

Word of Mouth Marketing

BUZZmakers™

A proprietary service from Gaul Advertising



BUZZmakers™ may be the most psychologically impacting way to create “buzz” about a product or service ever devised, more effective than print advertising, the web or traditional broadcast.

A New Way to Create “Buzz” at Tradeshows

Marketing Managers and Sales Managers often feel penned in by their own organization’s structure when they try to reach out beyond their own sales force and meet new prospects at tradeshows, conferences and special events. Either the sales force’s agendas are already too full with meetings, entertainment, dinners, golf outings and special events with current or existing potential prospects or they feel politically and budgetarily encumbered in pushing any harder at the goal of reaching out to the “new prospect” segment. After all, the show and the booth are already vehicles in themselves for new people to engage with your product or service. Aren’t they? Well, maybe so and maybe not.

As an internationally recognized brand paper manufacturer said to me some time ago, “I wish there was some way I could go around my own sales force without having to pay a political and psychological price.” A bent out of shape sales force can be too high a price to pay for reaching for new possible market share. In a risk adverse corporate culture, who wants to take that chance? Yet, those same corporate managers are pushed quarter to quarter to increase share. The conflict inherent in the situation is brought home when that



same executive goes to tradeshow after tradeshow and watches his sales force schmooze the same old people year after year.

How can you break the paradigm? What new way can one use to reach out and create activity? Should we look at spending more on traditional ways of attracting more booth traffic? More promos, more ads, pre-show mailings, electronics from the exhibition folks are all tried and true ways to expand your reach. Should you go “Gonzo” and buy billboards or broadcast? What can really work to create a buzz about your product or service? What can you do that no one else is doing? How can you be different? The answer is here and it’s called BUZZmakers™.

The impetus for the concept springs from the oldest of ideas in mass communications, the idea of “word of mouth” advertising. Creating “Buzz” for the most part is creating word of mouth advertising. Word of mouth exists as a subset of other advertising vehicles, sales contact or direct experience with the product/service. It can’t be purchased and distributed on its own. One can’t buy \$50,000 worth of word of mouth advertising and neatly fit it into the overall Marcom (Marketing communication) budget. You can’t rent a plane and drop it out on your geographic profile like so many fliers. You can’t make it happen on its own; it must be a subset of other communications tactics.

A good example to illustrate the point is the prospect who reads a well constructed, persuasive advertisement with a clear-cut USP (Unique Selling Proposition) in it. The idea is planted in the prospect’s head (mind) and when the category of product/service is brought up; the prospect recalls the message and repeats it orally to another person. This is word of mouth in its purist version. It’s usually done face to face, person to person. Psychologically, the sender and receiver of the message can evaluate it and process it based on all the known cues for credibility, persuasiveness and enthusiasm that humans possess.

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Today, there is an organization called the Word of Mouth Marketing Association (WOMMA) dedicated to promoting word of mouth as a viable way to communicate to new generations of consumers and B to B (Business to Business) buyers. We are members of this organization and for the most part we agree with its premise in so far as word of mouth's effectiveness in breaking through the clutter of much of the "image" and "brag and boast" advertising that is out in the marketplace today. Of course, our main focus is on the B to B marketplace. Problem is, it's tough to create word of mouth advertising in its purest sense. Yes, there are email blasts, blogs and many other newer vehicles that exist but they can't overcome the visceral and powerful impact of face to face interaction. BUZZmakers™ does.

It was about a hundred years ago that the great Albert Lasker defined what advertising was. Prior to that, Lasker who toiled at Lord and Thomas

advertising agency in Chicago thought that advertising was, "News about a product". As Lasker found out from his guru of the day, Mr. John E. Kennedy, advertising was, "Salesmanship in Print". That definition lasted for over fifty years as the standard for explaining the advertising business.

In today's environment with the web and electronic vehicles we encounter the concept of "Buzz". Simply put, it's no different than in Lasker's day; Buzz is news about a product or service. But let us not forget the essential difference that Lasker and Kennedy popularized and that is "Salesmanship".

Therein lays the special ingredient that makes a "Buzz" work. It is the persuasiveness that sales use to point out the essential product/service difference to the prospect. It gives the customer a logical reason or emotional incentive to remember or act on the proposition. The "Buzz" will work most efficiently when the client firm's message has differentiating benefits built into it from the customer's perspective. 


So what exactly is BUZZmakers™?



BUZZmakers™ is a small, select team of temporarily hired, trained people dispersed and circulating in the audience of an event or tradeshow. They are dedicated to introducing and presenting a brief, specific sales proposition or message in person (one on one) to a very targeted demographic in order to create word of mouth conversation about a product or service.

For the marketing of this concept, Gaul Advertising, Inc. has engaged the services of Robert G. Lail, President of MarketMakers Group, Inc. Mr. Lail brings 30 years experience as a skilled recruiter and trainer of sales and marketing

professionals. MarketMakers is a B 2 B telemarketing company that designs customized sales lead generation programs focused on measurable results and employs only highly educated professionals who train and work in dedicated business development teams. These teams can speak to your customers about your products in your language. MarketMakers will be coordinating the recruitment and training of the BUZZmakers™ for each event.

The training of the BUZZmakers™ is very similar to that of the telemarketer and can be accomplished in a half day session with the assistance of the client. Basic knowledge of the audience's concerns is important, a primer on the product/service is essential and the all important "elevator story" of a sales proposition is the final ingredient. As well, the client gets to review and meet the people who are representing his company at the show (event). Final judgment, as always, is held by the client. 

So what do I get by hiring BUZZmakers™?

Here are a few quantifiable points:

- You will get at least twenty-five contacts made per day, per BUZZmaker™ on the floor of the show (event).
- You will get an additional number of contacts made each day (to be determined) because each BUZZmaker™ will have incentives to go beyond the guaranteed 25 contacts per day.
- You will get some "hot leads" either identified by the BUZZmakers™ daily reports or by business cards (or similar substitute) collected by the BUZZmakers™.
- Depending on the show activity and placement/size of your booth (for tradeshow only) you should receive a spike in booth traffic coming in to meet your established sales force working the booth.
- You can reach into other exposition sites (other show halls at larger shows), conferences and demonstration areas, even competitor events that your sales force would not be privy to ordinarily.
- There will be a "wrap-up" report submitted to you following the show encompassing what the BUZZmakers™ have learned about your firm, product/service offering during their conversations at the show. This will be a written report so it can be used as part of your overall evaluation of the show.

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Of course, the primary benefit that is not easily quantifiable yet no less important is that you'll be creating a



“Buzz” at the event. There are some traditional research techniques that are available to measure this but they would entail additional costs. The “Buzz” created at the show will extend beyond the event itself for a few days. BUZZmakers™ will offer some additional telemarketing follow-up (at additional costs) should you wish to further cultivate the “hot” leads and deliver them to your sales force primed for a sales call.

One other tacit benefit is that you don't have to increase your booth size or do extraordinary in-booth marketing or give-aways in order to optimize your presence at the show.

All your present elements of operation stay in place, the involvement of the BUZZmakers™ can be virtually invisible to everyone else in your company, if you so wish.

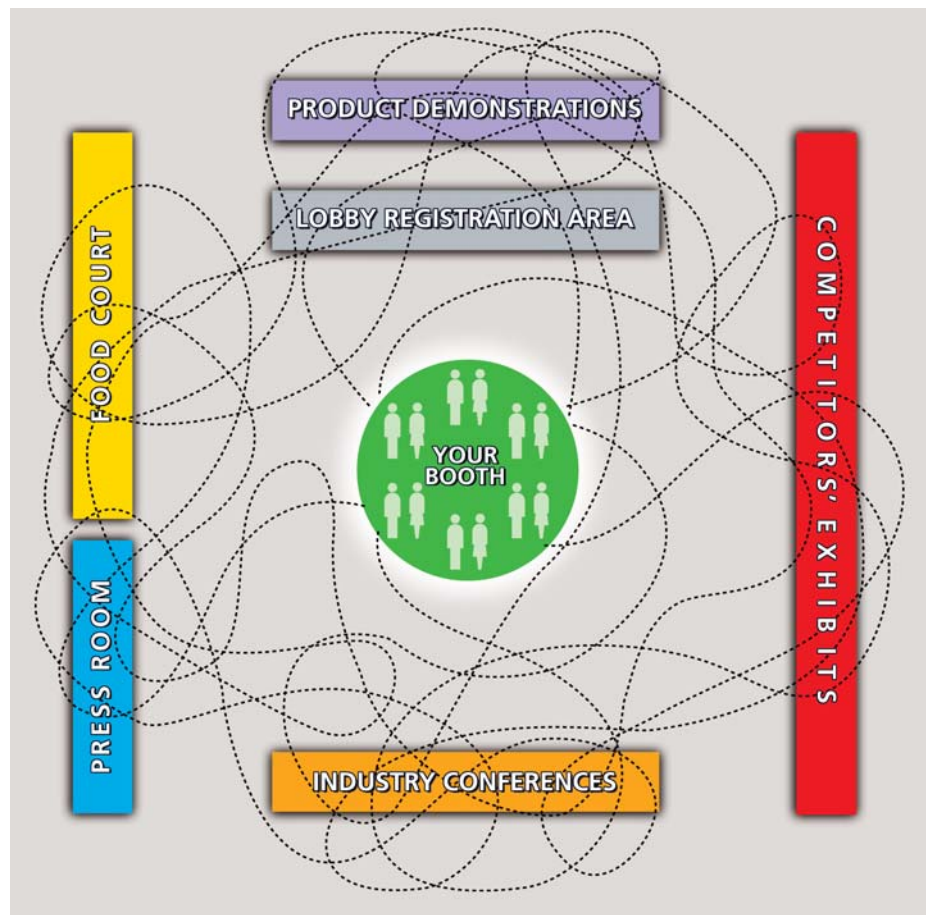
The final benefit of BUZZmakers™ is that you'll be using an entirely new and unique way of reaching out to your audience that your competitors will not be using. It will be a true competitive edge. BUZZmakers™ will not work with competitors at the same event. It will take some time for the BUZZmakers™ concept to develop to the point where competitive companies emerge who can work with your competition. 

So how does BUZZmakers™ work?

At the event (on the show floor) the BUZZmaker™ walks independently circulating in a random fashion cognizant of who is passing him/her and aware of certain areas of the show floor that would be good places to engage people. For instance, lobby areas, coffee shops, eating areas (where often open seating is available and people join up at tables to eat a quick meal together), demonstration areas (often new product demonstration areas are set aside by the Exposition Services people for new offerings), seminars, conferences, Press Events, news conferences, certain booths that are prominent, competitor booths and, of course, competitor events that are open to show registrants: these are all possible destinations for the BUZZmakers™ as they walk the show. Each show is different; each event is different so there can be no plan to follow a strict itinerary. It will be important however for the BUZZmaker™ to keep on the move and not to spend too much time in one area.

Each BUZZmaker™ will have a regular show registration badge (name tag). It will say Gaul Advertising, Inc. and it will have the BUZZmaker's™ actual name on it, i.e. John Jones. Each BUZZmaker™ will have been supplied with Gaul Advertising, Inc. business cards should a contact ask for a card.

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The diagram shows in concept the entire show and in the center the client firm's booth where the sales force interacts with regular show registrants who are booth visitors. The dashed lines represent the random paths around the show floor that the BUZZmakers™ travel. Noted on the diagram, one can see they (BUZZmakers™) visit various sites all over the show. As well, the BUZZmakers™ each take different paths to even out the show coverage and to maximize their potential contacts with hot leads.

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Since this is a tradeshow, in most instances, it is a place where business people consciously congregate for the expressed purpose of discussion, and being introduced to new product/services. So it will be no surprise to anyone that a person from Gaul Advertising, Inc. mentions a new product/service that a client firm is promoting at the show. Simply, this is the nature of the tradeshow experience. Commerce happens.

If pressed by an inquisitive contact who wants to dig deeper, the BUZZmaker™ will simply reveal that he/she is representing the client firm in a PR capacity here at the show. If that's not enough, the BUZZmaker™ can refer them to the Gaul Advertising, Inc. web site and give the contact a brief explanation of the BUZZmaker™ concept. This has been designed in this fashion to guarantee that the contact person does not feel duped in any way. We want to maintain the best overall image for our clients as we reach out to make new contacts. No doubt, some contacts will be enamored and interested in the BUZZmakers™ concept itself but our purpose is to present the elevator story of our client firm at the show and not to use this essential time to promote BUZZmakers™. So our intent will be always to turn the conversation back to the client firms' interests. As the BUZZmakers™ go through the day, they will jot down on a report form the names and firms of contacts that are made. If a contact is legitimately interested and would like to pursue the product/service further, the BUZZmakers™ will refer them to the client firm's booth (and/or web site). In some rare cases, they may walk the contact to the booth and there engage with the actual sales force. In some instances, the contact may ask to be contacted by the client firm where the BUZZmaker™ will take a business card or write down appropriate contact details. This information will be given to the client firm at the end of each business day.

The BUZZmakers™ expenses, travel, lodging and meals will be covered by the client firm for each day's activities. All expenses will be submitted at cost



to the client firm. Estimates for these expenses will be worked out in advance with the client firm. If the client firm has special accommodation possibilities, they can be utilized in order to defray expenses.


The BUZZmakers™ will work during regular show hours although after hours activities can be planned for special events, industry dinners and entertainment events that are put on at the show. The purpose is to have the BUZZmakers™ in position at functions and times when show registrants are mingling and having conversations with each other. This will make it easier to start conversations and meet more people. This is how the "Buzz" gets started. Remember, a face to face encounter-even if it's with someone you've just met-has more impact and potential for persuasiveness than any other type of communication.

There are several activities pre and post of the show (event) that are worth noting. Primary to this is the training session. This is where the BUZZmakers™ get some basic information about the client firm, the market, the show itself, major competitors and, of course, the focal point to the entire effort - the brief sales story (elevator story-Unique Selling Proposition) for the product/service. The training session will be conducted usually at the show site, or near it. This is closer to where the BUZZmakers™ live, it will save on travel but this is not mandatory. In preliminary talks the

client and BUZZmakers™ staff will determine the best locale and timing for the BUZZmakers™ Training usually when they determine how many BUZZmakers™ will be required.

A representative of the client firm will be required at the training sessions for two reasons. First and foremost, for correctness and expertise. Secondly, to approve the BUZZmakers™ who have been selected for this project and to meet them. The training session should be no more than a half day, four hours. The BUZZmakers™ will not be experts they will merely get the conversation going about the client firm's product/service. They will be deferring to the client's existing mechanisms for nurturing sales prospects when a contact shows interest.

Each BUZZmakers™ agreement will call for a different level of audience reach or penetration. For instance, in a small show of 10,000 registrants a team of three BUZZmakers™ for two show days may suffice. For larger shows of 100,000 registrants or more, a team of six or eight BUZZmakers™ for three days may be required. Every agreement will be customized. However, the general daily activities and principles of operations for the BUZZmakers™ will be the same. They will start the "Buzz"; they will not start the sale. They will direct the contact; they will not complete the sales story. They will not disseminate sales literature. They will not work the booth. They will not be gofers for the sales staff. They will be auxiliary to the workings of the show that the client firm has already in place.

Following the show, a written report to substantiate the number of contacts made will be submitted to the client firm. Additionally, the "hot leads" – persons showing genuine interest-will be forwarded to the client firm unless this has been done already at the show. Finally, some "learning" comments of value will be summarized and passed on to the client firm. BUZZmakers™ will hear feedback and reactions that may be helpful in fine tuning marketing and marketing communications in the future for the product/service. 

Typical Agenda for BUZZmakers™ Training Session

Start: 8:30AM

- Introduce and final biography/credentials review of each BUZZmaker™ candidate. Client Contact will approve all BUZZmakers™ in attendance. Open discussion encouraged.
- Client Contact will give description background of the event they will be working and detail who the target prospects are by title, age, education, experience and type of firm they work for. Client will describe the buying pattern, (i.e. buying teams) as they apply. Open questions/discussion.
- Client Contact and BUZZmakers™ Team Leader will describe and discuss with BUZZmakers™ the message. This is the USP, (Unique Selling Proposition) or, "Elevator Story" (short 10 to 15 second pitch) that the BUZZmakers™ must master and work into each contact experience that is applicable. Open questions/discussion. Client may use some support materials, pictures, literature. Handouts to BUZZmakers™ are recommended.
- BUZZmakers™ Team Leader will review etiquette, dress, badges, business cards, reports and principle training elements for engaging contacts at the event. This will be a training review for the BUZZmakers™ on their expected performance at the event, what they can say, what they should not say and what possible questions/issues may arise. Discussion with Client Contact comments.
- BUZZmakers™ Team Leader and Client Contact will discuss any client driven logistics that may be of concern (i.e. Client controlled lodging). Questions.

End: 12:00 PM

What does BUZZmakers™ cost?

Compensation is based on a per person day rate. The goal being, the cost of the BUZZmakers™ should be less than what it would cost for a booth space upgrade. Included in that figure, of course, would be additional booth space charge as well as booth construction, shipping and graphics. And that is simply a rule of thumb. For larger size booth exhibitors running forty or more feet this concept would not be a compelling incentive. For smaller space users they may be nearly doubling their booth costs, so there is a significant challenge for them to rationalize the use of BUZZmakers™. The real driver is not so cost specific, it should be based on the compelling message that the exhibitor needs to project.

If it's a new product/service launch, then the BUZZmakers™ would be a reasonable extension of an overall launch promotion budget or strategy. Our goal has been to keep the cost of each BUZZmaker™ under \$1200 per day including all expenses. Another way to evaluate that cost is "cost per lead". If 15% of the overall leads/contacts made are hot leads (The mid-point between trade show averages of 25% and tele-marketing averages of 4.4%) then one should be able to evaluate the efficiency of BUZZmakers™ based on comparing that to the cost of an average sales call.

If an average sales call is worth \$320 using industry standards, then using the minimum contacts of 25 persons per day for four BUZZmakers™ for two days works out to 200 total contacts. If you take 15% of that figure you get 30 hot leads. Apply the \$320 per standard sales call figure and it works out to exactly the \$9,600 cost for four BUZZmakers™ for two days.

This is a worst case scenario to demonstrate the rationale for hiring the BUZZmakers™ in the first place. Of course, there are no guarantees that the 30 hot leads turn into sales. On the other hand, one of those leads could double your annual sales. The real point or advantage is that this approach takes you into new market segments and into new prospects' minds. The reach of the "Buzz" beyond the 25 guaranteed contacts is not calculated here but it is reasonable to assume (using print advertising pass along rates as a guide) that each contact could re-mention your "Buzz Story" to at least one or two others.

Conclusion

In today's world there are many technological advances. Some of the technocrats would have you believe that these things-mainly computer and web driven-have changed the way people



behave. And they're right. Behaviors have changed but the basic motivators, the psychological core issues that move people to act are the same as they have always been.

So when choosing between high tech answers that influence prospects and low tech answers such as BUZZmakers™ you really are deciding which is most persuasive. One is removed, impersonal and transmitted electronically; the other is up close and personal. Our strategy is that the high tech solutions of which there are many (blasts, blogs, webinars, etc.) are excellent supports to what an integrated Marcom program and a personal sales force can do. We see BUZZmakers™ as a new category of support to sales that cuts between the traditional sales force and what technology can offer. Our insight can now be your competitive advantage. 