

## Low-Cost Marketing Tips for Today's Economy

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Professional marketing in today's economy is do-able!

I am thankful to be a new member of the Hoosier Hills Estate Planning Council. As a sales representative for a legal publisher it is important for me to see what issues you are facing. What you may not know is that I owned my own direct mail marketing company in Carmel Indiana for a number of years and worked with a number of professionals to develop campaigns that get the phones ringing. Ironically, some of the best marketing strategies are free, or cost pennies. Here are a few that might help in the current economy.

1. Most of my best customers, regardless of the product or company I worked for, even my own, come from referrals from other customers. If you are not ending every meeting with a client by **asking for referrals**, you are missing an enormous opportunity. Cost to you = Nothing.
2. **Networking** is a critical component in developing new clients for professionals. It is not always necessary to join a group. You can substitute at BNI meetings, stay after for coffee after church, attend chamber events or offer to speak before groups on topics of interest. I like to attend networking opportunities like Hoosier Hills because I enjoy being around people. That enjoyment translates to a positive attitude and positive attitudes attract people. If you are not comfortable in groups of people, this is a muscle you need to develop. Step away from the spreadsheet and commit to at least 1 group event a week. Cost to you? minimal
3. Publish. Get your name in local publications by **writing articles** on topics aimed at consumers or businesses. I have often written columns for business publications and it works because it counts as awareness building. Cost to you = Nothing
4. Snail Mail. The information superhighway is a very busy place. It has become easy to ignore email. But if someone sends me a letter through the mail, personally addressed to me, and in an envelope I open it. And so does almost everyone. **Correspond with your client base**. Write Thank You Notes to everyone who meets with you. In Pen. This is a very effective and often ignored way to keep your name and business or firm top of mind. Cost to you = minimal.
5. Dance with the one who brought you. Your existing clients are your best source of new & additional revenue and like most of us, they are busy. Develop a program of **consistent communication with those clients** and your dance card will fill up. If your clients are not calling you, they may be using someone else. Make sure you have a system in place for monitoring local obituaries. This is critical so you do not embarrass yourself professionally and permanently damage a relationship.

I recently received a letter from the man who I no longer use for financial planning. Not only was it obvious that the letter was a merged document, but it was addressed to both me and my late husband, and it was also obvious that the document had jammed in the printer, but they sent it anyway. Even if your client base is so large you must rely on support staff to keep the communication going, never let yourself be above involvement in this critical task. A little TLC is free!