

SECTION B

ADVERTISING

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B. 1 ADVERTISING

Advertising is used to persuasively communicate information about a product or service to consumers in order to influence their buying behaviour.

Very simply, you want to convince your potential nicenstripy customer to actually purchase your services.

In its simplest form, the advertising campaign consists of:-

- ◆ Developing the right sales message
- ◆ Designing how to convey your sales message
- ◆ Delivering that message to the right audience
- ◆ Delivering that message at the right time
- ◆ Delivering that message at a reasonable cost.

B. 1.1 ADVERTISING PHILOSOPHY

As nicenstripy becomes a truly national service organisation, we will establish a broad philosophy about our advertising, which will then adapted for local market conditions.

We will always, in each market, direct our advertising to the nicenstripy customer profile within that marketplace and ensure our image is portrayed in a suitable fashion.

You will be advised of all National/Regional Campaigns, which will usually focus on our Image and Brand Awareness. We will provide you with a Media Pack, which will be designed to back up and support each of our National/Regional Campaigns.

Your Central Office support team will work with you at any stage in the development of your plan but all marketing/advertising plans should be agreed in advance of implementation with your Central Office personnel.

The reason for obtaining agreement is not to be dictators in your business but to ensure each nicenstripy business centre follows a coherent brand awareness branding exercise.

B. 1.2 THE NATIONAL FOCUS

nicenstripy have a unified and consistent advertising image throughout the market.

Every approach should support and enhance the nicenstripy image and Brand position and only approved and/or recommended material may be used for any local advertising programmes.

B. 1.3 CO-OPERATIVE ADVERTISING

Because one of the strengths of the company is the power of the group (as opposed to individual nicenstripy businesses, each striving alone for success), nicenstripy recommends and encourages co-operative advertising whenever possible.

Several nicenstripy businesses in the same region, can purchase media more efficiently and effectively and can make a stronger, broader overall impact by working together.

Your Central Office support team will assist you in co-ordinating your efforts into joint campaigns.

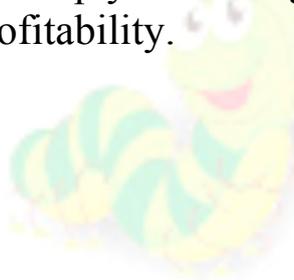
B. 1.4 ANOTHER STRENGTH

Another strength of a strong operation, in addition to the power of the number of franchised business units, is the resources available through nicenstripy Central Office.

Central support staff are available to provide you with recommendations on developing advertising plans, advise in staffing, create incentive programmes, design advertisements, order material, research demographics and co-ordinate assignments - indeed anything required to get the job done professionally, correctly and in a timely manner.

This resource is for your use!

Please ask for assistance and guidance to ensure you build and develop your strategic business unit to its maximum level of profitability.



B. 2 VARIETY AND USE OF MEDIA

The tactics of communicating your message to your customers are as varied as the goals agreed upon and the budget assigned.

Not every medium can accomplish the same task; some types of communication will be better than others, depending on your objectives and budget.

You may occasionally get good advice from the local media representatives selling the advertising space. However, remember, the sales representative wants to sell you something and may have his commission in mind, not necessarily your best interest.

You can and should take advantage of the assistance and knowledge of your Central Office support staff to assist you in evaluating your options, budget, and objectives to choose the right medium to achieve the best results.

B. 3 TRACKING

An extremely useful and important tool in evaluating media opportunities is the tracking of previous marketing efforts.

Experience is an excellent teacher. Not every effort will be a 100% effective and seldom will any programme be a total catastrophe.

In that middle ground, however, of working pretty well (or not-so-well), we need to know which activities produced what measurable sales results.

Some tools of measuring and 'tracking' include: -



B. 3.1 SALES

Obviously, the intention of your overall marketing strategy is to impact your sales. Examine your weekly sales on an on-going basis and you will begin to notice trends (other than seasonal).

Some of the routine increases or decreases are related to your specific focus of the business. Other peaks (or valleys) may be related to marketing activities.

- ◆ Chart your sales, by service type, on a graph to see the trend visually . A line graph on a calendar may show you more than a column of numbers.
- ◆ Compare your sales to the same period one-year ago/two years ago.
- ◆ Compare your market to other similar markets and to the group averages. You will observe trends and aberrations that will help you to evaluate your marketing.

B. 3.2 COUPON/LEAFLET TRACKING.

Use of coupons/leaflets can be expensive; not only does it cost significant money to get the penetration and delivery, you have the additional cost of printing materials, plus the cost of giving something away. With a coupon/leaflet you are sacrificing a portion of your profits as well as the out-of-pocket expense. Many things can affect the success of your coupons/leaflet.

- ◆ The method of distribution
- ◆ The quality of the company used
- ◆ The strength and attractiveness of your offer.

When making the significant investment to coupon/leaflet, it is imperative that you measure the results.

Sample forms and instructions are included in this manual, so you can record redemption of coupons/leaflets and draw conclusions about the variables influencing a success (or failure).

As with all of your marketing efforts, use your Central Office if you need advice or another opinion.

B. 3.3 RETURN ON INVESTMENT (R.O.I.)

Simply knowing how many coupons/leaflets were redeemed or how many premiums were given away is not enough to declare a promotion a success; just because sales were good does not necessarily mean you made money.

You need to examine whether the additional money brought in covers the out-of-pocket cost and the additional cost of what you gave away.

Did you break-even on those costs?

Did you get, or will future business bring additional return over and above the break-even cost?

Using the same forms included in this manual and measuring your R.O.I. for each programme will help you decide whether it is worth considering running the programme again.

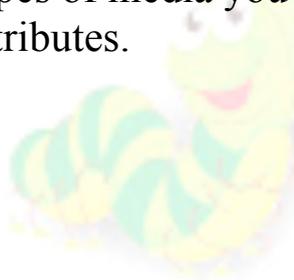
B. 4 MEDIA ADVANTAGES AND LIMITATIONS

Advertising and media planning is less an exact science and more of an art.

Some available media are measurable in quantifiable terms, but often the accomplishment of a plan is your feeling of success (dictated by budget and availability) combined with the facts.

To make a wise choice for an intelligent plan, it helps to be familiar with the characteristics, benefits and liabilities of the variety of media available.

Over the following pages, we outline some of the different types of media you might choose to use and their contrasting attributes.



B. 5 TELEVISION

B. 5.1 CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Commercials can be purchased either through the networks and seen nation-wide, or placed market-by-market and seen only in selected television areas.
- ◆ Usually measured in terms of the percentage of people watching a particular programme at a certain time, called TVR's (Television Ratings).

B. 5.2 ADVANTAGES

- ☑ Delivers your message to most people (called 'reach').
- ☑ Combines the energy of visual, audio and motion for maximum impact.
- ☑ Possible to convey the desired image in creative and interesting ways.
- ☑ Television is a passive medium; little audience involvement is required.
- ☑ Adds huge credibility to the brand and dramatically increases brand awareness.

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- Our market niche is wide with around 70% of television viewers being potential customers
television advertising could be very effective



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B. 5.3 CONCERNS

- ☹ Expensive to buy and effectively may require co-operative investment of several nicensstripy franchisees. While 'reach' is generally good, it is very expensive to obtain a high frequency level.
- ☹ Production is expensive.
- ☹ Requires some expertise to make purchases wisely; the advice of a media buyer with access to measurement resources is invaluable, as well as making use of your Central Office Marketing Team.
- ☹ Many viewers using remote controls to change channels during commercial breaks.
- ☹ Satellite penetration is diluting the audience for local commercial television, but has made TV advertising a real possibility due to the reduction in cost.

B. 5.4 CONCLUSION

Do not invest in television advertising without consultation with your Central Office support team.

If nicensstripy centrally uses television as part of our marketing mix, there may be an opportunity for you to use the materials produced, to support and enhance the campaign locally. It may even be possible to advertise within a regional TV catchment area providing all franchisees in that area agree.

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Generally, however, within our market niche there are more cost effective ways of targeting potential customers.



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B. 6 RADIO

B. 6.1 CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Can be purchased by reference to ‘number of listeners’ in strong, measured markets, but can also be purchased by spot, particularly in smaller markets where traditional services do not monitor listenership.
- ◆ The morning and evening hours (called drive times) are the most listened to times on the radio.
- ◆ Usually purchased as either 30 second or 60 second spots, although 10 seconds are occasionally accepted.

B. 6.2 ADVANTAGES

- The market within this medium is highly targetable, with the capability to reach with high frequency particular age and special interest groups who have the demographic characteristics of the desired audience.
- A radio advertisement can be highly imaginative, evoking strong images and associations.
- Radio stations offer tremendous opportunity for promotional tie-ins and celebrity endorsements.

Issue Number 000

- ☑ A station may, in conjunction with a paid schedule, provide a Radio Presenter for your franchise for a special event (e.g. A Launch of a new unit).
- ☑ An on-the-air disc jockey can extend your product message by commenting on the creative commercial or complimenting the service.
- ☑ Live announcer tags (what is said after the advert) can enhance the immediacy of a sales message and enlarge the impact of the message through the personality of the D.J.
- ☑ Complete live announcer scripts can reduce production costs and capitalise on the popularity of a particular D.J. (but can be dangerous with an unprofessional reader).
- ☑ Relatively low cost for production and air time.



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B. 6.3 CONCERNS

- ☹ Radio can be background sound in many environments and does not always focus the consumer's attention.
- ☹ The number of stations with varied formats may make targeting a particular demographic easier, but may mean having to buy a variety of stations to reach a broader audience.
- ☹ Although radio can invoke extraordinary images, it does lack the visual reinforcement of television.
- ☹ It is difficult to target the message that appeals to a particular age group with one series of advertisements.

B. 6.4 CONCLUSION

- ⇒ Consider only if several franchisees will benefit.
- ⇒ Speak with your Central Office personnel for advice and co-ordination.

B. 7 OUTDOORS

B. 7.1 CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Painted outdoor billboards are large signs hand painted with message and usually placed on heavy traffic flow areas.
- ◆ The painted panels may be moved at intervals to a new high visibility area.
- ◆ Paper panels, sometimes called 30 sheet posters are of smaller size than painted rotaries and are usually on less significant main roads, and residential and small town areas.
- ◆ The message is printed, usually by silkscreen, on paper, which is posted on the outdoor billboard, much like hanging wallpaper.
- ◆ A new location requires another set of poster paper posted on the new board.
- ◆ Some areas offer even smaller boards called ponies or 9-sheet boards.
- ◆ Other outdoor opportunities exist, including painting directly on adjacent buildings or walls; permanent structures like bus shelters and bus benches and portable message signs.
- ◆ An outdoor buy is measured in showings

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i.e.- how many people will view the message a determined number of times.

B. 7.2 ADVANTAGES

- Outdoor advertising provides precise geographic targeting or by locating a sign where your primary audience will see it routinely.
- An entire market area can be covered with continuous presence assured for the duration of the posting.
- Outdoor creates quick brand recognition and awareness.



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B. 7.3 CONCERNS

- ☹ The message for outdoor needs to be short and to the point, a creative rule of thumb is seven words or less.
- ☹ The billboard industry is continually under attack from environmentalists who fear the destruction and disfigurement of the landscape. Local regulations may also restrict or prohibit size of making good outdoor locations difficult to contract at times.
- ☹ Although a placement can be geographically targeted, it is difficult to deliver a particular demographic since everyone can see an outdoor board.
- ☹ Prime locations require long commitment and usually an extensive lead-time.
- ☹ Can be seen as 'down-market' to some.

B. 7.4 CONCLUSION

The decision can only be taken locally with the advice of your Central Office support team - much will depend upon the location of billboards, the cost and availability and the minimum time to advertise (usually no less than 6 months).

B. 8 DIRECT MARKETING

B. 8.1 CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Direct marketing is designed to reach a specific, identified audience to solicit a predicted, desired response.
- ◆ Usually the best measured of media tactics, direct marketing is normally a controlled, quantified distribution with a projected goal.
- ◆ Once responses are received, they can be tabulated and compared with expenses and projections, and conclusions on effectiveness and value can be made.
- ◆ The direct response vehicle often is in the form of a new brochure or the attendance of a special event.
- ◆ Material can be delivered direct to the consumer via a variety of means, including solo mail, combined or marriage mail, door-to-door delivery, or even inserted in newspapers or magazines.

B. 8.2 ADVANTAGES

- ☑ Direct mail, targeted geographically through postal codes or demographically selected mailing lists, can provide the most complete and accurate penetration to a desired target area.
- ☑ The tactic demands an action from a consumer and can be a strong behaviour inducer.
- ☑ Direct response is measurable:- the advertiser knows how many pieces are distributed, what the response was, the cost for each response and the cost for fulfilment or conversion.
- ☑ The effectiveness and efficiency can be easily evaluated.



B. 8.3 CONCERNS

- ☹ Direct response can be very expensive on a per person basis. Sponsoring a solo mailing where one advertiser pays the entire cost can be expensive, although sharing with other advertisers in a marriage mailing can reduce the cost.
- ☹ Production costs, depending on the quality desired, can also be expensive.
- ☹ Many consumers call direct mail junk and discard material without considering the content. With the proliferation of marketers using direct marketing, the clutter is greater.
- ☹ The medium, unless the advertiser mails daily or weekly, has only a single impact (if the piece is opened!).

B. 8.4 CONCLUSION

This can be the most cost effective method for reaching our existing customers **but** your Mail Shots must be professionally designed and measurable.

You should seek advice from your Central Office support team before contemplating a Direct Mail Campaign.

B. 9 LOCAL NEWSPAPERS/MAGAZINES

B. 9.1 CHARACTERISTICS

- ◆ Newspaper is usually sold by column inch - the number of columns wide (most papers are 6 columns wide) multiplied by the number of centimetres deep.
- ◆ Frequency of publication can vary by paper and the community size; large towns have daily (evening) publications, while smaller communities or special interest papers publish weekly.

B. 9.2 ADVANTAGES

- Print ads allow a great deal of information to be presented since the reader has the time and opportunity to absorb the message.
- Lead time is short, both for producing materials and ordering the space, allowing for immediacy and flexibility in schedules.
- The hard copy of the advert allows readers to retain the information received by clipping the advertisement.

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- ☑ Many papers are adding colour capability to their printing facilities, increasing the attractiveness and impact of advertising in print.
- ☑ The consumer often uses a local newspaper as a 'Trades' buying guide.
- ☑ The ability to effectively reach a relatively specific geographic area.
- ☑ The ability to effectively reach a relatively specific target audience.

B. 9.3 CONCERNS

- ☹ Because of the type of paper and the printing process, the production quality can be inconsistent and poor.
- ☹ Local newspaper circulation and subscription is declining in an electronic addicted environment, shrinking the potential audience for advertisers.
- ☹ The impact of an advertisement may depend on good placement, (i.e. the actual position of the advertisement in the media, specifically a particular page and its position on the page) which is seldom guaranteed.
- ☹ Delivering a message efficiently requires multiple inserts to ensure initial observation and retention of the content.

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- ☹ Not all newspapers would be suitable for a nicenstripy franchisee to advertise in, as the newspapers position within the marketplace may be contrary to ours.

B. 9.4 CONCLUSION

If the correct media is used can be useful for promoting special events,

e.g. Sales promotion of specific services, etc.

B. 9.5 IMPORTANT NOTE:

All advertisements placed must be in the nicenstripy image. Artwork must be checked and approval of the advertisement be obtained from Central Office **before** booking space.

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B. 10 CUSTOMER REFERRAL PROGRAMS

Customer Referral Programs can create a very good source of leads, which are not usually price sensitive. Conversion to real business also tends to be considerably higher than with any other type of lead!

In our industry, because of the wide variety type of customer, it is not easy to develop a referral program that suits everyone. Some will work harder if they receive a financial reward, whilst others will be insulted if offered money. Some will feel they are doing their friends a favour if we were to offer their referral a 10% discount on the first lawn cut, whilst others will say what's in it for me!

An incentive could be a *Free Autumn Feed* for every 5 referrals, or every 5 referrals that turn in to ongoing works.

A '*Tell A Friend*' campaign that offers no incentive for either party may not be as effective as those where some kind of financial incentive is offered BUT neither does it offend or embarrass any existing customer. There is nothing to stop you, however, in buying a small plant or bunch of flowers as a thank you for any referral, which may encourage that particular customer to provide even more leads!

ANY referral program that you implement should be repeated a minimum of 3 and ideally 4 times each year. Do not waste your time and just do it once, because you will not see the real advantage of running a referral program correctly.

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B. 11 SOCIAL MEDIA

Social Media includes (in this scenario) the nicenstripy Web site (as it is easier to include it in this section).

Few of us (unless your under 25) fully understand the importance of utilising the social media opportunities to their fullest advantage.

The term Social Media usually includes, Blogging, Twittering, Facebook and other areas of activity on the world wide web. Whilst there is a huge amount of information on the web there are also huge opportunities of promoting our business IF we do so in a controlled and active manner.

We are not advocating a particular media that we should all be using but at this stage making everyone aware of the opportunities available.

No doubt, in time to come, we will formally build Social Media into our group marketing campaigns and indeed with the extension to our web site some social media activities will become more apparent as we all get to use them.

BUT PLEASE BE AWARE that any comment you make on the internet can potentially be seen by millions . . . some of whom could potential become or indeed are our customers.

However, for those who would like to explore the opportunities of FREE awareness improving here are 14 steps for you to follow which will assist you in creating something positive;

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- B. 10. 1 Clearly articulate who your potential customers are before you begin.
- B. 10. 2 Clearly articulate the key issues these customers care about as it relates to your offering. Use a bulleted list with no more than three or four words per item.
- B. 10. 3 Begin by researching which, if any, top bloggers are discussing these issues. Use your bulleted list to search. The following are good places to start:
- Technorati
 - Del.icio.us
 - Google Blogsearch
 - Ask.com Blogsearch
- B. 10. 4 Inevitably, any substantial subject matter area has a back channel where top bloggers and influencers chat. For example, PR and marketing bloggers and tend to connect on Facebook, Twitter, and to some extent, LinkedIn. This back channel can yield powerful connections to highly influential minds who may not have blogs with top statistical ranking.
- Marketers looking to find their subject area's back channel should start with a basic search. Once your initial search yields important blogs, please visit them and note which social networks the bloggers use to connect. Join their communities. And learn what your stakeholders really care about.
- B. 10. 5 Don't just observe, participate. Comment on blogs and social networks in a non-promotional way. Become part of the community.
- B. 10. 6 Note several things in your research:
1. Top industry issues
 2. Top bloggers/thought leaders that write about your issues (you will need these for marketing purposes after your content

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creation process is done)

3. Preferred content forms (video, white papers, blogs, podcasts)
4. Ideal places to connect with the larger industry (social networks, etc.)
5. Other companies using the space: Who's successful, who isn't? Why?
6. What are the behavioural norms.

Write this information down in a formal analysis.

B. 10. 7 Using the analysis of your social media marketplace, identify the outcomes the organization would like to achieve. These outcomes will determine the measurement benchmarks once the company decides on its preferred communication tools. Possibilities include:

- Influence
- Awareness/changed perception on a particular issue
- Third party credibility through Word of Mouth
- Brand awareness
- Return on investment (sales)

B. 10. 8 Identify the company's value for the marketplace; specifically, the organization's subject matter expertise as it relates to the top industry issues currently being discussed amongst bloggers and thought leaders.

- Can the company provide enough information to add to the conversation?
- If so, is it enough to consistently be a part of the conversation, or is it limited in nature? Will it only be valuable for a short time?

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- Can the organization afford to give away this information or does the information comprise trade or corporate secrets?

B. 10. 9 Based on the company/organization's value offering and the marketplace's issues and needs, draft an editorial to serve the community/stakeholders.

Continue serving as a primer for those business executives new to social media or considering engaging with these new communications tools. The conversation should be educational, pragmatic and weigh the pros and cons of social media to provide an authentic, genuine viewpoint of social media marketing. We believe in social media's potential to better communications, but do not think it will replace traditional tactics. Instead we believe social media will be *integrated* into the larger marketing mix and may influence change in other disciplines.

B. 10. 10 Now examine the company's resources:

- **Time!**
- Thought leaders
- Technical capability and savoir faire: Blog, audio, video, social networking
- Financial resources for some of the above, plus graphic design, SEO (Search Engine Optimization), web hosting, application development

B. 10. 11 Select the outreach mechanism(s) that best fits the industry's preferred content needs (#6), can achieve outcomes (#7) the ability to convey the company's ability to deliver value through its editorial mission (#8 and 9), and that the company can afford to invest in (#10).

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There are many, many mechanisms. Each has its assets and detriments. And blogging is not a 'be all' solution. Consider these more popular initiatives:

- Launch a blog
- Execute a blogger relations program
- Podcast
- Create video(s)
- Develop social network community
- Create social network application
- Build your own social network
- Build a widget

B. 10. 12 Determine who will create the content. Group efforts can help distribute load as well as protect the company from an individual departure. Assign a schedule and make the person responsible. Participation in larger networks should be part of your content development plan and resource allocations.

B. 10. 13 Select general content categories to provide guidance on a weekly basis (if the effort is ongoing). Remain flexible to allow for larger industry and community events.

B. 10. 14 Determine measurement based on outcomes, social media communication vehicle(s), and dedicated effort the company intends to commit to the effort. Select tools to attain measurement. Tools and measurement can vary greatly. Research what is right for you and your effort. Some are free, some are not.

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B. 12 MISCELLANEOUS ADVERTISING / PROMOTION OPPORTUNITIES

Every community and trading area will offer unique and unusual advertising opportunities.

Any one of these may potentially delivery a positive result.

Some possibilities include: -

- Yellow Pages
- Transit advertising: taxis or bus sides
- Cross promotion (signage, leaflets) with other businesses (e.g. Nurseries', Farms, Local Authorities)
- Local cinema advertisements.
- Retail point-of-sale
- Special event participation
- Charity activities
- Allotment Group sponsorship
- Sales Promotions

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B. 13 MARKET RESEARCH

Research can be a valuable technique for answering marketing questions and a wide variety of tactics are possible depending on the nature of the problem to be solved.

nicenstripy has carried out research as a directive tool and will conduct research on a reasonably regular basis.

Opportunities may be available for research in local areas or information may already be on file; contact your Central Office for advice and recommendations.



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B. 14 PLAN YOUR LOCAL CAMPAIGN

You should *continuously* be looking for ways to promote your business and your services. In all your promotions, you should take care to project and support the nicenstripy Image.

This Section has been written to provide you with a number of activities for you to select, in the promotion of your business.

Having decided *which* activities you wish to participate in (other than the standard nicenstripy promotions which you should automatically carry out) you must then decide *when* you wish to implement the various marketing opportunities.

You will need to be planning, in detail, three months in advance as a minimum (preferably six months) and should be preparing a plan a year in advance, which might well be a rolling plan.

When you have prepared your first draft of your plan send it to your Central Office marketing team for comment and advice. They will be able to offer comments and advice on your plan and assist you to 'tweak' it to make it a more cost effect plan.

**"IF YOU
FAIL TO
PLAN ...
YOU PLAN
TO
FAIL!"**

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B. 15 HOW MUCH SHOULD I SPEND?

Decide on an annual budget for promoting your business and **stick to it!** As an indication you should be spending a minimum of 4% of projected turnover in the first three years of trading and then, depending on how aggressively you wish to grow your business, around 2 ½% of projected turnover is usually sufficient to maintain a steady (but not dramatic) growth.

You will receive numerous telephone calls from advertising sales people trying to persuade you to spend your budget with them. **Don't do it!!!!!!** Ask for testimonials, ask who else in your industry advertises with them (you should know the main gardening contractors in your area), ask if any other nicenstripy franchisees advertise with them (and then telephone the specific franchisees to check that he/she does in fact advertise and ask how effective they have found it to be).

Engaging in 'unplanned' advertising often proves to be a waste of your money and proves you have not planned your promotional campaign correctly, for if you had you would not have any spare funds to engage in unplanned advertising!

Not all advertising works in all areas, therefore you **MUST** keep a careful check on how effective your promotional campaigns are being. You **MUST** ask every customer how they heard of you, for without that knowledge you will not know which campaign has been effective.

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In a recession **INCREASE** your budget if your cashflow will allow. Whilst you may not increase your turnover at least you should aim to maintain a status quo. The cost of obtaining new customers during a recession increases and can (depending on how deep the recession is) double!



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B. 16 COST EFFECTIVE PROMOTION

We have been testing numerous promotional ideas and concepts since nicenstripy first started in 1996. During that time we have found what works well on every occasion and what really doesn't work well. This section outlines the various promotional activities taken place by the majority of franchisees and their successes and failures.

The most important point to make about promoting your nicenstripy business is to promote locally before spreading out to other areas, like a mushroom! Spend the majority of your budget within 5 miles of your base initially, later you can increase the area to 10 miles around your base and so on.

B. 16.1 CARDING

nicenstripy recommend distributing a **minimum** of 100,000 cards each year. Franchisees use various methods of distribution of the cards such as;

- 1) Royal Mail
- 2) Local Distribution Companies
- 3) Local/Regional Newspapers
- 4) Friends and Family

Each has its advantages and disadvantages which is discussed below;

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1) Royal Mail

Compared to other companies the Royal Mail is generally one of the most expensive organisations to use, but also one of the most reliable.

One advantage of using the Royal Mail is that you can select specific postal codes to use and they will be able to tell you exactly how many cards are required for that post code.

Another advantage is that the cards can be ‘dropped’ in quite large volumes within a specific time scale, so you can plan a systematic approach to your campaign, without having 300 enquiries in one week.

Probably the biggest disadvantages is the long lead times before the Royal Mail can actually plan a delivery and the rigid formalities that have to be followed.

Advice

Use the Royal Mail selectively. Choose post codes in outlying areas where the driveways are long and houses are spread out. This method usually becomes cost effective as it would take a huge amount of time for one person to distribute just a few cards.

2) Local Distribution Companies

Local Distribution Companies are often cheaper than the Royal Mail and as ‘commercial’ organisations are usually more flexible, but in essence do exactly the same job as the Royal Mail.

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Choose wisely, however, as some are better than others! Ask for a list of satisfied customers and ring them. Ask how successful their promotion was and what percentage of their leaflets were actually delivered (if they know).

3) Local/Regional Newspapers

Usually considerably cheaper than using either of the above type organisations but also far less effective. Use only in March and early September to distribute a large quantity of cards quickly. If affordable use one of the first two options.

4) Friends and Family

Friends and family members are usually more contentious than other distributors, as they have an emotional link to you. They are not, however, always as efficient!

If you cannot afford to pay an organisation to carry out your promotional campaign use your friends and family to distribute your cards.

Ensure that you plan where they are to go each day on a road map and get them to tick off each road as it is completed. Discipline is the key to success! If no plan is made your carding will become 'hit and miss' and the areas that are missed are definitely the ones where you would have received enquiries . . . it's just 'sods law'!

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5) Other Methods

a) Railway Stations

Railway Station car parks produce an excellent venue for carding. The car park is often full of commuters vehicles who travel daily, thus only tend their gardens at weekends.

Place your card in the top of the window of the drivers door, if you cannot jam it in the top of the door put it in the bottom near to the door handle.

Officially you should gain permission to distribute cards in this manner.

b) Supermarkets

Supermarket car parks are another area where a large number of cards can be distributed in a very short time period. Whilst much is wasted you only need one order to make the effort worthwhile!

Officially you should gain permission to distribute cards in this manner.

c) Hospitals

People in hospital are often not able to cut their grass themselves and require someone to do it for them. Friends and family often take over this chore for a short period of time and those friends and family members also visit the sick patient in hospital.

Car parks are usually quite large and are full almost every day (even weekends!).

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Officially you should gain permission to distribute cards in this manner.

d) On Route

Carding on route adds literally minutes to your day and can help to increase the efficiency of your route planning.

Around each job you carry out card 6 houses each side and 13 opposite. Card EVERY TIME you cut the lawn for an absolute minimum of 6 visits. It **proves** you are regular and reliable.

This is particularly important from the beginning of September when you should be starting to book your winter works. Card every visit until you stop grass cutting around the end of November.

What should be my expectations?

Impersonalised mail drops are like trawler fishing. You cast a big net in the water and hope you catch something of interest.

Using a **mixture** of the distribution methods discussed above you should expect 2.6 enquiries in spring from every 1,000 cards distributed. During the autumn period the rate usually falls to 1.8 enquiries for every 1,000. From those enquiries you should expect to obtain a minimum of 1 order.

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B. 16.2 LOCAL NEWSPAPER ADVERTISING

At the right time of year local newspaper advertising can be effective as part of your marketing mix. The right time of year is March and September used in conjunction with your carding campaign.

Newspaper campaigns should be planned to run over a six week period. You do not need to advertise in every issue over that period but unless you intend to advertise a **minimum** of three issues do not advertise at all as you will be wasting your money!

Without question the best place to advertise is full colour on the front page with an advert of no less than $\frac{1}{4}$ page. If unaffordable most local papers carry a gardening section during the summer months and place an advert around that section if possible. Don't forget to also ask for editorial space whenever you place an advert. As the saying goes *'if you don't ask you don't get'*!

You may only receive one confirmed job from each advert but those jobs will, over a period of time, pay for the cost of each advertisement placed.

B. 16.3 PARISH MAGAZINE ADVERTISING

Supporting local parish magazines do not always produce fantastic results in term of attracting new customers, but are a good way of supporting a local community and excellent for increase brand awareness. PR is often available with an advertisement and at times you will be asked to produce articles on gardening for them.

B. 16.4 VAN PROMOTION

One of the reasons we have large vans sign written is so potential and existing customers know who we are and they assist in creating brand awareness with our area.

Why not group together with a few other franchisees and travel around various towns and villages in convoy. You will need a minimum of 5 vans to make an impact and the more liveries vehicles used the greater the impact.

Travel through each town in close convoy a minimum of three times on a Saturday (city centres are less effective but still an impact can be achieved). Plan to give up a few Saturdays, however, as you will need to repay your neighbours by doing the same for them!

The actual cost of this promotion is minimal but the brand awareness it creates is phenomenal in comparison to the cost.

B. 16.5 RADIO ADVERTISING

nicenstripy have tested advertising with commercial radio on one occasion. To say the test was costly is an understatement as with six months of drive time advertising only one new customer was gained because of radio adverts and she already had an awareness of the nicenstripy brand because she had seen our vehicles!

Do not be put off by this one experience, however! If two or three franchisees club together and the right commercial radio station is in your area then, as a brand awareness tool, radio advertising could certainly prove to be an effective part of your marketing mix.

B. 16.6 TARGETED PROMOTIONS

Targeted promotions are exactly what they say they are;

A promotion that is targeted to a specific market sector.

e.g. Nursing Homes, Estate Agencies, Public Houses,
Management Companies, Help the Aged, Housing
Associations etc. etc. etc.

Simply find out who is the person you need to contact in each company/organisation and write to them! In the letter tell them why they should be using your company, the benefits you offer and the services you can provide (make sure you only mention the services they require).

Two weeks later, if you have not heard from them, telephone and try to make an appointment to see them.

These activities are best carried out in December, January and February as financial years often to start in January and April. Even if you miss the opportunity this year as one particular company's year end is November you are now armed with more information about that particular company and can approach them in September or October the following year in an effort to gain their business.

The other good reason to carry out your targeted promotion at this time of year is that you probably have a little more free time available due to the weather conditions!

B. 16.7 EXHIBITIONS

There are often a number of opportunities to exhibit the nicenstripy brand within any franchised area. We strongly recommend you discuss ANY exhibiting opportunities with your Central Office support team;

16.7.1 County Shows

County Shows can be an excellent method of increasing both brand awareness and services offered by nicenstripy. If you decide to exhibit at a County Show be sure to make your presentation is professional as possible.

A well designed stand can be a major benefit in showing potential customers your professional approach to business, likewise a poorly laid out stand shows unprofessionalism and is likely to have the opposite effect to that being sort.

We strongly advise you have some kind of shelter erected from the outset as being caught by a sudden cloud burst (yes it has happened) and standing in wet cloths for the rest of the day is not fun!

16.7.2 Small Holder Shows

One type of show we would usually pass by BUT can be very cost effective as they continue to attract both a larger and wider audience. Becoming 'greener' is very trendy and more and more people living in very ordinary houses are considering keeping chickens etc. to 'play their part' in saving the planet.

As with the County Show, however, a well designed stand is vital to the outcome of your exhibiting. Please contact Central Office to obtain any further advice.

16.7.3 Local Garden Centres

Exhibiting in the car park of a local garden centre over a period of 4 -6 weekends (ideally starting Easter Weekend which is over 4 days) can play a major role in increasing your customer base and increasing brand awareness.

Again, a well presented stand is vital!

16.7.4 Allotment Shows

You will be pleased to hear that your exhibition stand is not so vital at an Allotment Show. They are usually quite small, friendly affairs which do not require a huge amount of signage. Indeed, it can sometimes work against you! A professional approach in terms of handing out cards and speaking to people is, however, just as vital as any other exhibition.

B. 16.8 BNI MEETINGS

A number of franchisees attend BNI or similar meetings every week/2 weeks. These meetings are usually held early morning over breakfast and are good for business to business contacts.

If you enjoy speaking with like minded people and are focussed on what you want to achieve . . . then this could be a good avenue for you.

B. 16.9 RATED PEOPLE

Whilst can be quite expensive once you have been a member for a few months it can be a good source of leads.

Customers rate you after you complete work and can make whatever comments they please. YOU need to encourage your customer to rate you on this site as it contributes to your overall rating. Customers who are disappointed with your work will need no encouragement as they will be completing the rating form before you have started your van!

B. 16.10 CHECKATRADE

Another good source of leads and adds to your credibility in your local area. Again customers are encouraged to 'score you' and your work standards. It is important, however, that you maintain standards as just one bad comment and score will dramatically bring down your averages!

B. 16.11 TRUSTATRADER

The trustatrader website has burst onto the market as sponsors of several TV programs and has become the market leader of this type of site in a very short space of time. Their advertising expenditure to promote their site across all media is huge and they reputedly have considerably more 'hits' to their site than any other similar site . . . so should be a very good source of leads.

As with Checkatrade above you need to provide 5 references from existing customers and any poor comments will take you off their site immediately. Having said that, the more customers you have giving good references the more likely you are to obtain even more business.

B. 16.12 WORD OF MOUTH

By far the most successful promotional campaign is customer referrals. If an existing customer has given your name to a friend or family member you can be reasonably certain you stand a 90% plus chance of gaining the potential business. That is not to say you can be any less professional or you can increase your price slightly to obtain an improved margin.

Consider planning a referral program within your marketing plan and, if you require any tips or advice to put together a program, please do not hesitate to contact your central support team.

As we obtain further input from the network we will update the cost effective promotional sources section so that all can take full advantage of tried and tested systems.

**B. 17 nicenstripy ADVERTISEMENT
EXAMPLES**



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