



# Review

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 2

A review of great thinking from

## INGENUITY MARKETING GROUP

*a marketing and training firm that works primarily with professional service organizations and small businesses.*

*We offer strategic marketing planning and coaching, marketing program development, and curriculum and training mainly in the areas of consultative selling, professional service marketing, and customer service.*

Wendy Nemitz



Dawn Wagenaar



360 Robert Street North, Suite 510  
St. Paul MN 55101 Phone 651.690.3358  
Website: [ingenuitymarketing.com](http://ingenuitymarketing.com)  
E-mail: [wendy@ingenuitymarketing.com](mailto:wendy@ingenuitymarketing.com)  
[dawn@ingenuitymarketing.com](mailto:dawn@ingenuitymarketing.com)

## Creating a Media Buzz When Your Industry Seems Boring

By Liz Kuntz, Marketing Consultant  
(Based on a presentation from Beth Ewen,  
Editor of *Upsize Minnesota*)

*Upsize* is a terrific publication for small businesses that want to grow as it addresses many business challenges and contains a lot of very specific “how-to” advice from a wide variety of local experts. Their website is [www.upsizemag.com](http://www.upsizemag.com).

In January we attended the monthly meeting of the Minnesota Chapter of the Association of Accounting Marketing. Beth Ewen, editor and co-founder of *Upsize*, presented several outstanding and practical how-tos on working with the news media to create a buzz around your industry—even if what you do seems boring. Here is what we learned from Beth.

Accept the obvious. Emphasize the positive.

Interpretation: Professional service industries get a rap for being boring and that’s OK. They are also known to be stable, solid, reliable, smart, and dependable. These latter traits are the journalists’ dream source.

If a journalist has been assigned a story relating to general business trends, an accountant, for instance, would have tremendous value as a source. By trade, they have seen, lived through—and helped their clients live through—all types of business climates and situations.

Use your “boring” traits as an advantage when it comes to being a source.

## Here are 10 other tips from Beth to give you an advantage in working with the news media.

### **Build up trust with editors and reporters over the long-term.**

Most business reporters are terrified of getting information wrong. As a source—above everything else—you must be trustworthy. Always tell the truth. If you don't, word spreads fast among reporters and you will have severely minimized your chances of being quoted again. This brings us to the next tip.

### **Recognize that there are about five jobs in journalism and everybody just trades them.**

Word will get around about a source's trustworthiness, especially when staff members go to new organizations. On the flip side, reporters will take their best sources with them as they switch jobs.

### **Never blow off a reporter because you think the publication isn't important enough.**

It's almost a guarantee that the reporter who calls you from the local cable access station will one day be the managing editor of the state's largest daily newspaper. Be nice to them now, and they will be nice to you then. The more obscure the publication and the more inexperienced the reporter, the more grateful that reporter will be when you return a phone call. This gratitude will be remembered as they move up the ranks of their journalism careers.

### **Always build relationships with the people who have the quota.**

Often times it's the beat reporters—not the top editors—who are looking for a good story. Most are required to come up with a certain number of stories, or at least story ideas, each week, or day, or even hour. Find out who these people are by looking and listening for their bylines on articles in sections or segments where you'd want to be quoted. Then pitch your story ideas to them.

### **Read the publications and listen to the broadcasts where you want to be.**

By reading the publications and listening to the broadcasts you want to appear in, you will become familiar with specific sections and segments unique to each. With that knowledge, tailor your story pitches. If you speak directly to the right person's needs to fill actual content requirements, you will be that much more successful in getting mentioned in the media of your choice. If they call a section "Business Briefings," you call it by the same name. They will appreciate you tailoring your pitch to their needs.

### **Choose a few publications or shows and focus exclusively on them.**

Spreading yourself too thin is not going to get you anywhere. If you choose and focus, you will have a higher success rate in getting quoted or published.

### **It never hurts to compliment (sincerely) a reporter or editor.**

They like to pretend they don't care, but every reporter will keep forever the three thank-you notes they've ever received. So receiving a sincere email or phone call from a source commenting specifically about something they've written will go a long way. Just don't send gifts, most are unable to accept them.

### **Get quoted and published any way and anywhere you can.**

The first thing most reporters do once they get an assignment is check the Internet to see who has been quoted on the subject in the past. Those people typically make it on the source list. To increase your odds of coming up on an Internet search for a specific topic: write an op-ed piece, contribute to a how-to article, speak at a meeting so you are on the calendar, enter a business contest. Be in the news and you will continue to be in the news. (Ingenuity's Tip: Then post that information on your website as well).

### **Embrace the chaos that is the news business.**

Each person has their own system for choosing stories, although the term system should probably be used lightly.

There is not a magical formula to getting yourself or your story in the news. If one thing does not get attention, try, try again. Eventually you will break through.

### **Realize that it's the reporter's story, not yours.**

The press is protected in our society. They get to write the story. Unless you are paying for the content you will not get to see a copy of the story in advance. Attempting to violate this principle will make journalists cranky and may even cause them to drop you as a source.

### **BONUS TIP: If you get attention from someone in the news media, TALK!**

There is no faster way to drop OFF a reporter's go-to list than to be a person who won't talk. Conversely, there is no better way to become a trusted and much-covered source than to always have something to say.



## **Making the Most of Your Association Membership**



By Liz Kuntz, Marketing Consultant

The key to growing your business through an association membership is directly related to your level of involvement. It's always easier and more fun to do business with people you know.

However, the key opportunity most professionals miss when they pay their dues and join an association is that they do not actually show up to an event/meeting very often. There are always good reasons to miss association meetings, but if you miss too many you may as well just save your money. Having your logo in the association directory will not create new business. Showing up and meeting people and becoming actively involved will.

It's not possible for people to get to know you if you don't attend the meetings and get involved. As you know, if you are selling professional services you are selling yourself.

*We thought we would help you make the most of your investment in any association with these surefire methods:*

### **{ SHOW UP...AND INTERACT }**

Most associations hold monthly meetings. These meetings usually happen on the same day each month and at the same time—usually taking less than two hours. Once you figure out your association's meeting pattern, put each month's meeting in your calendar for the entire year. Treat these meetings like an appointment, not like something you can do if no other appointments get made.

Show up early and stay late. The most valuable networking time at these meetings is usually before or after the meeting. Once you're at the meeting, interact. Simply being in

attendance isn't going to help build relationships. While the idea of talking to strangers may not be appealing to most of us, it is necessary. Everyone in the room is in some way related to the industry the association caters to, which means you have something in common with everyone in the room. Use that common attribute as a conversation starter. You'll be surprised what you can learn once you break the ice.

If you're attending a meeting for the first time and don't know anyone when you show up, ask the person at the

registration desk to point out a board member or the executive director to you. It is these people's jobs to make sure newcomers feel welcome and get introduced to other people in the room.

### { JOIN A COMMITTEE }

Every association has committees—government relations, membership, sponsorship, programs, communications, special events, and the list can go on and on depending on the association size. Pick one and join it.

According to the article “Tracking Volunteer Trends” in the January 2005 issue of Association Management magazine, “Reluctance to commit to a long-term volunteer assignment is so prevalent that it's moving from a trend to an established fact.”

Associations are aware of this view, so most try to make sure their volunteer opportunities are time-sensitive. This includes sitting on a committee. Sitting on committees is often only a one-year commitment. Committees tend to meet once a month—some even happen via conference call so you don't have to leave the comfort of your office!

The two hours a month you will invest in this involvement will pay off tenfold. Sitting on a committee integrates you in to the association in ways being a regular member never will. Not only will you be giving back to an industry that has treated you well, but you will get the opportunity to build more intense, meaningful relationships with the people on your committee. You never know, the committee member sitting next to you could become your firm's biggest client in five years.

### { SPONSOR AN EVENT }

From being a general chapter sponsor to sponsoring a specific event, there is a wide range of sponsorship opportunities available through associations. Even advertising in the association newsletter or magazine can be seen as sponsorship.

Providing some sponsorship dollars will show your commitment to the association and the industry. However, review the benefit package versus the dollar amount before you decide on where to spend your money.

Unless a general chapter sponsorship allows you some free passes to monthly meetings, a free ad on the web site or in an issue of the newsletter, the opportunity to write an article or something along those lines, it's always a sure bet to sponsor an event.

Most associations have a golf tournament. Sponsoring a hole is always a wise way to spend your money, especially if the tournament director allows you to administer a contest on the hole and give away prizes, which will of course have your firm's name, logo and contact information on it. The opportunity to interact with potential clients in this fun, laid back atmosphere is priceless. People let their guard down more in environments such as this, so it's an easy opportunity to build relationships.

### { HAVE YOUR WAY WITH WORDS }

Find out if your association publishes a newsletter or magazine. If it does, put a call in to the editor and inquire about how they select their article topics and authors.

Associations typically do not have a huge budget for freelancers or staff writers. More often than not editors of association trade publications will welcome pre-written articles or members willing to author an article. If your firm has an article bank, sort through it and pull out articles you may find beneficial to the readers of your association's magazine. If these articles are tactical and not necessarily timely, they will make great filler for when an editor finds himself/herself in a bind at deadline time.

For more timely topics, pitch an article idea or topic to the editor. Be sure to offer to author the article, or at the very least be a source.

Getting published in your association's publications will lend credibility to you and your firm. People like to do business with people who know what they're doing.

If your association does not have publications, offer to be a speaker. In addition to monthly meetings, your association may have workshops. These workshops are usually intended to provide hands-on tactical information. As a provider of a professional service, these workshops are a perfect place for you to be a presenter.

Some of these workshops may be lightly attended. Don't let that discourage you. Even if only six people show up, you know they showed up because they were interested in the topic, which you just so happen to now be the expert on in their eyes. You'd rather have six people who are interested in what you have to say show up versus 60 people who don't care at all. If anything, think of all the free publicity you'll have gotten out of the association when they promoted the workshop to their members.

Despite all the other marketing you do, possibly the most effective will be joining associations (Jay Conrad Levinson, author of "Guerilla Marketing: Secrets for Making Big Profits from your Small Business"). You will make lots of contacts with people who can give you business and with people who will refer business to you. But if you join just to obtain business without being willing to help the industry and the association, all of these surefire tips to making the most of your association membership will no longer be surefire. Your true motivation will be discovered, causing you to lose business.

If, in addition to business development, your intentions are to give back to the community or industry that has been good to you by participating and volunteering in your association, you will most likely end up with important contacts.

"If you work hard and diligently for the community, folks will assume that you run your business the same way, and they'll want to do business with you," says Levinson in his book.

#### RECOMMENDED READING / BIBLIOGRAPHY

Levinson, Jay Conrad. "Guerilla Marketing: Big Profits from your Small Business."  
Houghton Mifflin Company: 1993.

Ellis, Susan J. "Tracking Volunteer Trends."  
Association Management magazine: January 2005.



### Our Tip to You

*When talking to a prospect, do not focus on the problems of the proposed work. Focus instead on the possibilities of the project, your enthusiasm for working with them and building the relationship. Save a mulling through of all the problems for talk with your team.*

We are delighted to welcome  
*Christine Nelson* to our team.



*Transitioning back to full career mode after balancing freelance communications and two awesome daughters, Natalie and Nicole, Christine reconnected with Wendy Nemitz, who gave her one of her first freelance clients in 1998.*

**Christine will work as a communications consultant with many of our clients to:**

- ~ Provide a wide range of communications expertise, including sales, marketing and advertising copy and website content.
- ~ Design and implement public relations campaigns, and build rapport with key media contacts.
- ~ Support internal client communications, from newsletters and proposals to client surveys and branding.
- ~ Represent a high level of service and professionalism with clients.



*Christine with her daughters  
Nicole (left) and Natalie (right).*

As a Strategic Achiever, Christine is adept at discerning broader patterns that result in clear, timely communications for the market. Her ideal goal is to connect Ingenuity's service-provider clients with the end-users who need them most. Christine is excited to do this by discovering and emphasizing what makes each client unique in their marketplace.

In addition to the occasional date night with her band director husband, Andy, Christine also enjoys cozy evenings with a good book, toddler tea parties and a brain-rousing game of Cranium with her 5-year-old. We heard a rumor that the 5-year-old wins.

Wendy, who is well known for her high writing standards (read snobbery), respects Christine's exceptional writing and interviewing skills. Dawn admires the Achiever in Christine and her ability to make sure it all gets done right and on time. Liz is amazed—and intrigued—with Christine's extensive knowledge base (it's the Input in Christine). Now that Liz and Christine are office roommates, Liz can't wait to start tapping Christine as a resource.

As well as professional service marketing, Christine has been a business journalist with a daily paper and still writes and edits features for a business women's publication. She has worked in IT and hospitality.

**\*\***The jargon about Strategic Achiever et al is from the Gallup Organization's "Now, Discover Your Strengths." It gives you a great vocabulary for discerning and appreciating the greatness in others.