

**Reaching out to Businesses**

**An Action Plan to Market Local**

**Business Development Resources and Services.**

**November 2016**

Tools for Business Success has created a best practices strategy or Action Plan to help our clients market local business assistance resources to their community. These ideas can certainly be used to promote your Tools resources, but they can also be used to market all your business services.

We chose to make this Action Plan larger than just The Tools for Business Success, because we believe a broader effort can have a greater impact on local businesses and potential entrepreneurs, on our clients, and on The Tools as well.

You are welcome to modify this strategy and make it your own. This Action Plan is revised regularly. It is always a “work in progress.” If you have new ideas, please share with us, so all our clients can benefit.

**Tools for Business Success**

For information, contact Kay Reynolds, kreynolds@toolsforbusiness.info 866-429-1527

**30 Ways to Reach**

**Your Business Community**

**Ask Yourself:**

**Since you built it,….Have they come?**

**After all your efforts, are you frustrated not enough people know about your services or your successes?**

**Do potential entrepreneurs and local businesses know you can help them?**

**Do you have the support you need?**

**When you ask your council, city, county, or sponsors for funding, do you have to explain all over again what you’ve done to justify their investment?**

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**You have the services and the resources.**

**Now, let your community know what you do.**

**Make more of a difference.**

 **1. Have a “How To” Plan.**

**It doesn’t need to be fancy or cost a lot. You want something you and your staff can refer to or show your Board or Council. You can start with this document if you want. Keep what you like and toss the rest aside.**

**Like the Pirate’s Code,**

**“It’s more what you’d call guidelines.”**

 **2. Use our FREE marketing material.**

 **3. Attack marketing on multiple fronts.**

**Different people respond to different approaches. Some prefer the printed page.**

 **4. Consider a weekly newspaper column.**

 **Most papers are delighted to have a stable supply of articles. Use the 10-Minute Tune-up or Grab & Go as starters.**

 **5. Issue press releases whenever appropriate.**

 **6. Do regular ads work in your area?**

 **7. Get business cards on your services.**

 **The Tools can send you a free e-version of a Tools card or use a card that covers more of your services.**

 **8. Consider 11 x 17 posters for you and your partners.**

 **We can send you a free e-version of a Tools poster or create one that covers more of your service.**

 **9. Use Local Flyers – EXTENSIVELY.**

 **Use the backside to promote your partners. Changes are they’ll hand the flyers out as well.**

 **Hand them out at events, meetings, and trainings.**

 **Keep a pile at your front desk.**

**Give copies to your board, the chamber, the SBDC, SCORE, the WIB, and others.**

 **Don’t forget your local libraries.**

**Ask the City to send flyers out with business license applications and renewals.**

**Ask your utilities to include them once a year with local bills.**

**10. Don’t be afraid to be creative!**

**11. Consider a stand-alone banner for banks, your lobby, events, and partners.**

 **We have sample banners that can be ordered directly from our printer, or we can send you an e-version.**

**12. Take advantage of community radio and television.**

**13. Arrange for community service announcements or maybe a regular ad.**

**14. Set up weekly talk shows. Include success stories.**

**15. Have a professional video made about all your services.**

**16. Reach out to your Spanish and other language stations.**

**17. Update your technology as needed. Is yours up to date?**

**18. Design a prominent link on your homepage.**

 **The Tools has lots of examples or use your own design. Having an image and text are best. Clients have used a toolbox, a Swiss Army knife, etc. Adding the word “Free” in text can make a difference.**

**19. Have a second link to your successes. Brag a bit!**

**20. Add images & links to emails & correspondence.**

 **We can help…at no cost.**

**21. Make Maximum Use of your e-newsletter.**

**Profile a local resource in each issue.**

**Include new federal, state, regional, and local resources.**

**Highlight local business successes.**

**22. Get serious about social media.**

**Use Facebook, LinkedIn, and others. to reach different types of entrepreneurs.**

**Consider frequent postings on Facebook.**

**Take advantage, tell your Success Stories.**

**Update resources.**

**Announce business expansions and locations.**

**Make it newsworthy; don’t just chat about the weather.**

**Aim for locals to say, “Did you read about…..?”**

**23. Partner. Partner. Partner.**

**Reach out to your:**

 **SBDC, SCORE, Libraries**

 **Chambers & downtown groups**

 **City and County**

 **Workforce agencies**

**Use your imagination!**

**Put your SBDC up front.**

**Don’t forget ethnic chambers & groups.**

**Remember your libraries are a key referral points.**

**Encourage linking to one another’s website.**

**Attend their events.**

**Have a regular column in their publications.**

**Learn about one another; meet regularly, share the responsibilities, ……………. and the credit.**

 **“Park your egos at the door and put the customer first.” Jack Llewellyn, CEO, Durango, Colorado Chamber**

**24. Visit your businesses!**

**Assemble a quality team.**

**Educate your staff, Council, Board, partners, volunteers, and ambassadors.**

**Consider a formal or informal Business Visitation Guide.**

**Create a compelling “Elevator Speech.”**

**Leave contact and program material with the business.**

**Drop off a survey to be completed anonymously and mailed in.**

**Emphasize & Re-emphasize to your team, the importance of CONFIDENTIALITY.**

**DON’T offer assistance if you can’t follow up quickly.**

**25. Maximize your events.**

**Host monthly Brown Bag or Learn & Lunch Business events.**

**Schedule free, or almost free, workshops.**

**Tie into the Chamber’s New Member Orientation.**

**Don’t rule out unusual events.**

**26. Consider an Annual Business Summit or Expo.**

**Have an exciting Keynote Speaker.**

**Present an update on your economy.**

**One more time: Celebrate Business Successes.**

**Have handouts on your services and resources.**

**Set up side workshops.**

**27. Survey your businesses.**

**Consider multiple ways of reaching your companies.**

 **Go to their location.**

 **Do a telephone survey.**

 **Mail a paper survey.**

 **Conduct focus groups.**

 **Post a survey on Facebook.**

 **Put a survey on your website.**

 **Email a survey.**

**Include questions that list your services & resources.**

**Enclose a brochure or flyer about your services or include a link to that information.**

**Respond quickly to requests for assistance.**

**Follow up with survey results.**

**28. Evaluate.**

 **Look at your program objectively. What’s worked well? What hasn’t?**

**29. Quantify.**

 **Whenever possible, count, measure, and tally results and costs.**

**30. Modify.**

 **Don’t be afraid to make changes. Learn from others.**

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**Kay Reynolds**

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**kreynolds@toolsforbusiness.info**

**www.toolsforbusiness.info**