

Rule #22 Don't Let Your Last Opportunity Become a Lost Opportunity,

The rule of closing the sale.

Newspapers, brochures, magazines, special events, direct mail, trade shows, in Internet, television, radio, transit advertising, billboards, dioramas, these are just a few of the tools and outlets that companies use to get people to buy their products. People are bombarded hundreds of times every day with someone trying to sell them something. Watching television for just one hour will expose you to nearly fifty commercials. Looking at a magazine or newspaper may expose you to twice that amount. The bottom line? Your marketing materials MUST be good enough to close the sale. Each piece may be your last opportunity to convince a potential visitor to pick you over the next destination or event. An excellent advertising or PR program can get potential visitors to call for your *free activities guild* or get them to log on to your website, but both better be good enough to close the sale. Otherwise, your marketing dollars are largely wasted.

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There is an old saying that "I know that half my advertising dollars are wasted. The problem is I don't know which half" It's not really very funny if you're the one spending the money. Most communities waste more than 85 percent of their marketing dollars because they fail to understand how to market effectively. That's right, 85 percent. Pick up a magazine or the travel section of the Sunday paper. Look through the travel ads. Which ones are good enough to get you to make a call or log on to a website? Then, when you get the brochure or look at the website, which places entice you to visit?

Second, there must be a call to action. This spells out the next step and often provides an incentive. "Call for our free Activities Guide to the Best Snowmobiling in the Lower 48," or "Take a virtual tour at www.ourtown.com." It must take the reader to the next step: either getting them to call for more information, log on to the website, or make those plans and reservations.

The top two to three inches of your brochure, activities guide, or ad must grab the reader's eye, while the bottom should have your potential customer grabbing for the phone or a pencil in order to write down the number or website address.

Tens of thousands of communities spend more than \$2 billion each year in the U.S. alone trying to get visitors to their community. That's a lot of marketing! The competition for the tourist dollar is tremendous and growing as more and more communities try to entice visitors to their town.

In the race to win people's vote as the place to spend their precious time off and spend their hard-earned travel money, second place doesn't count. Your town is either chosen or not. Winning marketing programs can create winning communities.