

An Alternative Approach to Advertising & Marketing for Stamp Shows

I originally wrote this for Scott English and the APS. Since it required about three months' time to research and develop I have adopted it, so it can be used by any stamp show.

Traditional Media

Television – TV stations are licensed by the FCC. They are required to do community service as part of their licensing agreement. They are constantly looking for news stories to fulfill their commitment. If you start with press releases and phone contact six months out, you should be able to set up interviews. Focus on the C3a and “Stamps in your Attic” to build excitement for the show and to entice stations to pick it up. An additional goal should be to get every local affiliate (CBS, NBC, ABC, & FOX) to send a camera crew to the show. The executive director should be willing to be in the market 30 days before the show, for two days, to conduct interviews with each of the stations (resulting from previous press releases and phone contact with news directors).

Radio – The exact same approach should be applied to radio stations. However, focus on all- news stations, classical, and adult contemporary stations. Both TV and Radio stations have community calendar type programs that are just made for the APS. Consider a radio buy of 60 second spots on an all-news station, during AM drive time. We did this for MSDA shows in Chicago and it worked very well, bringing in new collectors and collections to purchase. It also worked in New York for the ASDA show. You might be surprised a thousand dollars or two can buy.

Newspapers – Again use the exact same approach. Find out what kind of “Weekend” or “Festival” sections they have. Spend your ad dollars there: four, three, and two weekends out from the show. Supply them with a pre-written story about “Stamps in your Attic”, and pictures, to be included with the press release. Personal contact again, is extremely important.

The AP – Half or quarter page for the three months leading up to the show. List the show events, volunteer sign-up, etc. Consider offering an additional room rate discount for volunteers who travel to the show. Start pushing the room block six months out in your press releases.

Society journals (like USSS & U.S.P.C.S) and others start nine months out. Use ads like the ones designed for the AP but tailor them to the individual society. Linn's and Mekeel's should receive ongoing press releases throughout the year. Ads in these publications should start two months out from the date of the show.

Social Media

Both Facebook and Twitter can play very important roles promoting the show. Make developing the social media plan a priority. Social media can be an entrée into a younger market as well.

Marketing

Marketing is the key. This is where you get down to the grass roots of your target market and develop the clarion call for action.



1 Define your target market – who you want to attend your show

- A Members – Both local and out of town
- B People who buy and sell on eBay and other commercial websites
- C People approaching retirement – Offering them a hobby
- D Professionals
- E Families

2 What do we have to offer at our show

- A A base of knowledgeable dealers with combined \ hundreds of years of experience
- B “Stamps in your Attic”
- C C3a (borrow it from APS)
- D Seminars – Designed for beginners, intermediate, and advanced
- E Exhibits – Promote five or so in the advertising. Pick those that may have the most mass appeal.

3 What resources can we employ to build an effective marketing program.

Establish a relationship with your Convention Bureau and Chamber of Commerce 12 to 18 months out. They should be able to provide valuable contact information for local media, community calendars, elists, and all free local media. Develop a relationship with the local postmaster. Get him/her to provide poster space in each post office in the region.

Identify the clubs within 150 miles of the show site. Identify the club leaders and enlist their support a year out. Supply them with show prospectus, exhibit forms, and volunteer sign up forms. Provide monthly communication with them to build support and interest for the show.

To make this all work requires a dedicated committee that is willing to spend the time to develop and execute the plans.

I would not expect every show to try and incorporate all these ideas at once. Just focus on the ones that you think can make a difference for your show. I am happy to answer any questions of this topic.

Stamp Collecting: “The hobby of kings, an American President and still enjoyed by millions today.”