

# Filling Marketing Channels With Money

*Ways to turn marketing channels into promotional gold*

*By Peter Montoya*

Direct Mail. Email. Networking. Referrals. Website. Public Relations. Seminars. Advertising. These are all marketing channels you may have used (hopefully consistently) or may want to consider using. How can you make the most of them? How can you use them synergistically?

## **Five Ways To Fortune**

I recommend that you employ **at least five channels** to reach the same target audience of prospects. For example, if you make a living as a retirement planner, you might conduct public seminars on retirement planning, send a weekly direct mailing to several senior communities, network with advocacy organizations like the American Assn. of Retired Persons, run a website filled with retirement information, and employ a referral program designed to generate recommendations from clients over 55.

## **Specific Channel Strategies**

In your channel marketing, always think: “How can each channel promote at least two other channels?”

- **Direct Mail and Email**—Aside from promoting your services or special offers, your direct mail and e-mail messages can promote speaking engagements and seminars, newspaper articles about you, and your website content. You can reserve a small space on postcards, sales letters, note cards or even HTML e-mail messages for a “This just in!” type of news blurb, where you can announce a seminar or special event.
- **Advertising**—Your ad dollars will be much better spent specifically promoting an event (such as a public workshop) than your services. However, when you do run an ad, maximize the value of your expenditure by using the space to promote other channels. Include your website address in your ad, and in addition to your seminar notice, tell people they can view and download a PDF of your brochure at the same URL if they want a quick overview of what you do.
- **Networking**—Two keys to making the most of the networking channel: know what you want to say, and get a business card from everyone you meet. When you meet people at a symposium, meeting or mixer, steer the conversation in the direction you want. But when you get a question about your work or your seminar, make sure you have the facts at your fingertips. And don’t hand out brochures at a mixer; it’s tacky. Get cards from all contacts and enter them into your database. Then you can send them a personal letter with a brochure, an invitation or anything else you want.

- **Referrals**—The reason more advisors don't get more referrals is that they don't ask for them. Apart from asking directly during a meeting, you should also have a mailing program designed to regularly solicit referrals. Send clients several copies of your brochure, asking them to give them to friends and neighbors. You can cross-promote here as well; once you get referrals, suggest that they come to your seminar, or just visit your website for more information and an introduction to your practice.
- **Internet**—More and more consumers are using the Web as their financial resource, so cross-promote your website by doing some of the following: providing an e-mail box on the home page where users can request a brochure, having a "Breaking News" sidebar on the home page where you can announce seminars, allowing people to register for seminars on the site, reprinting articles or columns online, and so on.
- **Public Relations**—We recommend sending out a press release (properly formatted and professionally written, of course) whenever you do anything remotely of note: launch or revamp a website, hold a public or private seminar, win an award, open a new office, hire an associate, change broker-dealers—you name it. You never know what editors will print to fill a few inches of empty space. (There's a lot of it to fill, even in cyberspace.) And of course, always mention any upcoming event, promotion or speaking engagement in any press release or resulting article.
- **Seminars**—We mention seminars so often because they are wonderful vehicles for attracting and closing new clients. There are several things you must do to ensure success. First, make sure you have ample promotional material, such as brochures, available in a packet that you give to every attendee. Second, promote all your other activities in written materials: a flyer about your website, a calendar of your public appearances, a column reprint, etc. Finally, make sure you book meetings DURING THE SEMINAR, instead of relying on a phone call later.

Peter Montoya is President of Peter Montoya Inc. - the only advertising agency in the country that specializes in financial advisors. Check out [MarketingLibrary.net](http://MarketingLibrary.net) for unlimited access to hundreds of marketing articles, letters and invitations for only \$10 per month. Learn more at [www.MarketingLibrary.net](http://www.MarketingLibrary.net) or by calling (888) 730-5300.