

# Guerilla Marketing...for Cheap & Free!

Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia's First *Spark* Event of 2005

January 10<sup>th</sup> @ The Playground, 2030 Sansom Street

\*\*\*Remember the second Monday of every month is a new Spark event hosted by the Theatre Alliance of Greater Philadelphia. Individual & Organizational members attend free, all others are charged \$10 per person. (This money may be applied towards membership dues!)\* \*\*

## Special Guests:

**Robin Barnes** - Marketing Major at Rutgers University, has worked for advertising agencies before finding her way to the arts and is *currently at home as the Senior Marketing Manager at Philadelphia Theatre Company*

**Christine Barbush** - Villanova University Graduate, Arden Apprentice, Theatre Alliance's Barrymore Awards Producer (2 years) then Barrymore Awards Administrator (2 years), Managing Director of the Fringe Festival, Freelance PR for 1812 Productions and Fringe Festival, *currently Director of Marketing for the Kimmel Center (Broadway at the Academy Series)*

**Sue Winge** - Started at Prince Music Theater (then, American Music Theatre Festival), then to the Painted Bride Art Center, Arden Theatre Company as Director of Communications, Freelance Consultant, *finally finding her way as Marketing & Public Relations Director at Villanova Theatre.*

## Remember Marketing requires three things...Money, Time & People

- With Marketing YOU can control the message, the when the where the why etc.
- with PR, it is all up in the air and the press can take whatever spin they want to.
- Always have your Marketing Materials on you to pass out and give away! ☺

## ➤ Surveys

- Don't spend a penny until you know what you are doing
- You are creating a relationship with someone who wants to buy your product - know your audience - **who is coming to your shows???**
  - Surveys should be done about once every 3-5 years or if you are embarking on a big change in your company
    - E.g. changing your building location or artistic direction
  - Give the Surveys at the door and maybe give an incentive to fill it out
    - Free cup of coffee...small door prizes
  - Free surveys online provided by Surveymonkey.com
  - Important information that should be included in a survey:
    - Age
    - Income
    - Where they live
    - What they read
    - What they listen to
    - Do they have children
    - What shows has your company done that they liked best (and worst)
    - What show would they like to see your company do
    - When do they buy their tickets (subscriptions, three months, one month, one week, day of)
  - Mail the surveys out to your subscribers and enclose an addressed stamped envelope to return the survey.
- This information should be tallied and pay careful attention because it will provide the following:
  - Product - What are you selling?
  - People - Who are you selling it to?
  - Price - How are your prices competitive and is there a greater value to your ticket?
  - Position - Who are you? What is your niche in the market?
  - Placement - Where are your buyers getting their information?
  - Politics - What is happening now and how is it affecting your audience? Is it important to them?
  - Promotion - How do I sell my product with all the above information?
- Create a Marketing Budget and Plan based on this information

## ➤ **Marketing Budget and Plan**

- Need to create one
- Zero Based Marketing Plan - how to start with nothing
  - What do I have to pay for versus what can I get for free
    - Brochure, posters and postcards and people, time and creativity
  - Get competitive bids from printers - visit at least three.
  - See what you can get for free
    - Board Members, Volunteers, Friends, Spouses, etc
  - See if you can get a trade
    - Advertisements in program in exchange for food on opening night
  - Good Writing, designing, and artwork
    - Appreciate the talents of those who do that work for you.
- Save money by printing your entire season all at once!
  - Season brochure, individual show postcards, have a look for whole season
  - Save more money by printing additional materials along edges of paper...
    - i.e. business cards or bookmarks - make them a part of your initial design since you are paying for the printing and paper anyway! (may be charged a small trim fee)
- Know your postal guidelines
  - Know what the standard sizes are so you don't pay for more postage
  - Know where you need to place the addresses so you don't get many mailed incorrectly
  - Get your Bulk Rate from USPS - small fee for bulk mailing - visit <http://www.usps.com/businessmail101/> for more information or the Post Office at 30<sup>th</sup> Street for more information: 2970 Market Street, 215-895-9178

## ➤ **Database Management**

- Always collect names, addresses, and emails at the Box Office
- Insert "Add Me to your Mailing list" papers into your programs and in your lobby
- Use the names to get materials out!
- Use traditional mailing methods and new email methods to reach audiences.
- Acquire Press list and keep them updated (look for more information on Press in **Press** section below.)

## ➤ **Advertising - get the most bang for your buck**

- The Guide to the Lively Arts in *The Philadelphia Inquirer* is expensive
  - Maybe only use it on Fridays and Sundays (most viewed papers)
- Take the survey information and approach the papers about season sponsorship
  - Approach them with a plan
- Rely on as many free listings as possible in newspapers
  - Check to see if your information is printed correctly in those newspapers (Box office #, times, location)
  - Use ticket value as trade for advertising
  - Give tickets to them to give away
- Email Marketing
  - "Google" the big local show - take note of how many places it is listed (theatremania.com, etc) and submit your show on those same lists
  - Never send attachments in emails
- Work on word of mouth marketing
  - Offer 2 for 1 coupons etc
- Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance publishes a Media Guide every year - good for Tri-State Area
  - \$65 per copy
  - Theatre Alliance has three copies of Media Guide to be borrowed or used by the membership at any time.
- *Philadelphia Business Journal* publishes its Big Book of Lists
  - You may find a group of people who would be interested in your production depending on what list they are on!
- Trade mailing lists with other theatre companies
  - If they did a similar show last season, find out their single ticket buyers etc
  - NEVER give phone numbers or emails
  - Don't swap if the show is too similar to your current show so you may promote your show first.
- If your own personal email list is too big to send out your own email blast (you might be filtered out as a spammer) - try Patronmail.com - cry poor and they will try to make it work in order to work with you
  - You will get all your information back including who clicked on the email, who linked to other things by it, etc

- Don't email too often, you may find that people will unsubscribe to your list messages.
- Smaller Theatre Companies should have last minute, 2 weeks in advance marketing for the most impact!
- Donate tickets to fund drives
- Stein Advertising for cocktail napkins, matchbooks etc...tell them Madi sent you! ☺

## ➤ Press

- is free whereas Marketing is paid for.
- Use your own Website so others can find out about you 24 hours a day.
- If you have a Newsletter, use it!
  - The Wilma and PTC made their newsletter a part of their program.
  - Mail it out early to your subscribers
- Look at the Press Community as another audience that wants your product - **KEEP THEM INFORMED!**
- Press Kits can include the following:
  - Show Press Release
  - Season Press Release
  - Show Program
  - Postcards
  - Photos with captions on bottom or back (these can be digital on burnt CD)
  - Press Releases about exciting additions or developments to your company
  - Promotion for the next show
  - Any other marketing materials you have
- The Press Release
  - Make sure the release is concise with all the facts...two pages max.
    - Attach a fact sheet: Who What Where When Why etc
  - Always use quotes in a press release
  - Mail and Email the press release (when emailing you can still make it personal as a courtesy)
  - Send opening night invitations
  - Email photos to the photo editor - keep digital photos to 300 dpi
    - Or have downloadable images from your website
  - To pitch a story you can always write a personal letter and attach the press release
- There are two kinds of press: Feature Stories and Reviews
  - Put your heart into the Feature Stories - Reviews can be bad and can kill the show, but there are other writers out there that are not critics! They need stories too...they are always looking!
  - You can give them information without getting a review.
  - Suburban Papers are very good with Feature Stories
  - CALL THEM! They need the story as much as you do!
  - Read, listen, and watch for who does what kind of reporting and pitch your story accordingly
- Write a press release for every show - for anything you do (some wacky stunt for special event - let them know -
  - Pick a spokesperson as the FACE of the company. They will have direct correspondence with the Press.
  - Combine efforts with another company to help get you both to the forefront.
- Know your cast, employees, where they live and what is their religion to get to the grass roots organizations and papers - get profiles on everyone!
  - Keep your company in the news by profiling one of your cast or employees in a local paper.
  - Keep track with company info sheets - where did you go to High School? College? Where did you grow up?
- What is your hook? Find one.
  - Is it a photo opportunity? Wacky stunt? Will it attract crowds? Does it involve children or a minority? Find the angle...Find the community interest!
  - Have one great photo and one great blurb
  - They love corny stuff so go for it!
  - Is it an educational or community outreach project you want to get some attention? Maybe you could contact these folks:
    - Lucia Herndon - *The Philadelphia Inquirer*
    - Marty Moss-Coane - *WHYY*
    - Jim Cotter - *WRTI, Creatively Speaking*
    - Karen Phillips - *KYW*
  - Michael Klein & Society press for gossip and Michael Harrington for "7 Days" for *The Philadelphia Inquirer!* ☺
  - Think about the content and who would be interested.

- Be consistent with your imagery - have two photos - one vertical and one horizontal - always the leads
  - Keep your message the same. You want to burn the imagery into your audience.
- The Visual
  - You have 3 seconds to grab someone's attention with your image
  - One striking image that could speak about the play
  - Accompany it with a good quote about the play or if it won any awards
  - Post photos on your website
  - Stage the photos if costumes are incomplete, make the shot tight but be respectful of representing design elements in photos
- **PSA's**
  - Catering to community relations events
  - 15 & 30 second spots - email to all the stations
    - And to community calendars at radio and television stations - they will do it for any non-profits at no cost to you.
    - Send them early because they need to be approved by other staff members and you never know when it could be played.
    - Accompany it with a community message - a service you are providing to them
- **One final note:**
  - Have a seamless, friendly, and helpful front of house staff.
  - Your box office and house management personnel will be the first ones to greet any audience and press
    - Keep them well prepped!

## **FREE ways to list/promote your upcoming event**

### **Craig's List Online Community**

Post your events at:

<http://philadelphia.craigslist.org>

*Under the "Community" header there is a sub-section titled "Events"*

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### **WHERE Magazine's editors choice newsletter**

E-mail your press releases to:

James Zeleniak, Editor

[jzeleniak@abartapub.com](mailto:jzeleniak@abartapub.com)

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### **Digital City Philadelphia**

Post your events at:

<http://www.digitalcity.com/Philadelphia>

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### **Young Professionals Update Magazine**

E-mail your events to:

[eventcalendar@youngprofessionalsupdate.com](mailto:eventcalendar@youngprofessionalsupdate.com)

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### **philly.tribe.net**

Sign up with a profile and then post your events at:

<http://philly.tribe.net>

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## **Philly Fun Guide**

Post your events at:

<http://www.phillyfunguide.com>

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## **WHYY Arts Calendar**

Submit your press releases and event details to:

<http://www.whyy.org/community/arts.html>

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## **Around Philly**

A good entertainment resource website where you might be able to get featured on their website or in their newsletter

E-mail your press releases and event details to a few of the E-mail contacts listed on the site:

<http://www.aroundphilly.com>

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## **Greater Philadelphia Tourism & Marketing Corporation**

<http://www.gophila.com>

Posts Philadelphia events on their website as well as sends out E-Newsletters.

E-mail your press releases and event details to:

[james@gptmc.com](mailto:james@gptmc.com)

[cathy@gptmc.com](mailto:cathy@gptmc.com)

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## **UCnet.com**

A good resource for reaching audiences in the 18-25 year age range.

Post your events for free on their calendar at:

<http://www.ucnet.com>

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## **Upcoming Events Calendar**

Post your events for free on their calendar:

<http://www.upcomingevents.com/arts.htm>

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## **And of course... the Theatre Alliance Listserv!!**

Visit the Theatre Alliance home page at <http://www.theatrealliance.org> to sign up