

Tips on Marketing Your Facility

by Susan Snyder-Davis

The following quick tips are ways to promote your facility and its programs.

- 1 Celebrity skaters - bring in celebrity skaters (local or national) for autograph signings. Be sure to notify the media.
- 2 Balloons – imprint your rink’s name on balloons for parties, giveaways or other events.
- 3 Book covers – create a book cover to give to kids at nearby schools. They will be walking billboards for your facility.
- 4 Bumper stickers – hand out your bumper stickers and let everyone know that if someone on staff spots your bumper sticker on their car they will be awarded free skating passes.
- 5 Calendars – distribute calendars with your schedule to everyone who visits your facility.
- 6 Cash register tape – put coupons on grocery store cash register tapes whenever possible.
- 7 Coupon books – create a coupon book to sell or give as a gift to customers. Fill it with coupons for snack bar items, skating admission, game tokens, birthday parties, skate rental and more.
- 8 Drama – add drama to your promotions by advertising in local theater and school theater playbills.
- 9 Little Leagues – advertise on ballpark billboards and scorecards. Sponsor or co-sponsor a team.
- 10- Announcements – every week write promotional copy to be read over your speaker system.
- 11 Tourism – go after the local tourism market by getting your brochure to local hotels, motels, Chamber of Commerce, tourism offices, popular restaurants and anywhere tourists look for information.
- 12 Yellow Pages – list your facility in the Yellow Pages of the local telephone book. You may want to list in more than one location, such as under Skating, Family Entertainment, Party Planner, etc.
- 13 Community appearances – make a point of being public. Participate in community parades and festivals and exhibit at local, school and state fairs. Distribute passes and coupons through school festivals as prizes.
- 14 Place mats – advertise on place mats at restaurants that sell the space and put advertising on your own snack bar place mats.
- 15 School newspaper – advertise in school newspapers, game program books and school yearbooks.
- 16 T-Shirts – create a fun T-shirt to represent your facility and sell it for a fair price. Put your advertising message on the backs of your best customers.
- 17 Support local Scout groups – Let Scouts keep some of the profit for selling event tickets at your facility. Tell the Scouts they can have meetings in your facility and if they want to skate after the meeting, let them skate for a discounted rate. Let Girl Scouts sell cookies during busy skate times. Offer to work with Scouts on their badge programs. To help in setting up an ice skating badge program, contact ISI at 972-735-8800 to order new booklets on suggested ice skating programs for

Boy and Girl Scouts.

18 Answering machine – always use your answering machine to sell your activities. Don't forget to direct callers to your Web site for more information.

19 Web magic – use your Web site to promote events, your calendar, birthday parties, group parties, hockey programs, skating lessons, competitions, discounts, coupons, current press releases, fun pages for kids, coloring contests and more.

20 Gift cards – everyone gives out Christmas cards, why not give out cards for Kids' Day or some other related special day to draw attention to your facility.

21 Open house – have an open house and invite event group leaders, media, and school leaders for a party. Serve snacks and let everyone tour your facility. Hand out information on programs, special events, and parties. Be ready to book parties and sign people up for programs.

The primary product for ice rinks is ice time. To fill ice time and attract more customers, utilize the above proven tips to develop a successful marketing program for your facility and its programs.

* Susan Snyder-Davis is the owner of Kids Marketing Factory and the author of Marketing Your Family Entertainment Center. She can be reached at 317-895-5424, E-mail: kidsmktg@juno.com.