

Where do service businesses need the most help?

I attended a market planning presentation you recently gave to a group of retailers and consumer service businesses. I wonder what areas of the market planning process you find retailers need the most help with.

I have been most often approached about the planning and implementation of non-traditional promotional activities to attract more customers to a store and retain them on a regular basis. To do this I need to know:

• What specific product or services are most often bought from your store and when (weekends? holidays? summer?)

• Why customers are buying from you instead of a competitor.
• How customers make the decision to buy from you (impulsively? based on customer recommendation?)
• Where customers go to buy similar products.
• Who are the key customer groups who regularly patronize your business (lifestylers? reason they like doing business with you? demographics?)



focus: small business

Mary DiPaolo

Gathering this information as a first step is crucial to the planning of any successful promotional program. This represents one aspect of the market planning process that retailers may agree is somewhat im-

portant but usually do not focus on in ways that are meaningful when planning their promotions. Once these key customer markets and their related buying habits are understood, the goal is to select promo-

otional strategies that will best reach and persuade them. These same principles apply to any business when planning future promotional activities.

I heard there is a list available of the hottest new businesses for 1991. Are you aware of it?

Entrepreneur magazine prints a list of hot business ventures at the beginning of each year. For 1991, the businesses named include: event planning, cruises only travel, gift baskets, chicken wings, specialty

personnel, senior day care, mail order, exercise wear, food delivery, desktop publishing, summer camps, exporting, computer consulting, children's learning centers, building "doctors," recycling consultants, Mexican food, gourmet takeout, educational books and toys for children, healthy desserts and bicycle shops.

Mary DiPaolo is the owner of *MarketTrends*, a Northville business consulting firm. She is also producer and host of the cable television series, "Chamber Perspectives."

datebook

• **NETWORKING**
Thursday, May 9 — Leads Club meets in Southfield. Information: Jo Anne Kusudo, 641-2756.

• **WORK WITH ARCHITECT**
Thursday, May 9 — "How to Hire and Work with an Architect" in Southfield. Fee: \$8. Information: 746-8700. Sponsor: Southfield Public Schools.

• **CAREER WOMEN**
Thursday, May 9 — National Association of Career Women meets in Farmington Hills. Information: 626-0752.

• **INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**
Thursday, May 9 — "Immigration Issues and You" 7-9 p.m. in Southfield. Information: 569-5320. Sponsor: Stanley H. Kaplan Education Center Ltd., American Immigration Lawyers Association.

• **BUILDING OWNERS**
Thursday, May 9 — Building Owners and Managers Association meets in Southfield. Information: 964-4000.

• **WORDPERFECT 5.0**
Thursdays, May 9-30 — "WordPerfect 5.0 Intermediate on the IBM Personal Computer" 7-9 p.m. in Bloomfield Hills. Fee: \$85. Information: 645-3635. Sponsor: Cranbrook Schools.

• **LABOR-MANAGEMENT FORUM**
Friday, May 10 — "The Dynamics that Made Saturn" speech presented at 1 p.m. in Troy. Information: 370-3124. Sponsor: Oakland University.

• **CMA REVIEW**
Saturday, May 11 — Certified Management Accountant examination review Part Three 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$95. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

• **START A BUSINESS**
Monday, May 13 — "How to Start Your Own Business" offered in Southfield. Fee: \$6. Information: 746-8700. Sponsor: Southfield Public Schools.

• **FINANCIAL PLANNING DEGREE**
Tuesday, May 14 — Free information night about personal financial planning certificate program begins at 7:30 p.m. near Rochester. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

• **BETTER MEETINGS**
Tuesday, May 14 — "Conducting Effective Meetings" 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: 353-4500. Sponsor: American Association of Employers.

• **WOMEN IN SALES**
Tuesday, May 14 — Professional

Women in Sales meets in Bloomfield Hills. Information: 452-5650.

• **WOMEN'S ECONOMIC CLUB**
Tuesday, May 14 — Women's Economic Club meets in Detroit. Information: 963-5088.

• **LSAT PREPARATION**
Tuesdays and Thursdays, May 14-30 — Law School Admissions Test preparation workshops 6:30-9:30 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$195. Information: 370-3120.

• **CUT HEALTH CARE COSTS**
Wednesday, May 15 — "Health Care Cost Containment" 9 a.m. to noon in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$125. Information: 353-4500. Sponsor: American Association of Employers.

• **MONEY FOR TECHNOLOGY**
Wednesday, May 15 — Seminar on getting money from government for technology-based companies runs 9 a.m. to noon in Troy. Fee: \$15. Information: 689-4094. Sponsor: Walsh College.

• **MODERNIZATION CONFERENCE**
Wednesday, May 15 — "Modernizing America's Industrial Base" conference in Detroit. Information: 769-4454. Sponsor: Modernization Forum.

• **LEASING APARTMENTS**
Wednesday-Thursday, May 15-16 — "Professional Apartment Leasing for the '90s" in Southfield. Fee: \$165. Information: 348-9550. Sponsor: Residential Marketing Concepts Inc.

• **PURCHASING MANAGEMENT**
Thursday, May 16 — Installation of officers of the National Association of Purchasing Management — Metro Detroit and mini-seminar by Rick Inatome of Inatome Computer Centers: "Keys Issues in Public Purchasing" at the Detroit Yacht Club. Information: 1-773-3737.

• **NETWORKING**
Thursday, May 16 — Leads Club meets in Southfield. Information: Jo Anne Kusudo, 641-2756.

• **BUILD A TEAM**
Thursday, May 16 — "Building an Effective Team" 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: 353-4500. Sponsor: American Association of Employers.

• **WAGE & HOUR LAW**
Thursday, May 16 — "Wage and Hour Law Review" 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. in Southfield. Non-member fee: \$225. Information: 353-4500. Sponsor: American Association of Employers.

• **TECHNOLOGY COUNCIL**
Thursday, May 16 — Michigan Technology Council meets in Southfield. Information: 313-763-9757.

• **ACCOUNTANTS ASSOCIATION**
Thursday, May 16 — National As-

sociation of Accountants meets in Bloomfield Hills. Information: 838-9329.

• **CPA WEEKEND**
Friday-Sunday, May 17-19 — CPA Weekend review for certified public accountants near Rochester. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

• **CMA REVIEW**
Saturday, May 18 — Certified Management Accountant examination review part four 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$95. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

• **BLACK WOMEN**
Saturday, May 18 — National of 100 Black Women meets in Detroit. Information: 534-9746.

• **WORDPERFECT 5.1**
Saturday, May 18 — Course on columns and tables for WordPerfect 5.1 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$60. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

• **LOTUS 1-2-3**
Saturdays, May 18 through June 8 — Lotus 1-2-3 version 2.2 workshop 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. near Rochester. Fee: \$160. Information: 370-3120. Sponsor: Oakland University.

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