

UW-Stevens Point PRSSA

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How do Small Businesses Reach Customers with a Small Budget?

The Importance of PR for Local Businesses

The hardest thing for a new/small businesses to do is develop a customer base. How does a company advertise themselves when there is no money in the budget to put toward marketing? Costs for advertisements aren't cheap and can be costly to a start-up business or a small business in general.

The first thing a business starting up should do is define its internal and external values. These are crucial for every business and should be evident in every mean of communication; with media and with customers. Once those are established the message must reach the consumer base.

Let's look at average cost ranges in Wisconsin:

- Newspaper Advertisement: \$7- \$350
- Radio Advertisements: \$25-\$80
- 30-second TV Commercial: \$200-\$1,500
- Digital Billboard Advertisements: \$1,500 to \$3,000
- Standard Billboard Advertisement: \$650 to \$3,000

These are just prices in Wisconsin's major areas, the national averages for these forms of marketing are double, if not more than that.

With costs so high, developing a social media platform is the cheapest way to reach customers. Social media accounts are free and are extremely important resources to reach, arguably, the largest audience. It's true that advertisements through social media can add up, but in building a business, advertisements aren't needed as much as building a base online that people can find within a couple of clicks.

Once that social media base is created, it is important to encourage customers to leave their opinion on the page through reviews. This type of campaign could be in a handout included with receipt of purchase or even a conversation about leaving a review. Good or bad, these reviews help gain credibility or can give great insight on what needs to be improved.

Public Relations is important to a business because it defines the brand, can increase sales, and helps gain 3rd party credibility. A business can market itself to look great, but it can easily lose its reputation from bad reviews, comments, or news articles.

Relationships are free. It is important to start building strong relationships with customers, local leaders, media professionals, and the community overall. These relationships give a business an aura that becomes a strong reputation that isn't easily taken away.

Businesses don't have to spend millions to become known. Start with social media to get external news out, build relationships, and focus on values and a small business can get a big name in a community.

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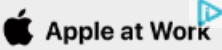
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