

MORE THINGS WE SHOULD KNOW ABOUT RUNNING OUR BUSINESS

by Barbara Schuckman

Miniatures BY BARB

I hope that after reading my last article you gave some thought to your goals for the future of your business. Did you think about a Mission Statement? Writing mine, which I did for the article, helped me focus on my next business step. Marketing my business in new areas.

During a telephone conversation, with a gentleman who's article I read, I mentioned how impressed I was by the article he had written and what great advertising it was for his company. The gentleman informed me that he had learned it from Guerilla Marketing. I visited my local library and found Jan Conrad Levinson had written a series of Guerilla Marketing books. You might want to review them. They are not long winded or overly wordy. His books are primarily lists of ideas, many of which are easily implemented

Marketing does not only consist of print ads. Marketing is whatever puts your product or shop in front of potential customers. The reasons for marketing should seem obvious. The marketplace is always changing. Your competition is marketing himself. People forget quickly. You need to attract new customers and retain the attention of existing customers.

A creative marketing plan will establish your company image. It should be consistent in style and message. It is important to identify the markets you want to reach. Identify their needs and list your products and services that satisfy them. To help you decide how you meet these needs complete the sentence: "My shop is special because.....".

A media marketing plan will help you identify what publicity and advertising will help you meet your goals. Don't keep falling into the same rut. Of course advertising in trade publications keeps your name in front of your customers. Speak with the advertising departments of the trade publications. Ask for new ideas in advertising. Be creative, try new venues. Offer to teach a course in a local school. Be a guest speaker in the library or a local civic group. Create a project with a young person's group. Try introducing your product into new markets. Consider the home decorating market or the gift market. Offer to display a doll house or some miniatures. Ask a realtor, a gift shop, furniture store, antique shop or interior decorator if they would like something to display.

If you already have a marketing plan remember it should be reviewed periodically. As the economy, competition and consumer's needs change, so must your marketing strategy.

If tackling a marketing plan for the first time sounds too daunting or you can't think of how to change what you have been doing try one new thing. I once read, "Don't expect things to change, if you won't", it seems appropriate here. This year will lead us into a new century. How about the internet? Both MIAA and CIMTA will give you a free listing on their web pages if you are a member. Think of all the potential customers you can reach.

Yes, think of all the potential customers you can reach. You must market your shop. Who knows it better than you?