

Top 10 Marketing Ideas Under \$50

By: Nanette Miner

#1 Everybody in your salon should have their own business cards. It is an expectation of consumers that a “professional,” at the bare minimum, has a business card. You can order 250 FREE business cards from www.VistaPrint.com. VistaPrint does put their own web address on the back of your card, as a marketing vehicle for themselves, however it’s very tasteful and it’s hardly an imposition for you since you ARE getting cards for free!

#2 If you use flyers for announcements and specials, print them on goldenrod-colored paper. Studies have show that goldenrod paper returns the best response for sales letters. You can purchase a ream of goldenrod paper at your nearby office supply store for under \$10.

#3 Speak to community groups and civic clubs. Community groups and civic clubs such as the rotary, lion’s club, women’s club, etc. are always looking for speakers for their monthly programs. You may do 45 minutes to an hour about the latest styles for spring, or at-home skin care remedies, or something that would appeal to both a male and female audience. Ask your customers what groups they belong to and if those groups are looking for speakers. When one of your customers refers you into a group, it’s more than likely that you will be chosen as a speaker.

#4 Referral cards. Referral cards are handed out to your existing customers for them to distribute to their friends and family. Print them on a regular business-sized card with your salon name, address and telephone number, and a line that says “Referred by: _____.” Create an incentive for your customers to refer your salon by offering a free haircut with every five (or ten) referral cards you receive back with their name.

#5 Give away product that isn’t selling well. If you have product that is not moving off your shelves, it is costing you money to keep it there rather than replacing it with product that DOES sell. Bundle the hard-to-sell items with more desirable products and create a price that is slightly higher than the desirable product, or slightly lower than the cost if the products had been purchased separately. This will move product off your shelves, will bring in income, and will be viewed as a good-will gesture by your customers.

#6 Gift certificates. Gift certificates are marvelous sales because typically two-thirds of certificates are never redeemed. Pre-print your certificates for actual services rather than monetary amounts. This allows the giver to give a certificate to your salon and not let the recipient know how much was spent on the gift. You can print your own certificates by buying blank ones at an office supply store for under \$15 – then simply run them through your own printer.

#7 Sponsor an event. Non-profit organizations in your community are always looking for businesses to partner with for charitable causes. You may hold a cut-a-thon in your store or sponsor a contestant in the “Little Miss *Your Town*” pageant.

#8 Salon services club. A salon services club is much like a frequent flyer program with an airline. You can create a methodology that encourages your customers to return to your salon again and again. You may make a salon services club for a specific service such as a cut or color or manicure; you might create a salon services club for a certain dollar expenditure – say for every \$25.00 spent in the salon, the club member receives \$2.50 toward a future services (that’s a 10% savings); or you may simply make the salon services club generic and for every tenth or twelfth visit, the customer receives their next service for free.

#9 New client phone calls. Too often we take our customers for granted. When a new client comes to your salon for the first time, within 24 to 48-hours, you or someone you designate, should call that customer to ask if they are satisfied with the service and their salon-experience in general. This one activity generates more good will than any other type of marketing you can do – and it costs you nothing.

#10 Booklets. Booklets are an excellent marketing tool; they give you credibility as well as a side-line income to your regular business. Offer booklets for sale at the counter or at special events where the salon is appearing. Two to three dollars is sufficient to entice people to brush up on techniques or learn new ones (example: Three New Up-Dos for Prom or Wedding Season). There are fairly cheap computer programs that allow you to first create your booklet in Word and then transform it into a side-by-side booklet or three-fold brochure.

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Nanette Miner is a small-business marketing expert and co-author of the book, *101 Media and Marketing Tips for Salon Owners, Stylists and Managers*.