and your plan, the truly essential piece in this formula is to *do something!* Do not be afraid to experiment, to try things that may not produce results, to stretch the bounds of your own thinking around marketing. Marketing is one part science, one part craft, and one part audacity. And the beauty of a well-executed plan is that it can cost you little or nothing! Which is a good thing for any business, any time.

Business Improvement Workshops

Business Basics Workshops every 2nd Tuesday (monthly) pay a pre-registration fee. It will be refunded if you attend the workshop.

Beyond the Basics Workshops are fee based. Check the specific work for the amount.

Preregistration discounts can save you money, pre-register. Note: Workshop is Free to SCORE CPA "active" clients!

- **Writing a Better Business Plan**—March 15, 2011
- **Ten Ways to Finding New Customers**—April 19, 2011

Note: The April 19th workshop is being sponsored by **THE UPS STORE, 19 Colonnade Way** - **FREE to anyone if you pre-register.**

There is a fee of \$15.00 per person after deadline or on the day of the workshop. This is non-refundable.

All workshops are in Centre County, 9:30am –Noon at the Nittany Bank, 2541 East College Avenue, State College PA (near the Nittany Mall)

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