

grassroots marketing campaigns has landed her contract work with Godiva and PepsiCo, among others, pushing entrepreneurs to brand themselves along with their businesses makes perfect sense.

"Aside from just promoting the product or service alone, I encourage them to market themselves as personalities in their own communities," says Lichtenstein, who used this concept to establish Bucktown, Ill., paint boutique owner Michelle Herzog as a Chicago-based color expert.

"Really, how many people would naturally think of paint as a lifestyle decision?" Lichtenstein says. "But after spending any amount of time with Michelle, it's easy to see that she's so much more than the owner of a great store. Her time is a commodity too."

4 JOIN THE CLUB — OR FIVE >>

Lichtenstein advises all new clients to join their local chambers of commerce. Why? "Because aside from providing instant exposure to the local business market, it invariably leads to co-branding, advertising and cross-promotion opportunities that drive long-term profits," Lichtenstein says.

Alison Statler, a product placement strategist, has seen clients like eyewear house Face à Face rake in profits after placement on hot shows such as *Alias*, *Desperate Housewives* and *Grey's Anatomy*. Her secret? "There are so many resources to be found just by joining a civic organization or attending a magazine launch," Statler says. "That's how I met nearly every one of my clients."

Organizations like the National Association of Women Business Owners, the National Women's Business Council and the Women's Business Connection host free forums and networking events on a regular basis.

5 SPEAK UP (AND OUT!) >>

Susan Valeri, vice president of Outstanding Women Speak, an international bureau representing women from Karen Bokram, publisher of *Girls' Life* magazine, to television personality Star Jones Reynolds, considers speakers bur-

eous an underutilized resource.

"People are always eager to hear someone else's story, or take in another perspective," Valeri says. And they're willing to pay.

According to Valeri, legitimate bureaus represent speakers for a small percentage of the speaker's fee. She adds that the ethical ones won't charge a dime to review the press materials, video packages and speaking samples that most require when you apply.

6 GO WHERE YOU'RE NEEDED >>

Yoshi Simms, principal at The Publicity Formula, an Atlanta-based firm specializing in marketing packages for businesses of all sizes, is never afraid to solicit paid opportunities on behalf of her clients, wherever the gigs may be.

Simms, for example, recently booked personal finance author Harrine Freeman to speak to a gathering of FedEx employees. She advises seeking out like-minded companies that might benefit from your expertise, requesting calendar dates for their corporate meetings or forums, and volunteering to tailor your message to any topic.

7 SEEK OUT THE "IT" FACTOR >>

Like Lichtenstein, Rebekah Iliff of XA, The Experiential Agency, in Los Angeles tries to coax a showstopper personality out of clients who hire her to promote their businesses. Even when it comes to big-name Experiential accounts like Tag Heuer, she always looks for what she calls "potential brand ambassadors."

"The marketing dream is to have a client that's also home to a personality," says Iliff, who recently helped place top chef Douglas Rodriguez—already considered an expert in the culinary world—on NBC's *Today*. "Even when they're affiliated with big brands or concepts, having individuals with an 'It' factor can be priceless," Iliff says.

8 GRAB A PARTNER >>

Iliff can cite numerous times when partnering with an unexpected brand—namely nonprofits or those related to the arts—has opened new market doors.

Pairing client Snow Queen vodka with the Sundance Film Festival and the nonprofit Freedom Campaign proved a business boon for all three.

Snow Queen, a U.K. brand, was new to the U.S. and was planning a spring 2007 launch in Los Angeles, hometown to most of Sundance's patrons. The opportunity to show off the emerging liquor client among the bigwigs attending Sundance was a no-brainer. Likewise for the Freedom Campaign, which arranged for 10-minute teaser showings of its upcoming documentaries to precede certain movies.

9 GIVE TO GET >>

Rafferty, Iliff and Lichtenstein agree: The goodie bags, giveaways and freebies that we're often tempted to think of in terms of short-term cost, not long-term profit, can be important tools when placed in the right context.

"Think about it this way," Iliff says. "You can buy ads in markets where thousands of people will see your brand's name and walk away, or you can place your product or service in the hands of the right 100 people." In terms of ad dollars and what you'd spend on a traditional marketing budget, getting real products to the right people at the right time is a priceless profit strategy.

10 NEVER HESITATE TO ASK >>

"The best way to find out how to do something is to pay attention to who's already doing it," says Statler, who also hosts a weekly Connecticut radio show called *Greenwich Entrepreneurs*, featuring successful businesspeople from all walks of life.

"Other than a passion for what they do, the best guests that come on the show have something else in common," Statler says. "They're not afraid to put themselves out there. They're not afraid to ask. They ask themselves if there's a demand for their skills, and they ask others how they started their businesses and how they turned profits." ■

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