

Marketing Materials Workshop Script

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Welcome to Essential Marketing Materials for Your Business. This workshop, presented by DBE Supportive Services, is designed for Maine certified Disadvantaged Business Enterprises or DBEs.

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In this workshop we will cover the following: What are marketing materials?; Marketing materials checklist; Creating marketing materials; Marketing Tools; Market research; Promotion; and Marketing mistakes to avoid.

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Marketing materials are printed pieces which you will use to promote your business. These materials include business cards, brochures and letterhead.

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What types of marketing materials should you consider for your business? This checklist is a good place to start. Consider having a logo; a unique selling proposition or USP; a business card; business stationary; a website; a brochure, flyer or leaflet; an e-mail signature and an elevator speech.

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When creating marketing materials, you need to answer the following questions:

- Are you defining the nature of your product or service and listing all the features that would be of interest to a prospective customer?
- Are you defining clearly why you are different from your competitors? Maybe you supply something that no one else does. Why do your prospective customers need you and not your competitor?
- Are your materials written for your target audience? Have you done research on your target audience and do you have more than one?
- Is your information easy to understand and read?
- Do your materials draw your prospective customers' interest?
- Do your materials have a consistent and familiar design?

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The first step to having successful marketing materials is the creation of your logo. Your logo provides a "look" for your company that people will recognize and associate with your company over time. For example, the recycling logo is recognized by people all over the world. If possible, have your logo created by a professional. They will be able to help you decide on an image that will reflect your company. Working with a designer to discuss colors and graphics will provide you with a polished, professional look that will be memorable to your customers.

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Next, you should create a unique selling proposition or USP. The USP is your tagline or slogan and identifies what makes you unique. It should describe your business and it may even be the first line from your mission statement. It will provide the same recognition to your customers as your logo. For example, the recycling USP is "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle."

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Once you have a logo and USP, you can create a business card. Your business card is a tool that you can hand out to a perspective client or potential business contact at any time as they are easy to carry with you at all times. Your business card should include your logo, USP, name, contact information (such as your address, phone and fax numbers and your e-mail address) and website address if you have one. (We will discuss creating a website in a moment). You should also consider utilizing the back of your business card to list your products or services, customer testimonials, projects you have completed or any other information you feel would be valuable to the audience you will give your card to. When creating your business card, remember that your card should tell your audience what you do. This is important especially if your business name and USP do not clearly convey what your company does. For example, if you are ABC Inc., it's not clear what products or services you offer just by looking at your company name. Be sure to include that description somewhere on your business card and remember you can always use the back if you find you may need to explain your business in detail.

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Next, you may want to consider having business stationary. Having letterhead created is another way to get customers to recognize your business. Your letterhead should include your logo, USP and contact information. Having envelopes that match your letterhead also provides branding recognition. You may even want to print your invoices on your letterhead or add your logo, USP and contact information to your invoice template.

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What about a website? With increasing technology and the ease of using the internet, it is important to consider having a website for your company. A website gives your company an online presence. More and more people are searching for businesses using the internet and having a website will allow potential customers to find you. An important factor to think about when creating a website is using meta tags or meta elements as they will provide keywords to internet search engines. Meta tags are coded bits of information placed in the heading section of your website that are not seen by the user. This is how a search engine finds your website for the person conducting the search. Discuss using these elements with your website designer when your website is created. When creating a website, include your logo, USP and contact information. Think about what you want your website to do for your company. Do you want an informative website or an interactive website? An informative website offers key information about your company such as a detailed description of the company itself, your products or services, the projects you have completed, customer testimonials and a way to contact you. An interactive website provides the user tools to complete tasks such as ordering products, being added to your mailing list or requesting quotes. You should discuss all of these elements with your website designer to ensure the creation of a website that reflects your company's image. Remember, if you are a Maine certified DBE and your business resides in the state of Maine, DBE Supportive Services can work with you and a student intern from the University of Maine at Augusta to develop a website for your company.

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Having additional printed marketing materials, such as a brochure, flyer or leaflet, provides you with a handout that presents more in depth information about your company than your business card. It can be used for distribution at a trade show or as a mailer to current or prospective customers. Depending on what your business offers, you may need more than one printed marketing piece. If you have different types of customers, you may need varying handouts so that you can present your business information in a way that makes sense to each audience. Another reason to have more than one printed piece is if you have a wide variety of products or

services that need to be separated from one another. Another option is to create a general handout about your company and additional pieces that highlight particular products or services. For example, if you release a new product, you should consider a printed marketing piece just for that product to send to your customers. If you are a Maine certified DBE and your business resides in the state of Maine, DBE Supportive Services can work with you to create these printed marketing materials.

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Do not underestimate the power of an e-mail signature. It is a quick and simple marketing tool that you can create anytime. Most e-mail systems have an option to create a permanent e-mail signature so that it is included on all of your e-mail correspondence. When creating your signature, include your name, title, business name, contact information, USP and website address. You may also want to use your e-mail signature to promote an event or something new in your business such as a new product or service.

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Finally, consider writing and rehearsing an elevator speech. An elevator speech is a 30-second, concise, well thought-out and practiced description of your company that anyone could understand in the time it takes to ride an elevator. Your elevator speech may be created from your mission statement or visa versa. Depending on your audience or the environment you are in you may need more than one elevator speech.

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Another component of creating marketing materials is market research. Market research is the gathering and analyzing of data about a specific market. There are two forms of market research, primary and secondary. Primary research is the gathering of information from the marketplace conducted by you. Secondary research provides broad market information conducted by an outside source not hired by your company.

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Either method of conducting research costs money and for many small businesses this may be an issue but do not underestimate the value of good market research. Try to set aside what you can for a budget to get the best information possible. Primary research will be more beneficial and relevant to your company. Some ways to conduct primary research is to survey or question your current and/or potential customer base or to hire a professional market research firm. Secondary research is less expensive but does require time. You can complete secondary research by keeping in tune with changes in your industry such as reading trade publications, talking with others in your industry, and learning about new technology relevant to your business. You can also review studies conducted by a secondary source online or in printed publications.

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You can use all of these marketing materials to promote your business. Listed here are some ways you can accomplish that. Networking events, such as conferences, tradeshow and matchmakers, are great venues to use many of your marketing materials. You can hand out business cards and brochures and use your elevator speech when meeting new people. Use your elevator speech when conducting cold calls to potential customers. This will allow you to get your message across quickly and efficiently. Send out direct mailings using your brochures, flyers or leaflets or send a letter created on your letterhead. Use your logo to advertise in trade publications or ask to have a link to your website from another company's website that you are

affiliated with. Send out press releases to promote new products or services or other news that your customers should know about.

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Here are some marketing mistakes to avoid. Do not base your marketing strategy on cost. This is hard for all small businesses on a budget. Set aside some funds to build your marketing materials and promotion. Remember, you do not have to have every marketing tool we discussed in this presentation. You must choose what is right for you and your company. You want to have materials that look professional. If possible, have your materials professionally printed even if you created them yourself. Quality paper and ink are valuable when creating materials to be handed out. Be careful that you do not advertise in publications that are not relevant to your business. Know your target audience and advertise in publications that they will read. When writing the copy for your marketing materials, do not give them to a designer until you have them proofread by someone else. This also applies if you have to create your materials in-house. You do not want your marketing materials to contain typos or information that does not make sense to the reader.

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Remember the Law of Seven. Someone needs to see your name at least seven times before they will try to do business with you. Having a consistent company image makes it that much easier to make an impression. If you are a Maine certified DBE located in the state of Maine and wish to utilize the DBE Supportive Services website development program or marketing materials creation, contact DBE Supportive Services at info@mainedbe.org.

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Thank you for participating in this online workshop. We would appreciate any feedback you have. Please complete a short survey about the workshop you just viewed by clicking on the survey button below.