

Getting Noticed Attracts Customers

The Super Bowl is a huge event, but for weeks before and after it, more focus sometimes seems to be on the advertising than the game.

“Today, small-business owners increasingly feel that they cannot effectively compete in marketing when facing such huge marketing campaigns, thus hindering their chance at growth,” says (Insert name and title) of (Insert county). “Yet these small-business owners often forget the advantages they have.”

Small-business owners develop deep connections with their customers. Those connections arise from close interactions. In such an interaction, the owners can identify the specific problems the customer is trying to solve. They can find the unfilled niche and learn how to attract an audience.

“The owner, in many ways, has developed his or her own focus group,” says Glenn Muske, the North Dakota State University Extension Service’s rural and agribusiness enterprise development specialist. “Major companies will spend thousands of dollars to gather similar information.”

Muske continued, “The information gathered from existing customers probably represents a sample of a larger audience. This provides the business owner with an incredible resource for building an effective marketing campaign.”

Information that owners could gather includes:

- What brought people into store today?
- Have they visited the store previously?
- Why did they buy something today?
- If they’ve been to the store before, why did they stop the first time?

Further questions might include:

- Do they remember seeing any advertising/marketing for the business?
 - If so, what was it?
 - Did it provide them with information on new products, services or other information?
 - Did it entice them to take some type of action?
- What marketing tools do they find most effective?
- Do they shop for and compare products and services online?
- What online marketing is effective and why?

All of these questions focus on the key marketing elements of getting attention, interest and action from potential customers.

“It is a lengthy list of questions,” says (Insert last name). “Owners need to pick out the most important. They will have, if they have done their job, future chances to ask more questions.”

For more help with marketing, check with your local Extension Service office at [insert phone number and email address]. Also visit NDSU's small-business support website at www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness and sign up for the monthly newsletter. Or check out Facebook at www.facebook.com/NDSUextsmallbiz or Twitter at @gmuske. Another online resource is www.eXtension.org/entrepreneurship.

Joining groups such as your local chamber of commerce can be helpful, too. The Small Business Administration and its related organizations, such as the Small Business Development Centers and Service Corps of Retired Executives, also can be valuable resources.

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For more information, contact glenn.muske@ndsu.edu or call (701) 328-9718. You also can visit our website, www.ag.ndsu.edu/smallbusiness.