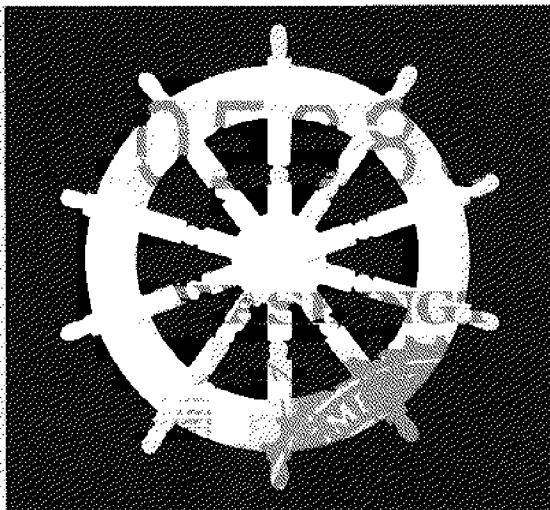


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Sea Grant Depository

LOAN COPY ONLY



Charter Boat

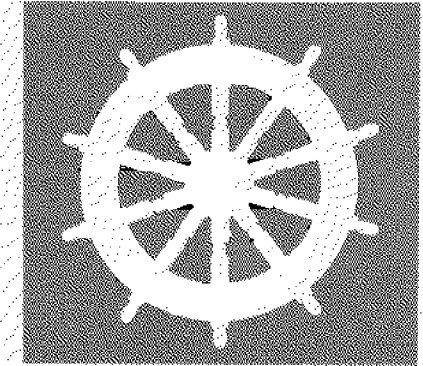
MARKETING TIPS

A Guide to Effective Advertising

SERIES

Secretary of the Treasury

WASHINGTON
DOLLAR



Charter Boat

MARKETING TIPS

A Guide to Effective Advertising

James M. Falk

Marine Recreation Specialist

University of Delaware

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This guidebook provides a six-step approach for charter captains to consider prior to initiating an advertising program for their fishing service. The guidebook will be useful to captains who charter their boats, as well as to those captains who operate head boats or party boats.

The authors wish to thank numerous individuals who have contributed their ideas, comments, and technical support to making this publication a reality. Tracey Bryant and Sharon Fitzgerald, University of Delaware Sea Grant Communications; David Barczak, designer; Bruce DeYoung, New York Sea Grant Extension Program; John Schwartz, Michigan Sea Grant Extension Program; John Tiedemann, New Jersey Sea Grant Extension Program; Jerry Blakeslee, Delaware Charter Captains Association; Joe Johnson, charter captain; and Barbara Porter, outdoor writer.



If you think
advertising doesn't pay...

We understand there are
25 mountains in Colorado
higher than Pike's Peak.
Can you name one?



— *The American Salesman*

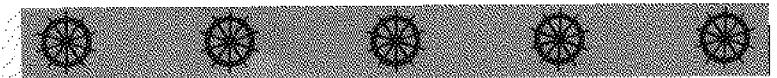
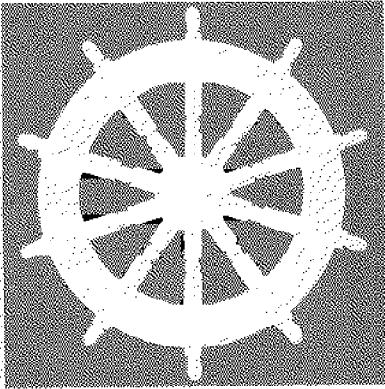
INTRODUCTION

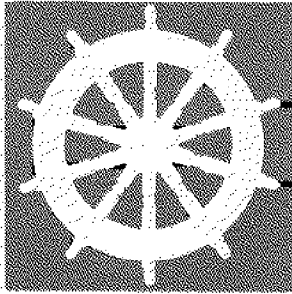
The role of marketing is becoming increasingly important for today's businesses and organizations. Due to changing economic conditions, rising costs of operations, increasing government regulations, competition, and environmental variables, profit and non-profit firms alike are discovering and rediscovering the marketing mix.

The marketing mix is the essential tools or elements available to a business that influence current or potential customers. These elements are often called the "4 Ps" of marketing: product, price, place, and promotion.

This guide is concerned with the promotion part of the marketing mix — specifically, advertising. All four Ps are vital to the success of any business, including the charter boat fishing business. But effective advertising can be the key to even greater Success

Sportfishing increases in popularity each year, with millions of anglers seeking the pleasures associated with this sport. Charter boats provide a unique opportunity for many fishermen to reach popular fishing spots. Many studies suggest that most fishermen initially decide to use a charter boat because of "word-of-mouth" advertising from previously satisfied customers. This approach to gaining new customers is not the only effective method, considering the multitude of avenues available to reach a targeted market. In the following pages, some techniques are outlined for charter operators to consider in developing effective advertising programs.





A DEFINITION

Advertising is the mass communication of information designed to persuade for the purpose of profits. If you can prompt an interest in your "ad," then you can elicit an interest in the service that you offer for sale. For purposes of this guide, consider charter boat fishing a service. In a sense, a charter captain is selling his ability to provide a satisfactory fishing trip to those who decide to fish with him. The end result may not always be a full cooler, but the trip still may be considered successful if the customers return to the dock satisfied that they got their money's worth.

To develop an effective advertising program, here is a six-step approach you may want to consider:

- 1—STUDY YOUR SERVICE
- 2—STUDY YOUR MARKET
- 3—STUDY THE MEDIA
- 4—PREPARE YOUR AD
- 5—PLACE YOUR AD
- 6—EVALUATE



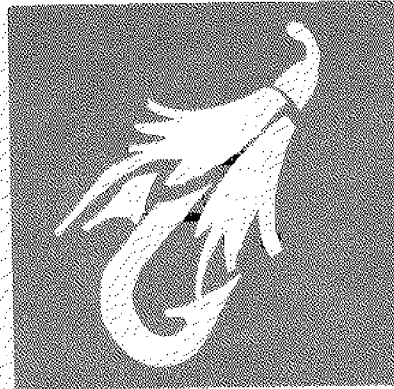
STEP 1—STUDY YOUR SERVICE

There are three elements of any service.

ELEMENT 1: THE CORE SERVICE

The core service answers the questions: “What are the consumers really buying?” and “What are the benefits they seek?”

In your case, is it convenience of fishing? Your expertise? Your assistance? Your skill? Your answer should be yes to all those questions. Many would assume the core product is fish. Fish may be the end product of a day’s fishing, but many studies indicate the core service is more than just the fish that anglers have the chance to catch.



ELEMENT 2: THE FORMAL SERVICE

The formal service is the larger packaging of the core service. It is what the consumers recognize – the marina, **you**, your crew, your boat, your boat’s name, the features of your boat, and other similar elements. Capitalize on these often, considering it usually can be done for little or no cost.

ELEMENT 3: THE AUGMENTED SERVICE

The augmented service is all the benefits received or experienced by your customers, such as adventure, friendships, excitement, relaxation, outdoor life, and personal services. Many people feel a charter fishing trip is satisfying even if they do not catch fish because of the intangible qualities associated with the trip. Keep this in mind, especially when the fish aren’t biting.





The University of Delaware Sea Grant Marine Advisory Service conducted a survey of head/charter boat fishermen in Delaware waters during the summer of 1982. Listed below are responses from 512 fishermen on what they liked most about their head/charter boat trips. As you can see, catching fish was ranked fourth, while the positive qualities of captain and crew were rated first.

TRIP HIGH POINTS	PERCENT OF FISHERMEN
Qualities of boat captain and crew	21.2
Being with friends	16.6
Being outdoors or on the water	14.9
Catching fish	11.7
Good weather	11.2
Boat ride	8.4
Relaxing	6.6
Just fishing	6.0
Getting away	5.1

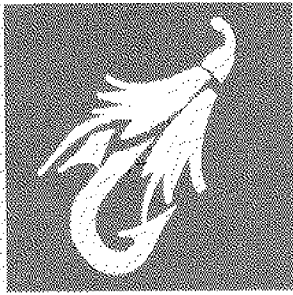
RATE YOURSELF

To objectively study your operation, take out a piece of paper and divide it in half. On one half, list the advantages of your service. What is unique about it? What sets it apart from the competition? Why should someone use it?

On the other half, list the weaknesses of your service. In some cases, disadvantages such as a poor fishing season or uncooperative weather affect all charter boat operators, and are uncontrollable. On the other hand, individual weaknesses such as constant breakdowns usually can be corrected.

Now, can you convert any disadvantages into advantages? For example, bookings made ahead of time can be a positive aspect of seasonality. You can more effectively schedule your service and





customers can better plan their outings. As another example, a slow fishing season should encourage you and your crew to spend more time talking to your customers and educating them about fishing in the local area. Try it! Stress only the major advantages you listed, and work to shore up weaknesses in your service.

Finally, what changes would you like to make now? In the future? Are your business goals currently being met? Do you have future goals related to your charter boat operation that you can begin formulating now? What opportunities currently exist that you can capitalize on? *Be realistic.* For instance, can you accommodate the growing segment of senior citizens that may enjoy charter fishing? If they are a targeted clientele, you might want to begin altering your service to meet their needs.

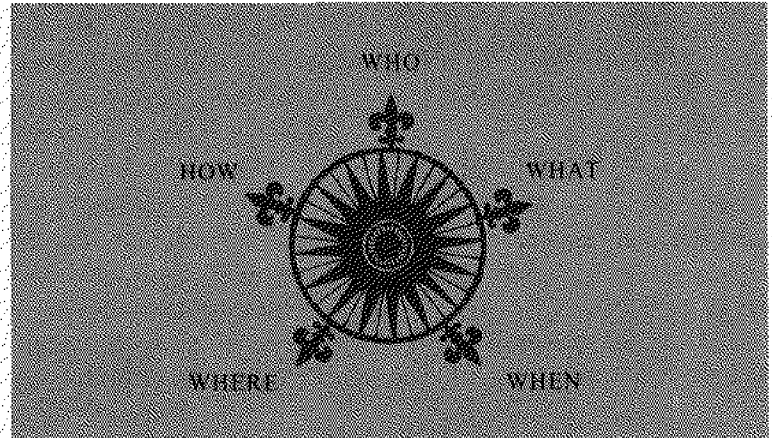
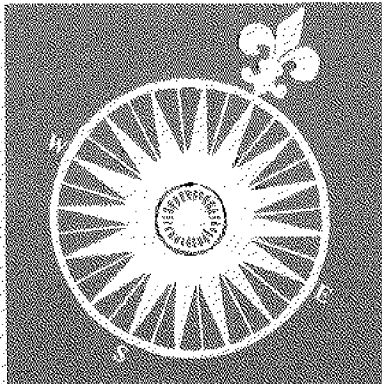
After reviewing these questions and tips, you should know your product fairly well. You should also feel confident about your ability to make others think it is a service they would like to purchase. The next step is to zero in on your targeted market.



STEP 2—STUDY YOUR MARKET

To study the market, answer each question on the advertising compass.

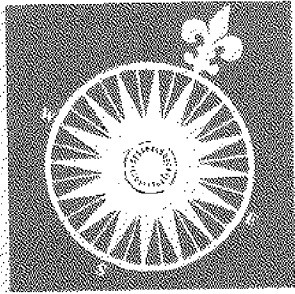
ADVERTISING COMPASS



As you well know, a compass provides direction. The advertising compass provides a complete checklist for analyzing your market.

- *Who* uses your service? *Who* pays for it? There may be differences.
- *What* is it about these people you should know (demographics, life-styles, interests)?
- *When* do they use your service (seasonal, monthly, weekly, time of day)?
- *Where* are the users (geographically)?
- *How* can you best approach the users?

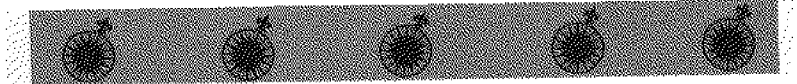




One of the simplest ways to obtain this information is to have your customers fill out a short survey card, or include a couple of questions on tickets and ask your customers to answer them before you collect your ticket stubs. The answers can provide you with a basic profile of your fishing clients to better target your advertising dollars.

There are other sources of information on charter boat anglers. In many cases, a local college or university may have conducted research on sportfishing and, more particularly, on charter boat fishing. In the mid-Atlantic region, for example, the Sea Grant Colleges at the University of Delaware, the University of Maryland, and the Virginia Institute of Marine Science of the College of William and Mary all have conducted research on charter boat fishing. The information is available on request. Your state natural resource agency or tourism office also may have data on fishermen who use charter boats.

Knowing your customers should be an ongoing process since your targeted market may change. Take the time to study your market every year to assure the best value for your advertising dollars.



STEP 3—STUDY THE MEDIA

*To get the most for your money,
carefully analyze your advertising options.*

After analyzing your service and your market, select your specific media vehicles. Your job is to match the right media, with the right audiences, at the right time, in the most logical place, at an affordable price. Therefore, when examining your options, consider these seven factors:

1) DEMONSTRATION OF SERVICE

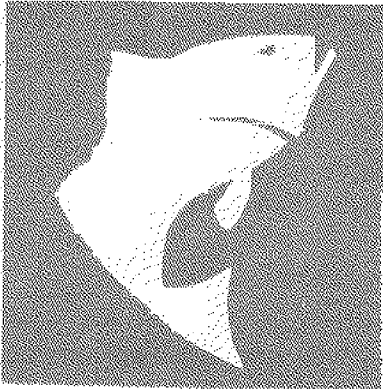
If you want to show your service in use, television is an excellent vehicle. TV can combine sight, sound, and movement to effectively demonstrate products and services. Print media (magazines, newspapers, outdoor signs, billboards, and direct mail) can provide fair demonstration, enabling you to show a picture of your service. Of course, radio only provides sound.

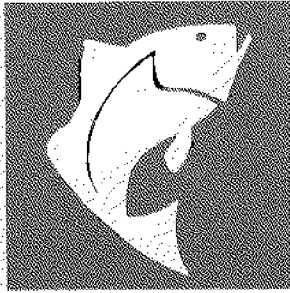
2) SHORT-TERM ACTION

When the audience hears your ad, how soon will potential customers react to it? Radio, newspaper, and direct mail provide fast, short-term action. It may be only a brief time before someone is exposed to your ad and then responds.

3) COST PER AUDIENCE EXPOSURE

In order to maximize your advertising's effectiveness, it is critical to compare the cost of the ad with the number of potential users that can be reached. Radio and direct mail appear to be today's best buys for your advertising dollar.





4) PREPARATION COST

Any ad requires the expenditure of your time, effort, and money. In your business, time is money. The advertisements most economical to prepare are radio and newspaper ads.

5) COUPONS

Attach a coupon to your ad. By using different or numbered coupons, you will be able to evaluate each ad's effectiveness. Newspapers and direct mail are excellent coupon vehicles.

6) MAJOR MARKET PENETRATION

In many cases, it saves time and money to advertise in major markets (where the highest population density exists). Television, radio, and newspapers are the most effective media to aid you in major market penetration.

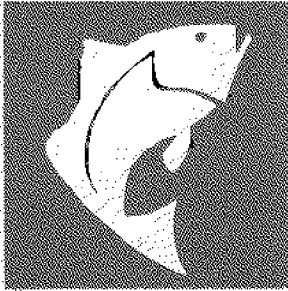
7) REGIONAL BUYS

Some media enable you to advertise in selected towns and communities. Regional buys are best handled via newspapers.

MEDIA REVIEW

As indicated, each media is different in characteristics, exposure, awareness, and cost. The following chart presents an overview of the major advertising media.





CHARACTERISTIC	MEDIA					
	TV	Radio	Maga- zine	News- paper	Outdoor Signs/ Billboards	Direct Mail
Demonstration of Your Service	Excel.	Poor	Fair	Fair	Fair	Fair
Short-Term Action	Good	Excel.	Fair	Excel.	Excel.	Excel.
Cost per Audience Exposure	Good	Excel.	Fair	Excel.	Fair	Excel.
Preparation Cost	High	Low	Mid	Low	High	Mid
Coupon Vehicle			Good	Excel.		Excel.
Major Market Penetration	Excel.	Excel.	Fair	Excel.	Good	Fair
Regional Buys	Good	Good	Fair	Excel.	Good	Fair

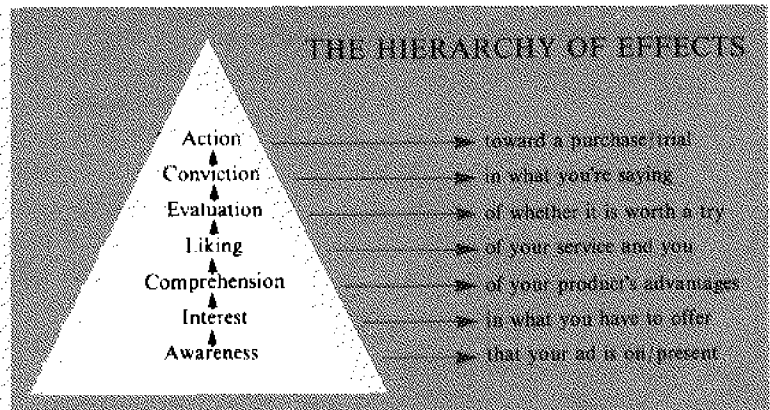
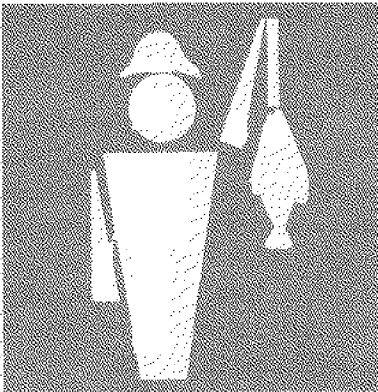
Advertising is expensive so you must carefully select the media outlet that will work best for you. Your choice depends on many factors: the amount of money you have budgeted for advertising; past advertising methods that have worked — or failed, and your ability to accommodate an increase in customers.

Additionally, try to “plug-into” other tourism organizations, including chambers of commerce, state tourism offices, and municipal tourism promotion organizations. Often they have additional information about media sources and can provide valuable assistance. Nearly all charter boat captains maintain contact with current customers through direct mail. However, when the decision to attract new customers is made, a decision to expand your advertising dollar must be made as well.

STEP 4—PREPARE YOUR AD

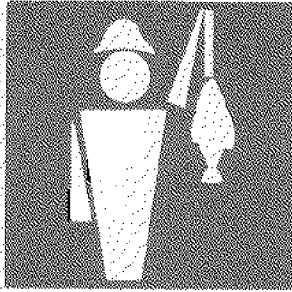
*Your ad should entice consumers
to become your customers.*

Ideally, your ad should take the reader through the hierarchy of effects. Initially, a reader becomes aware of your charter boat operation and eventually should take action to try it. Maintain a consistent look and message in all of your advertising. Use similar type styles, as well as your name or logo, in all of your ads. Work closely with advertising personnel to make your ad look more professional.



The hierarchy of effects is a helpful tool that puts advertising in its proper perspective. Americans are bombarded with more than \$45 billion in advertising each year; information overload occurs daily. You must create an ad that begins at the base of the hierarchy — awareness. If your readers/audience/listeners are not aware of your ad, you cannot reach the other levels in the hierarchy. Awareness, then, is the crucial and vital element and is best achieved by remembering the acronym KISS (Keep It Short and Sweet). Your ad should be hard-hitting and have a catchy,



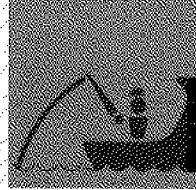


concise, and interesting headline or beginning. Once awareness is achieved, your audience can quickly move through interest, comprehension, liking, evaluation, conviction; and — finally — action.

To complete and carry out the hierarchy of effects, several execution styles are possible.

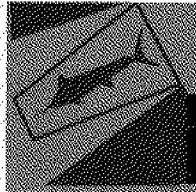
SLICE OF LIFE

This is best executed on television. Show one or more individuals using your service in its normal setting (action shot).



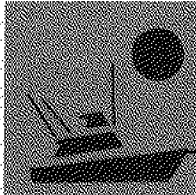
FANTASY

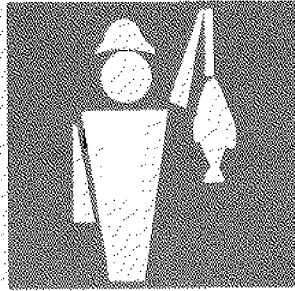
Magazines, newspapers, outdoor signs, and billboards can be best used to carry out this execution style. Show what might happen — adventure, a successful catch — if your service is purchased.



MOOD/IMAGE

For this, magazines, direct mail, newspapers, and television are the most appropriate media. Try to build around your service a distinct mood or image, such as friendliness, beauty, scenery, or relaxation.





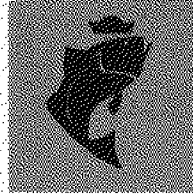
MUSICAL

Radio and television are the obvious vehicles for musical jingles. Try a song or jingle: "Come take a float — on my fun boat!"



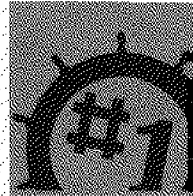
PERSONALITY SYMBOL

This can be most effectively displayed via magazines, newspapers, outdoor signs, and billboards. Create a character that represents or personifies your product or service — Captain Al, Charlie the Tuna Catcher, or Salty Sam, for example.



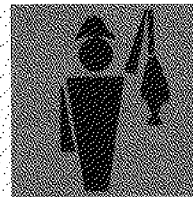
EXPERTISE

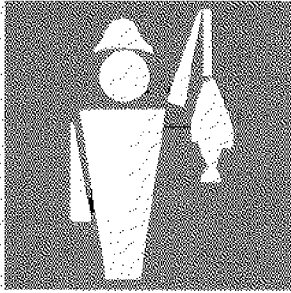
This is best conveyed in direct mail, magazines, and newspapers. Stress the care you take in delivering your service. For example, if you are Coast Guard-licensed, have numerous years of experience, or are a Charter Boat Association member, tell your potential customers!



TESTIMONIAL EVIDENCE

Magazines and newspapers appear to be best for using testimonial evidence. Feature pictures or personal comments of satisfied customers, tournament winnings, or record catches.





PREPARATION TIPS

If you are preparing an ad for print media, keep in mind that some people have never fished. Items that are obvious to you may not be to some clients. Think about the questions you have been asked in the past. For example, mention the best clothing and shoes to wear, or that you provide or rent fishing gear. Always try to grab your audience's attention early — by using headlines. Highlight your main selling points, such as years of experience, large boat, or comfortable ride. The sample advertisement below involves the readers in the ad, but does not overwhelm them.

Join Captain "Trophy" Thompson
aboard the

SEA NOTE

"Family Fishing at its Finest"
Flounder-Trot-Bass

* \$19 Adults * \$8 Boat Rental (not included)
* \$14 Children * Full Day Fishing 8 Hours

USE THIS COUPON

\$200 OFF
per family member
good for the 1987 season

CALL 1-800-SEA NOTE
Bayside Fishing Village
Plymouth, GE 29678

A black and white illustration of a fishing boat on the water, with a large fish being pulled up. The background is a dark, textured square.

If radio or television are your selected mediums, involve the listener right away. Since you are talking directly to the listeners, speak in a conversational language, as if you are telling a story to a friend. Remember to tell people where they can reach you. Keep addresses and phone numbers near the end so they are the last things the listeners will hear — and remember.



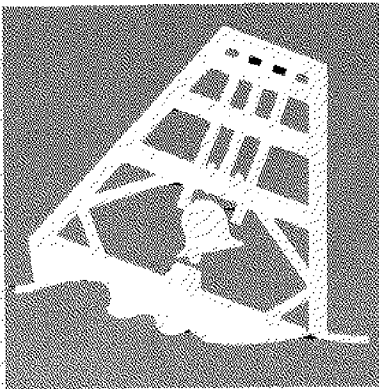
STEP 5—PLACE YOUR AD

You must answer two critical questions when placing your ad: at what time and in what media will you advertise.

The timing questions concern what months or weeks work best and what time of day reaches the appropriate listeners or readers. In many cases, you have several options. Keep in mind when the fishing season starts and ends in your area, or when it's at a peak. If you are trying to attract new customers, plan to spend the largest part of your advertising budget during the prime visitor season or peak fishing time.

Decide on your media based on what you believe will work best. Try a combination of media, but be consistent. Keep the same theme. The media source is especially important if you are doing local advertising, as well as if you are advertising in non-local markets. Billboard and radio advertising, for example, probably will not be effective unless used locally.

Try to set up up a media calendar such as the one below. Give yourself deadlines when your ads/scripts/pictures are due to varying media sources.



			1	2	3	4	5
6	Deadline for newspaper ad & TV ad film	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	Photo and brochure sent to Chamber office	16	17	18	19
20	Contract by publisher for newspaper ad	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	Start of fishing season			



STEP 6—EVALUATE

*Advertising is costly,
so periodically evaluate its effectiveness for you*

Is advertising an expense or an investment? The marketing-oriented answer to that question is that advertising is an investment. In order to evaluate this costly investment, you must keep records and survey your customers. You must understand what did work and what didn't work . . . and why!

When you evaluate your advertising program, there are four major factors to consider:

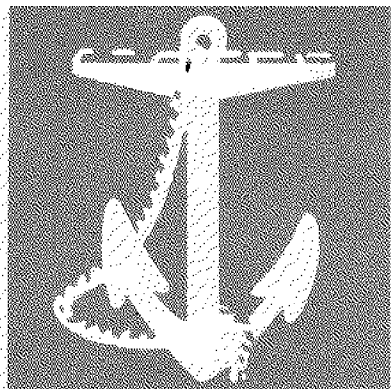
- 1) the cost of each advertising method,
- 2) the amount of revenue generated by each method,
- 3) the number of inquiries resulting from each method, and
- 4) the number of bookings resulting from each method.

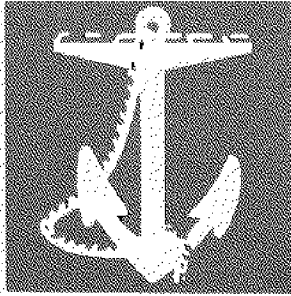
It is impossible to be 100 percent accurate in determining costs, revenues and sources of customers. However, you can key your ads to keep track of how customers are finding you. In addition to asking callers how they heard about your service, use different coupons or color codes to keep track of your advertising and the customers you attract. Finally, keep accurate records of your ad expenses by each medium.

Also, consider using:

— *CUSTOMER SURVEYS*. They can provide information on how people heard about your boat, as well as reveal customers' likes and dislikes. Ultimately, such surveys can help you better understand your customer base.

— *SALES ANALYSES*. They require you to break out your dollar sales for each product or service you offer (rod rental, bait and tackle, food and beverage). Try to spot trends that reflect increases or decreases in sales and relate them back to your advertising program.





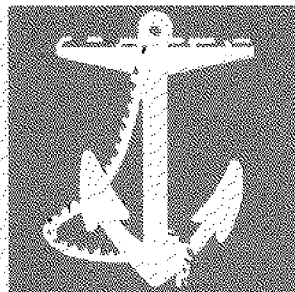
— *PROMOTIONAL ANALYSES*. They often mean coupons. If you have distributed coupons, figure the total number returned against the number you distributed. Try to estimate “add-on” sales, or the dollar amount spent by a customer who used a coupon. Other promotional techniques, such as evening cruises, may be evaluated in a similar fashion. Do not expect promotions to yield a high profit, but look at them for their long-term benefits — attracting new customers who might not otherwise have taken the trip.

CALCULATING YOUR RETURN

At the end of the fishing season, you can calculate the return on your advertising investment if you have done a good job maintaining your records. Divide gross receipts from customers who found out about your service through each advertising medium by the cost of the ads you placed. The example below shows the return for each dollar spent developing a brochure.

\$7500 spent by customers who fished with me after reading my brochure	= \$3.75 return for
\$2000 spent developing brochure	each dollar spent





In addition, by examining the return on your advertising investment over a number of years, it is possible to tell which method of advertising is producing the best results. In the example below, newspapers and brochures show higher returns over the years for our fictitious *Sea Note* charter service than radio or TV advertising.

Year	MEDIUM			
	SEACOAST Newspaper	WFSH Radio	SEA NOTE Brochure	WCST TV
1977	\$ 8.15		\$10.26	
1978	8.65	—	9.65	—
1979	9.12	\$2.60	8.26	—
1980	9.75	2.10	8.55	—
1981	10.84	(minus)	9.12	
1982	10.15	3.00	10.11	\$2.75
1983	9.75	3.26	7.95	3.20
1984	8.75	2.95	8.75	4.13
1985	9.56	4.15	7.55	2.50
1986	10.21	3.80	8.10	2.15

CHART YOUR COURSE

Every charter fishing business is unique, as are the individuals who operate them. The overall success of any advertising program will be based on the goals you establish and on how well you know your customer base.

There are no guarantees that this six-step advertising plan will produce an overwhelming response from customers overnight. However, by following the steps as closely as you can, you should see some real benefits in the future. *Good luck!*



ADVERTISING COST GUIDE

Costs to advertise vary with the type of media source that you have selected. All advertising rates are subject to change. An attempt, however, has been made to provide general information on the costs to advertise with the various media.

Costs include preparing the ads and then directing them to the different mediums to use. If the ads are to be prepared by an ad agency, you can expect the price to range between \$200-\$500 per ad.

Direct Mail — It will take between \$100-\$300 to set-up a direct mail system (creating an ad, purchasing supplies, etc.). Each piece mailed out will cost approximately 30 to 50 cents, depending on the type of mail class and materials and labor involved.

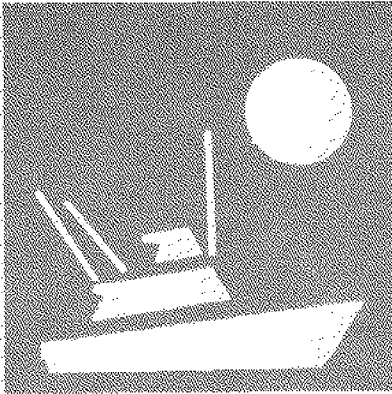
Television — It will cost between \$40 and \$500 dollars to advertise on television. This will depend largely on the market area of the station. A normal budget for television advertising is approximately \$1000 per week.

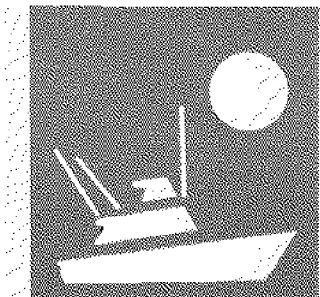
Radio — These ads can be purchased for as little as \$20 a spot. Cheaper package deals also may be purchased. If a charter captain decides to sponsor a marine weather broadcast on a local station, he might pick up a three-month deal for \$650-\$700.

Magazine — These ads can be quite varied and can be prepared for approximately \$200 if in black/white and around \$1000 if a color ad is desired. Much will depend on the size ad you would like and the number of times you want it to run in the selected publication. Additionally, you must consider if you want to advertise in a local, regional or national magazine.

Newspapers — Weekly newspapers charge between \$15 and \$75 per week to run an ad. This will depend on the size of the ad. Three-month deals can be purchased for as little as \$250 to \$300.

Billboards — Billboard space can be expensive. Prices can start at \$1500 a month.





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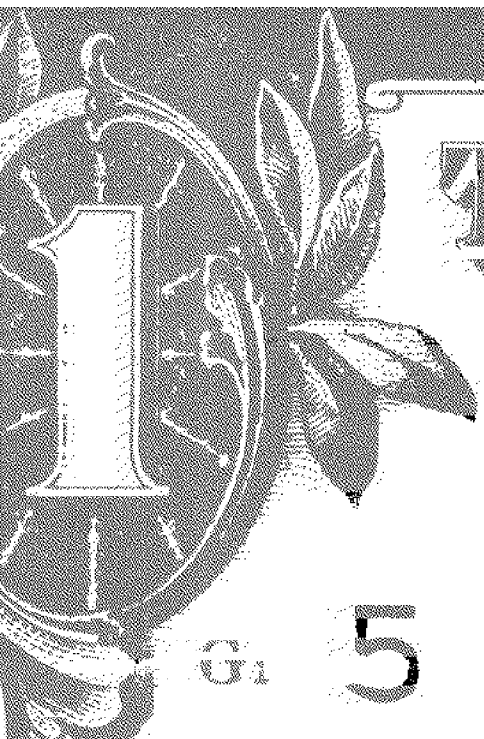
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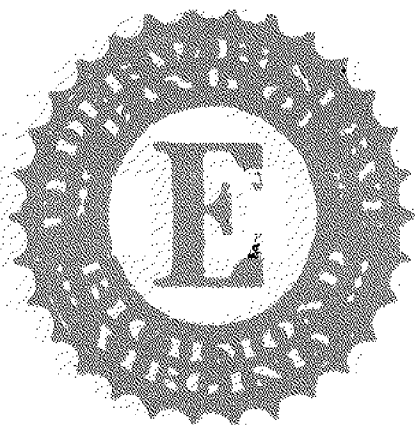
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Barry W. Kania

Treasurer of the United States



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