

# Piggyback your promotions to get re

Exhibitors that integrate their general promotions around their shows, achieve substantially improved results. They save lots of money too.

By Colin Green

**J**OHN Wanamaker, a successful US department store magnate at the turn of the 20th century famously observed "I know that I waste half of my marketing dollar - I just don't know which half".

Integrating all of your promotions with your show schedule is a large part of the magic bullet.

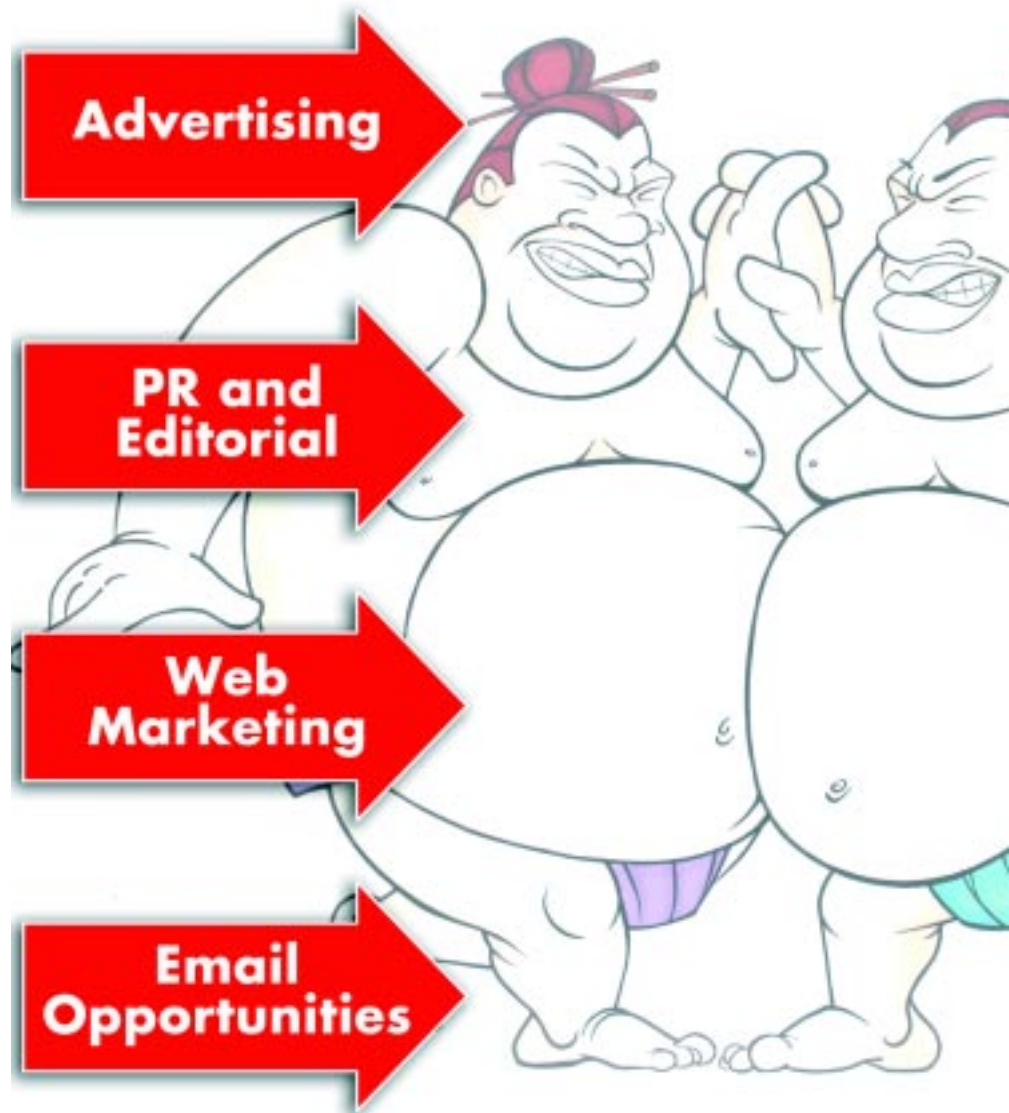
Near where I live there is a company that sells boats. They use innovative radio advertisements persuading listeners that owning a boat is most affordable and to call into their show-rooms to get set up for the boating lifestyle.

They take a large stand at the annual boat show too. They make great offers to persuade buyers that owning a boat is most affordable and, again, that they can sign up right there to get set up for the boating lifestyle.

Same message — two different media. What is really puzzling is that they don't join the dots... They never mention their presence at the show in their advertisements. Yet the show is bursting with would-be boaties who while unlikely to drive to the show-room, are at the show! Why don't they modify their advertisements before and during the show, directing prospects to their stand?

What makes it even more surprising is that few other exhibitors do either!

What an opportunity for the savvy exhibitor! Consistent long term promotion is a primary key to branding. What power to focus it right at your show presence, bringing it from the relatively impersonal realm of general



marketing to the intensely personal world of the exhibition.

It's even more powerful when you promote in the same media that your show(s) use, successfully combining with and piggybacking on the show's activities to bring valuable buyers right to your stand.

### Belly to Belly Marketing...

Exhibition marketing is unlike any other mass medium. Belly-to-belly, nose-to-nose, eye-to-eye - it's intensely personal. The most valuable buyers in the audience are those who already feel that they know you. When you integrate

# Real returns for your marketing dollar

your marketing effectively they actually do...

## General Advertising

In addition to modifying your advertisements as the show approaches, build the "look and feel" of your promotions right into your stand too. It taps into the feelings of familiarity in your Targets



minds. And it makes the task of designing your stand considerably easier — you have a solid template on which to build.

## Editorial & Public Relations

Send editorial to the same publications that the show uses to promote to

buyers. Readers will see you at the show — and your credibility and interest factor will be substantially enhanced.

Editors publish what their readers want to read - not what hopeful writers send in hoping for publication. So inclusion in a publication that addresses your specific Target Market is fair proof that you really have addressed that Target Market appropriately.

Publications like good graphics - choose these with care to enhance instant recognition of your stand.

## Web Marketing

List the shows you're exhibiting at on the front page. Provide links to information within your site. Use the show logo(s) along with the locations and dates.

Optimise for the search engines. As well as featuring words your Target Market might use to find you, include the locations and names of the shows you exhibit at too. This is a specialised field so it pays to use professionals.

Include a "Let's Meet!" form where Targets can request a time to catch up.

## Email Opportunities

Include "Meet us at the ABC Exhibition, 2-8 June in Farawaytown" in the footers of all emails that your company sends and link to your web site.

Everyone in your company will automatically promote your shows when they send email.

## Direct Mail

Direct mail costs around a dollar a piece. For very few cents more your existing mailings can also very effectively promote your shows.

Add a note — "DL" size is great - noting the shows where Targets can meet you. Perhaps invite them to call for a "free show ticket" which most exhibition organisers are pleased to provide, probably free of charge.

Be simple and direct. A specific show, date, place and your exhibit stand number as each show approaches is best.

## Company Personnel

Get staff worked up and excited at the show! Persuade them that it's where the people are!

Count down the days to the next show with an office sign. Rev the Team up at staff meetings! Rev yourself up! Supply pre-printed "With Compliments" forms with your stand number and encourage staff to tell phone callers "I'll send you a free ticket today!" It's easy to hand-write a caller's name and address and mail the ticket with the "With Compliments" form — and so personal!

Everyone can do this. Sales, accounts, reception, technical, management...

## Channel Partners

Encourage your upstream suppliers and downstream Channel Partners to promote your show. Both have a vital interest in building your mutual business — encourage them!

Supply them with "With Compliments" forms and free tickets too. They have many contacts you'd otherwise miss. Encourage them to actively participate in your exhibition too!

## More!

Telephone "on hold" messages, a line on your business cards - the possibilities are limited only by imagination. Get innovative!

Take a moment now. Create a list of ways to promote your show participation and draw Targets to you at every show you do. How can you modify existing promotions — at little or NO cost? What else can you do throughout the year? How can you ensure that your promotions build an image that will be triggered when Targets see your stand?

Done well — and it's so very easy — your problem at your next show will not be attracting an audience — it will be handling and filtering the crowds that stop to see you. Which we'll look at next time...