

The Artist's Marketing Plan

7: PROMOTE YOURSELF AND YOUR WORK

your image

One of the most critical mistakes artists make is not acting like a visual artist. In everything you do, you must convey the fact that you care about how things look and that you pay attention to detail. You must also make sure that your art is the center of attention.

Professional printed materials are invaluable to your marketing efforts.

By putting out printed materials that contain consistent design and information, you are showing people that you intend to stay in business. If you don't have one already, create a logo for a business name or a "look" for your own name. For instance, if you have a ceramics studio called Red Dirt, you might create a logo with that title. On the other hand, if you operate your ceramics studio under your name, Jane Clay, your look would be simply **using the same font** for all of your materials—all of the time! Make sure the font you select is legible and not too funky. It should reflect your style without competing with your work.

You will use your new look on your invitation, informational cards & price tags, letterhead, brochures, flyers, and everything else. It should all look like it came from the same place and the same person.

Look at the contents of your portfolio and other essential marketing materials. What do you have currently available? What do you need to produce or update so that it screams "professional artist"?

Item	✓ Already Have	Produce/Update By (date)
Cohesive Body of Work (at least enough for two exhibitions; titled, dated, & inventoried)		
Letterhead		
Business Card		
10-second "Commercial" (verbal)		
Artist Statement		
Résumé		
Biography		
Images of work		
Brochure (optional)		
Web Site		

building name recognition

I encourage my clients and other artists to begin "community building" immediately. The goal of community building is to generate interest in your work and, more importantly, in yourself. It isn't exactly about advertising or targeting to a specific market, but about creating one of your own. Why do I say that you need to generate interest in yourself? Because some things sell themselves, but mostly things are sold by people. People are often featured more prominently than the products they are trying to sell us in advertisements and commercials, perhaps because

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we can relate more quickly and easily to them than to their products. Your product is art. The more people relate to you, the more they will be interested in your art. That's worth emphasizing: *The more people relate to you, the more they will be interested in your art.*

I am talking about generating interest in you and your work at a grassroots level. Think about it as creating a program for your career. It is based on your artwork, but is in addition to your art. It is a different (& fun!) way to approach marketing.

Many artists can make the gallery scene work for them. Other artists choose not to go that route for one reason or another. You can be successful without gallery representation if you're willing to do the work required.

One of the things you need to do first and foremost is to begin your **mailing list** and commit to updating it *and using it* frequently. It should be your #1 asset.

Other almost-free ideas that project your images as an authority include teaching & speaking in public and writing articles (local papers, publications distributed nationally or to your artists' organization, web sites, etc.).

advertising

Can you afford to advertise? How will your dollars best be spent?

I usually discourage artists from spending money on advertising, but it all depends where and how you do it and your end goals for doing so. If you paint "portraits" of people's homes, it might do you good to advertise in realtor trade publications. Likewise, if you create garden sculpture, a horticultural magazine or web site might be just the target for you.

If you decide to advertise, where will it be and at what frequency? What are those expenses?

Publication / Other Ad Venue	Type of Ad / Frequency	Expense

Think about getting your work reviewed in a publication. Or think about writing an article of your own. If this appeals to you, what publications are appropriate and when can you realistically do it? (Never pay someone to review your work!)

If you just can't wait to dive in and are seeking media attention, I highly recommend the following book. Though not artist-specific, it's excellent! I've almost worn out my copy that is barely six months old!

Marcia Yudkin, [6 Steps to Free Publicity](#). Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press, 2003. My newest favorite book!



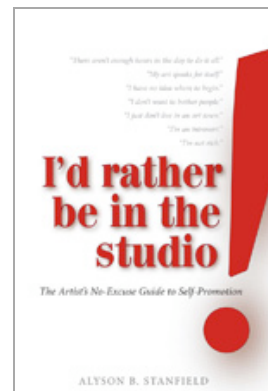
promotional goals

Not all artists have sales as the primary reason for their marketing efforts. Artists might seek more recognition or an audience outside of their immediate environment. What are your one-year goals for the following? **Complete the ones that are applicable and delete the rest.**

Sample

	specific goal for this time next year	deadlines
Mailing List	I will have 200 new names on my contacts list.	I will add five new names each week.
Mailings	I will send out a new postcard every four months.	Oct., Mar., July
Newsletters	I will send out a monthly newsletter to my e-mail contacts.	Beginning February 2004.
Meeting influential people	I will meet the museum curator and art critic for the major newspaper.	By 4/30/04
Articles about my work	I will write one article about my work for <i>Pastel Journal</i> .	By 7/31/04
Exhibition entries	I will limit my juried exhibition entries to ten more prominent national exhibits.	Ongoing
Grant applications	n/a	
Teaching / Demonstrations	I will apply to teach at the art center (where I'd like to have a show in a couple of years).	by 2/15/04
Public talks	I will give one public talk about my work at the library.	By 7/31/04
Open studios	I will research open studios and plan one for the holiday season next year.	Plan and begin publicity by 10/1/04.
Gallery representation	I will go to at least two new galleries a month and begin the process of seeing where my work best fits.	Beginning immediately.
Web site	I will update my Web site every six months.	By 1/31/04

The entire contents of *I'd Rather Be in the Studio!* can be used to complete this section. Pay close attention to page 53-67 (speaking and teaching); pages 94-114 (amplify your online presence); pages 115-137 (send a killer newsletter); pages 139-159 (communication and following up); and pages 161-183 (become a media magnet).



Your Turn

	specific goal for this time next year	deadlines
Mailing List		
Mailings		
Newsletters		
Meeting influential people		
Articles about my work		
Exhibition entries		
Grant applications		
Teaching / Demonstrations		
Public talks		
Open studios		
Gallery representation		
Web site		

next session: create good habits

What one thing do you want to accomplish before the next meeting?