



## Ask SCORE for Business Advice

Green Bay Press Saturday, Nov. 22, 2008

### **Guerrilla Marketing** by Tina Dettman-Bielefeldt

Holiday shopping has started in earnest, and small businesses are looking to attract as much of that business as possible. Al Lautenslager, author of *Guerrilla Marketing in 30 Days* and a SCORE seminar presenter, believes that effective marketing is the key to success. He encourages entrepreneurs to develop a strong marketing plan.

“DO NOT CUT marketing as an expense even in tough times. In tough times, marketing is most needed. If you haven’t started, start now,” Lautenslager recommended.

Recognized as one of top marketing experts in the nation, Lautenslager has the experience to back his advice. He has started numerous businesses and is a multi-winner of business of the year awards from various organizations. He is a consultant, author, speaker, and entrepreneur. His articles are featured on more than 200 on-line sites. Lautenslager teaches the Guerrilla Marketing concept of using unconventional marketing tactics to achieve conventional marketing goals with little or no money.

He suggests, “Have events often, consistently communicate via email and direct mail to those who have signed a guest book during the year, have a contest or drawing, create your own holiday (National Wrapping Paper Day), have a seminar, invite a celebrity in, and use press releases. Work with other businesses in joint ventures. Use free marketing like networking and public relations.”

All are components of a marketing plan and part of defining the benefits that a business provides. Lautenslager describes benefits as what a consumer perceives that the business can do for them. “Benefits are anything that makes a prospect/ customer feel good, save time, save money, avoid pain, makes them smarter, etc.,” he explained.

It is important for the business to know what motivates their customers and to address that need. Price is usually important, but not always. Lautenslager stated, “If saving money is the primary benefit of the consumer then price will play an important role. Not meeting that benefit will result in no sale. If other things are more important than price, then a lower price doesn’t matter nor does a higher price.”

Once a business has this information, Lautenslager believes that addressing the benefit should be a focus. It will allow the business to market directly to consumers. He noted,

“Capturing the attention of the prospect makes them interested in what you have to offer to the point that if they are interested enough, they will be motivated to take action.”

The motivation to visit a business and make a purchase will come from marketing, good merchandising, and customer service. “Customer service is part of a buying experience or purchasing experience,” Lautenslager said. “A person having a good experience will tell three others. A person having a bad experience will tell 10 others.”

In addition to these steps, owners and employees need to remember that this is the season to be jolly and customers appreciate cheerful people. Lautenslager says, “Customers and prospects like to do business with successful and happy people. The more you can portray these attitudes, the higher the probability of success.”

If you’d like help with your holiday plan, contact the Green Bay Chapter of SCORE. Visit [www.greenbayscore.org](http://www.greenbayscore.org) or call Cindy Gokey at 920-496-8930 for information.

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