



Marketing Your Group (Revision date 1-12-2013)

When you think of marketing, I am sure you think of a business plan to get the word out to consumers that you want to reach in order to build your business. That is true, but it is also true with your group. You must have a strategy to get the word out to interested individuals. Growth does not happen by accident; and while WE believe in what we are doing and our cause, unfortunately, the majority does not “get it” yet.

Now the difference between starting up and maintaining growth for a business and launching your own Tea Party group is money. With a business, there is income. From that income, you create a budget that has within it, advertising expenses.

With a Tea Party group, however, it will be “slim pickins” and often times; those “pickins” come from you and your core group of leaders – at least at the beginning. No matter how much or little you have, you need to know how to properly market so that you can take advantage of any opportunity that may come your way from an unexpected source. Pretend that your group is a business that you need to get growing and apply these same principles and you will know what to do when those funds roll in.

Marketing may be the only effective way to put a human face on the Tea Party. We are fighting against forces that do not fight fair. They have the bully pulpit to say whatever they want their audience to think about us. If we want to break that cycle, we will need to become creative with how we market our group.

In order to be successful with your group, you will need a plan and not take the, “I think I’ll wait and see” approach. Whether you have dozens of leaders to help or it is just you, you need a plan. Whether you have thousands of dollars or ten dollars, you need a plan.

Thousands of small businesses offer superb products and service, yet only 1/10th of 1% will see significant financial success because so many businesses are run by the seat of their pants. The same is true with Tea Party groups. The leaders run their homes and businesses with a plan but when it comes to their Tea Party group, there is no plan.

Part of your plan should be your ability to explain who you are and what you stand for and differentiate yourself from what the media says about you. What is it about you that sets you apart from more “partisan” or radical groups? Do you know the difference between the Tea Party groups and the Occupy ones? Can you articulate that difference?

One thing to remember when you are trying to promote yourself, never criticize other groups, even if it is warranted. Do not ever engage in a negative conversation about other groups and their efforts. It will invariably come around to bite you. You never look professional when you are negative and critical. Simply point out that you are different. You have chosen a different path to reach your goal (maybe even the same goal).

A story is told about an article that appeared in the St. Louis Post Dispatch. Umpire Bill Guthrie was working an afternoon baseball game. The visiting team catcher made it his business to protest Guthrie’s every call.

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Guthrie endured the heckling for three innings and then it got the best of him. In the fourth inning, when the catcher started to complain, Guthrie promptly stopped him. “Son,” he said gently, “you’ve been a big help to me calling balls and strikes, and I appreciate it. But I think I’ve got the hang of it now. So I’m going to ask you to go to the clubhouse and show them how to take a shower.”

Too many times people try to be the expert at everything and find it necessary to criticize the work others are doing. We can learn, as the catcher did, that there is no sense in arguing with the one calling the game. “I have never been hurt by anything that I didn’t say.” ...Calvin Coolidge

Marketing is a two-pronged activity. We advertise to get them to join us. From that point on, it is up to us to get them to come to our meetings and stay involved. Your leadership team is a vital marketing arm of your group that speaks volumes of who you are as a Tea Party group and a leader in your community.

Advertising can be expensive so you want to minimize your mistakes. Therefore, when advertising, you need a plan and advice. Many groups have within them, small business owners who have experience with advertising. Others may be blessed to have a media rep that is willing to lend a helping hand.

Rarely does advertising bring overnight miracles. It takes a lot of water to fill a bucket. A general rule of thumb is that it takes 27 times of seeing an ad or commercial to get a response from someone who may be interested in getting involved with you.

- Start with a minimum three-month plan.
- Do not change your basic message. Stay consistent and focused. This will breed familiarity and confidence. Your core values are a great place to start.
- Keep all of your printed material “timeless.” Never say, “Leading for ____ years.” Rather say, “Founded in _____.”
- It is not a good idea to put individual leaders pictures in any brochures that you may offer as you may add new ones or others may leave.

There are varieties of advertising venues. You may use just one or may combine several. The more ways you use to get your message across, the more credibility you will have in your area of influence.

As I give you all of the venues available for advertising, understand that I understand that most of us can or will never use half of them. I would rather provide you with all you could possibly need than leave open holes where wrong decisions can be costly.

Marketing Venues:

- **Television** is considered the “long distance runner” in the advertising business. It can be, however, a powerful tool. You have the opportunity to have a spokesperson verbalize your message to the public as well as have a visual for them to see.
 - Be sure you select shows that your target audience watches.
 - Frequency is important and it must be tested over several months for effectiveness. Remember, this is considered the long distance runner in advertising.
 - Cable is more affordable than network marketing. You will need to be aware of your audience and select the programs that will target that audience.
 - Always draw your audience to your web site for more information.



- **Radio** is said to be the most intimate of the media. It allows you to spend one-on-one time in restaurants, businesses, automobiles and the home. It is also seen as a “long distance runner” in advertising.
 - You want to know your market to select the station that will reach your target audience. Just because you do not listen to a certain station, does not mean that the majority of your interested individuals will not.
 - With my own business, when I select a station that my target audience would listen to; I stayed away from jazz stations. Why? I do not like jazz. Guess what? The majority of my client base listened to the local jazz station!
 - When delivering the message, be clear, concise, and professional. You can use a voice other than your own to deliver the message or you can do it yourself.
 - Be sure that the person delivering the message is sincere, knowledgeable and speaks with enthusiasm.
 - Never have the person delivering the message sound as though they are reading a script.
 - Frequency is important. Many will hear your ad while away from a place where they can write your name and number down.
 - Again, always draw them to your web site for further information.
- **Newspaper** should be used to disseminate news. Keep that in mind when you are placing your ads. **It is never wise to use your name as a headline.** Who cares? They want something that is going to get their attention and your name will not do that.
 - Your headline should capture the emotional feeling of your audience.
 - Ask a question such as, “Are you better off now than you were four years ago?”
 - Understand what is newsworthy.
 - Maybe it will be an upcoming event, meeting, new group, or a new location.
 - You may want to get the word out about a large event or seminar.
 - Make it interesting.
 - Make it compelling.
 - Newspaper can give you immediate response but frequency and consistency is impressive and communicates success.
 - It may take a long time for Joe public to tire of your ad.
 - Rotate from section to section.
 - Monday is a good day to advertise in the Sports section for men to see it.
 - Wednesday is going to hit the women best in the Home section.
 - Friday’s Entertainment section is a great for reaching those who are looking for activities for the weekend.
 - Try to get your ad located on the right hand page above the fold.
 - Drive them to your web site in your ad. (Are you beginning to get the picture here?)
- **Newsletters** are your cheapest form of advertising and the audience could not be better. It is like drilling for oil in your own backyard because this is done with your data information that you collect at all of your events.
 - You already have a relationship with each one, to some degree.
 - They are a captive audience who usually read your information.



- A newsletter helps you reel in those who you may be close to attracting but they are hesitant for some reason.
- Maybe they were not quite ready to do anything when they first saw you but they are now.
- A newsletter is a personal contact from you.
 - It informs the reader about any new Action Alerts.
 - You keep them informed about active legislation.
- A newsletter is a unique way to gain your readers trust and keep them informed.
- **Your Web site** is critical to lending credibility to your group. Today's inquirer is demanding more information before making a commitment to you. Here, you have an unlimited amount of space to communicate your message.

It is best to have more than a "brochure" on your site. Ideally, you have the opportunity to let people hear a message from you and/or your other leaders and members.

Videoed events are a powerful tool to capture their interest and show your professionalism as well as showing them your reach into the movement.

- An individual can "check you out" before they contact you and have a good idea what you stand for.
- Have your site "talk" to them. Have as much video as your webmaster talent will allow.
- Post your monthly newsletter on line to read.
- Have a good follow-up method where they can contact you for more information.
- In all your print and other advertising, **drive everyone to your web site.**

Printed Material – Brochures, Business Cards and Flyers

Brochure

- You can get a nice tri-fold brochure done that is very inexpensive but gets your message out.
- Things that you should include in your brochure:
 - Your group name, address and phone number
 - E-mail information
 - Web site
 - Meeting information
 - Mission statement
 - Information about your successes (or the Tea Party in general).
 - What you stand FOR
 - Good pictures from events you have had.

Business Cards

- It's very inexpensive business cards printed through Vista Print on line. For \$10, you can get 250.
- Keep it simple and clean looking.
- If you have a logo, it is good to use it on your card.
- Things to include:
 - Group name.



- Contact information (address, phone, e-mail)
- Three prong mission statement.
- Logo.
- Use good card stock.

Flyers

- Creating flyers for every event that you have is essential. Not everyone has e-mail so you need to get the word out through printed material.
 - Pass out at meetings and events.
 - Pass out in neighborhoods.
 - Hand to your friends at church and other community activities.
 - Ask to put them in small businesses.
- Have flyers that contain information that you want to disseminate is an inexpensive way to communicate to the public.
- Make them colorful and attractive but not busy.
- **Seminars** will attract new leaders and/or members and are an untapped resource.

Hold it in an “Open House” format that is casual and inviting. Provide refreshments that are appropriate for the time of year and the hour of the day that you host your event. Avoid serving alcohol at these events due to the liability that may incur.

- Advertise well in advance. This is where your newsletter database comes in handy. Not everyone on that list may have come to one of your meetings so this may be a “non-threatening” way to introduce the Tea Party to them.
 - Advertise the event in the paper and on the radio.
 - You may be able to use their free offers for community service ads.
 - Encourage them to bring another interested friend.
- Team up with other group leaders and offer several locations for meetings that they can attend
- Have a presentation that will accommodate people coming in at different times.
- Be equipped to answer questions on a wide range of questions.
- Have your entire leadership team there so that they are all visible to anyone new and they will feel more comfortable.
- Have printed material there for them to take. Even if they are not ready to make a commitment to get involved, they may know someone who is.
- A word of caution:
- Do not invite a politician to speak, as most individuals are tired of feeling being talked down to by them.

Outdoor Advertising

Outdoor advertising consists of billboards, bus ads, taxi signs, painted signs and outdoor signs.

- **Billboard** advertising should be done with the help of good statistics in hand. You need to find out how many cars pass the billboard site each day. Billboard firms usually have this data at their fingertips. What type of traffic passes by? Trucks traveling long distances usually will not benefit from your information. Homeward bound local people may be interested.



Billboard advertising is usually considered, “share-of-mind” advertising, meaning that you are trying to plant a thought that they will respond to.

- It is best to use only six words. People are driving at about 55 miles per hour so your message needs to be simple so that when they glance (or if they glance) they can get it within 7 seconds.
 - It is best to give them one large graphic or phrase for them to concentrate on. Just your web site is may be enough.
 - Be sure that the type is clear and words are large enough to read.
 - Be sure that it is illuminated at night.
 - Usually, if you supply the design, the billboard company will produce the billboard for you.
 - Many times, billboard companies are willing to negotiate price and location. They may ask you to do multiple signs, however.
- **Taxis and busses** produce moving signs that are targeted in urban areas. These moving signs are seen by many people, some of who may be interested individuals. People throughout a metropolitan area see taxi signs while people who travel the same route see busses.
 - Signs should be done similarly to those that you would use on a billboard.
 - Avoid making your sign busy. Never use fancy letters or bland colors.
 - Keep it readable, warm and in a good location.

Encourage word of mouth spreading of your message.

- Encourage your members to bring friends and/or family to your meetings.
 - Some think the speakers you have are “preaching to the “choir.”
 - It is the “choir” that brings the outside people there.
- On literature, you send out, and in the newsletters, remind them to forward this information on to their friends.

Become involved with your community:

Participate in parades for July 4th, Veterans Day, Constitution Day, and Christmas.

- You help with the fundraising event of your community.
- You get your name and face out for people to see. Again, it is putting a human face on the Tea Party.

Participate in City and County Fairs and Home Shows

- You have the opportunity to pass out literature, sign individuals up to get your e-mails and have one on one discussion with interested individuals.
- Builds good will in the community.

Participate in Community Work Days

- Work shoulder to shoulder with them in their efforts that you can support.
- It will come around to you.



E-mail Communication to Your Database

When you send out e-mail communication to your database there is a protocol that you should always follow in order to cut down on the negative feedback that you will get.

- Never send out an e-mail that you have not vetted to be completely true and reliable.
 - This is so important. If you send out one unvetted e-mail and you later find it to be either untrue or overly embellished, you will have a difficult time regaining your audience.
- Do not overload them with dozens of e-mails each day. Common sense should tell you that people would not read three or four e-mails each day that come from you.
 - Most want to hear from you only several times a week.
 - If you send more, be sure that it has an urgent call to action.
 - Be sure that it contains information that they need to see that day.
 - **True confession time here.** I have wonderful friends who send out six or seven e-mails a day and I never have time to read all of theirs and the dozens and dozens of other e-mails that I need to read each and every day. Consequently, I had to enter them as spam and they go to trash before I even see them. I just do not have the time to filter through them all.
 - Be respectful of your receivers. You may have valuable information that they never get because they have had to do the same thing I did.
 - There are times of the year (as with an election season) that you will send more than normal. Most will understand when they read your subject line.
 - Make sure that they are “news worthy” if you want them to read what you have to say.
 - Keep your e-mails as short as you can. Most will read the first two paragraphs then scan to the bottom or just hit the delete button.
- **NEVER** send your list where all of your readers see everyone’s e-mail address when they open it.
 - The first rule of e-mail etiquette is that you always blind copy (bcc) your addresses to preserve your recipient’s privacy.
 - I have known people who are no longer friends because of this violation.

Good and smart marketing strengthens your dignity. To never start, you only short-change your reputation and reliability. If your economic situation prevents you from paying for advertising then take advantage of the free things that are available. Establish a bond of communication with your members and the community that is not broken.

You need advertisement to start your group and you need advertisement to maintain your group. Advertising maintains morale. Your members see your ads, are proud, and feel that your group is healthy. You will maintain momentum and clarity.

Keep your commitment to marketing. Consider it a mandatory investment like the fuel that powers your vehicle is mandatory to keep your car running.

To plan your strategy you need to ask yourself these questions:

- What is it about you that describe your group and core values?
- What is your niche?



- Define your target market or markets?
- What marketing weapons will you employ?

Good marketing gives people the information they need to begin the process of making a decision. Advertising gets them “in” the door, but you and your leadership team need to keep them involved and enthusiastic. You cannot keep them from walking away, even if your advertisement brings them in, if you provide less than quality leadership, integrity, focus and being true to your core values.

“If you don’t invest much, then defeat doesn’t hurt very much and winning is not very exciting.”

Dick Vermeil