

# The Orangeville & Area Small Business Enterprise Centre (SBEC)

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## Ways to Promote Your Product/Service

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# Ways to Promote Your Product or Service

## Summary

The marketing budget deserves careful consideration, because it not only serves to create market impressions; it is expected to generate revenues. Understanding the kinds of impacts that can be expected from the various print and electronic media will help to manage this element of business expense.

An important precaution is to understand that each market segment may react differently to the way that a promotional message is presented. With all due respect for human nature, an exciting, aggressive or even humorous message may be perceived as offensive or insensitive even though it may be grammatically and politically correct.

## The Print and Graphic Arts Media

Business cards and stationery are effective, inexpensive and professional promotional tools but use of these items should be restricted to personal contacts. Rubber stamps or staples are for impersonal, routine tasks and should not be used in any way with this media. Advertising specialties such as pens, key rings and calendars acknowledge goodwill in the form of a small gift, but these convey more image than information.

Local newspapers are preferred by many retailers because it provides maximum flexibility in terms of budget, timing, coupon feedback, product and price mix. The perception rate is high because the reader can get more than one impact from the same message.

Brochures, posters and packaging are cost effective ways to provide a combination of moving and static visual impact with the most versatile applications. Brochures inform, posters inspire and packaging validates the customer's buying decision.

Catalogues used by the mass merchandisers are expensive and designed for specific, targeted markets. The high quality graphics makes the catalogue a reference product with portable but inflexible information. The catalogue style of advertising is more frequently used in promotional sales flyers.

Magazines are more expensive than newspaper or radio, but have the advantage of a more specific audience of subscribers (i.e. teens, women, crafters, etc.) Manufacturers tend to use this media to reinforce their brand names and trademarks in the market.

Yellow pages provide an interactive link to the primary electronic media; the telephone and the fax. The toll free 1-800 service invites extended markets, and implies modern services.

Increased use of cellular telecommunications is expected to influence a new wave of creative marketing tactics.

## The Electronic Media

Radio is cost effective and the audiences are routinely loyal to a station's program format. The lack of visual impact makes the message more personal and conversational. Promotional events often build on the interactive links with the audience. Radio messages tend to develop a personality and convey a friendly, local relationship.

Television captures more audience time than any other medium and it has the powerful advantages of visual impact. It is generally believed that as much as 90% of a person's total perception is the result of images conveyed to the brain in one way or another.

The T.V. commercial is targeted at a home audience in a relaxed and suggestive atmosphere, by using short, repetitive, and high impact messages. The T.V. remote control has changed viewing habits such that commercial spots are now formatted in clusters of ten and fifteen second clips.

There are an increasing number of online directories available with which you can list your business. Not only are many of these directories available at reasonable rates, they allow customers from all parts of the province, country and world easy access to your business. Social media tools such as Facebook, YouTube, Twitter and Linked are quickly becoming important business marketing tools and they provide a cost effective and valuable way of reaching new customers.

**Yellow.ca (Canada)** - is Canada's online directory designed to promote business in Canada. Recognizing the "commercial potential" that the World Wide Web offers, Yellow.ca has created a cost-effective registration that allows every Canadian business an opportunity to market their company on the Internet. You can contact Yellow.ca at: [www.yellow.ca](http://www.yellow.ca)

## **The Personal Efforts**

Networking and Word of Mouth referrals are an effective way to reduce out of pocket costs and cultivate a clientele. The valued opinion of influential customers is the most important and cost effective promotion that a business can develop. Markets never buy anything; only customers buy products and services.

Community involvement expands the personal network of contacts and marketing intelligence; however, this should be the by-product of genuine interest in the community.

Special promotions and events can be made to work in concert with any one or a combination of the above methods. This can be in the form of door prizes, Welcome Wagon gifts, free passes, free coffee, or even honouring a competitor's coupons.

## **The Market/Media Mix**

Since most media have a range of light, medium and heavy users, the challenge for business is to anticipate the customer's needs in terms of typical behaviour patterns in human nature. Each media has a variety of strengths and weaknesses to consider. In some market situations a dollar spent on the print media can out pull a dollar spent in the electronic media and vice versa.

Concurrent planning must include methods to compare results with costs and competition. Even the smallest advertising budget will benefit with a marketing plan because it remains a vital part of the **Business Plan**.

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