

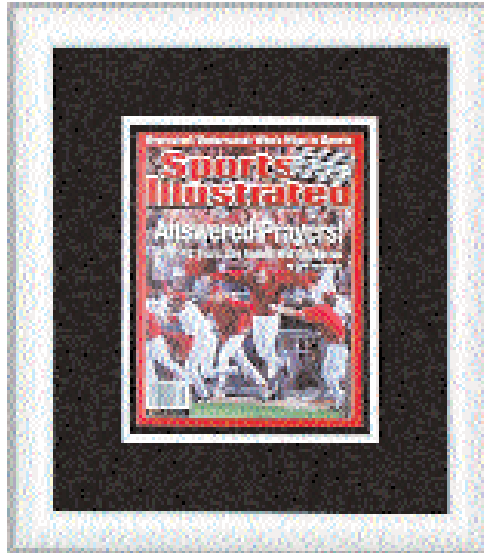
# For Every Season...

## Creating and Improving Business with Promotions Throughout the Year

by Joshua Gabriel

You may have noticed that movie posters have become a popular item in decorating. These posters capture the essence of pop culture both past and present, lending its owner a connection with a particular era or positive motivation from its message. Unfortunately, these posters can be both difficult to locate and costly to obtain. There is another avenue from which framers can get a similar type of business—magazine covers. Many magazines feature outstanding cover photographs and interesting headlines. They are easy to obtain and not cost-prohibitive. With subject matter including “special tributes” or “anniversary” issues to sports championships, magazines are collected and saved by many people. Retail framers can benefit from this popularity.

Baseball fans may have seen a recent post-World Series issue of *Sports Illustrated* magazine. You can buy the magazine for roughly \$3.00, frame it, and display it for sale. It makes a colorful decoration for a rec room,



Framing notable magazine covers for sale in your shop is a both timely and inexpensive way to encourage purchases. (Framerica White Dust with triple matting.)



Talk to restaurant owners in your area about framing the menu they display in their business. Including a small card about your services will increase your visibility around town. (Framerica Brushed Gold moulding and matching fillet.)

college dorm room, or home office. Recent tribute issues to Elvis Presley marking the 25th anniversary of his death can be purchased and sold to any of the countless number of “King” fans. An old car magazine with the title “Best Vette Yet” is a perfect gift for any car enthusiast. Or perhaps you know a wristwatch connoisseur.

There are numerous possibilities. Magazines capture a moment, the culture, and the memories of your customers. Best of all, they allow a tremendous profit margin. You can browse any newsstand or bookstore for images to frame. You can frame one or 10 in any given month. It’s a great way to keep your frame shop walls fresh and exciting. *Time* magazine, *Life* magazine (now in tribute issues), *Sports Illustrated*, *Motor Trend*, and *National Geographic* are great to get started. Information on obtaining past issues is often available inside the magazine near the masthead or subscription information.

While magazine covers can provide an easy, cost-effective way to improve business, they are only one

example amongst a vast supply of opportunities. In fact, each new season brings with it the need for custom framing.

**Spring:** When the warmer weather of spring arrives it brings with it the baseball season, graduation ceremonies, and excited June brides. Hanging pieces that feature your local professional team is an excellent way to capture the excitement of opening day. You might also consider offering clever discounts (perhaps \$10.00 off) if a customer brings in a game ticket or program to be framed.

Graduation ceremonies bring a sense of pride and accomplishment to graduates and their families. Target these proud parents by posting signs around town, in your store window, and on flyers reminding the community that diplomas are a lifelong keepsake worthy of custom framing.

Finally, since June is one of the most popular months for weddings, remind people that framed invitations make



*Highlight framed diplomas and other graduation-related items in early spring when the majority of graduations are being planned. (Framerica Museum Silver with matching fillet.)*

## 10 Reasons to Call Your Customers

**Keeping an open** line of communication with your customers, particularly those with whom you have a good relationship, is an excellent way to improve business. Since you're a picture framer and not a telemarketer, you'll need a good, non-threatening reason to call (never during dinner). The following 10 reasons have worked for framers around the country. Each of these ideas was shared by framers with members of the Framerica sales team during their travels to frame shops and galleries over the past six months.

**Host A Wine and Cheese Party** – Hosting an informal event is an excellent way to get customers into your shop and thinking about framing. It's also a great excuse to call them with an invite.

**Meet The Artist** – Local artists are often excited to promote their work and what better venue than a local frame shop or gallery? This type of gathering works both as a reason to call and a way of generating new business from whatever friends/potential clients the artist might know in the community.

**Update Your Files** – Calling a customer to ask for their e-mail address is a good marketing tool. It allows you to keep in touch in the future without having to call repeatedly and is generally considered non-threatening. You can then follow up with e-newsletters featuring pictures and specials.

**Suggest A Framing Idea** – Calling a customer to suggest an idea usually works well for special events. For example, "I just wanted to call and thank you for your past business and ask if you had any birthdays or anniversaries (graduations, new births, retirements, etc.) coming up. We just got in some great new designs."

**Sales Promotions** – We all know customers love specials, so why not call and let them know when you're having a sale?

**Trade Shows/New Products** – If you attend any one of the

various industry trade shows this year (Las Vegas or Philadelphia, for example) you will often see various new products. Call your customers and tell them you were at a show. Then, invite them to stop by and see some new, exciting design samples they might like.

**VIP Call** – Customers enjoy "special treatment." Call your best customers and let them know you appreciate their business and that you're having a VIP special. (Of course, make sure they really are your best customers.)

**Annual Pre-Framed Art Extravaganza** – Whenever you feel like off the wall poster/art sales have slowed, hold a pre-framed art sale. This also works well in auction form and can serve to create an exciting atmosphere where people return with photos, memorabilia, etc.

**Mirrors** – Chances are every customer has an awkward space in their home where a framed picture just wouldn't work. Call to let them know about your versatile new selection of mirrors, which can be made to fit anywhere, adding light and design to any space.

**Five-Year Check Up** – Customers will appreciate a call letting them know that new conservation materials are available to protect their artwork. Remind them that it's been five years, and offer to update their frames. Perhaps when they see your new mouldings they'll decide to go for an entirely new look. ■

thoughtful gifts. If there is a local invitation supplier in your area, offer to frame examples for their shop in exchange for signage about your services. Couples will be excited about the idea of decorating their new home with the invitation they choose, and friends and family will be more likely to frame the happy couple's invitation as an engagement gift.

**Summer:** When the summer finally arrives, people everywhere begin to think about vacation. For many, this long awaited time off will provide them the chance to do some much needed cleaning and redecorating. Pick a Saturday and make it your stores annual redecorating day. It will put the idea in people's minds and may serve to generate some extra walk-in business during the often slow summer months.

**Autumn:** Then there's the always exciting fall season. Since football dominates these months for many, gridiron artwork is an excellent window display, especially if your store is near a popular professional team or large college program.

Fall also means Thanksgiving, a chance for families to gather. This is a great time to remind customers who want to liven their decor for holiday gatherings that you can help with custom framing.

And, if the stuffing, desserts, and wine are accounted for, a framed photo is a great alternative gift for any host. Consumers will likely not consider this option on their own, but with the proper window signage to inspire them, it could work.

**Winter:** That leaves one season. For many consumers the

winter season revolves around the holidays. While custom framing is a perfect Christmas or Hanukkah gift, it may be difficult for some individuals to choose a picture or design which will satisfy the recipient's personal tastes. Overcome this problem by framing holiday gift wrapping paper and displaying it in your window as a gift certificate. With a gift certificate purchase of a certain dollar value, provide the framed piece to the customer for display under the tree. They can then return the loaner (which can be reused) when they redeem the gift certificate.

**Year-Round:** There are also various ways to increase business throughout the year. These opportunities are an outstanding way to create a steady workflow. Each day, babies are born to proud and excited parents. These new additions often mark the greatest day in a respective parent's life. It's not uncommon for family members to run out and purchase newspapers on that day, only to file them away to yellow as the years pass. Many newspapers offer covers printed on higher quality paper that will not deteriorate. These are suitable for framing. Negotiating for space in a hospital gift shop or obtaining a list of newborns for direct mailings is an excellent way to secure this business.

Another common occurrence in a community is the grand opening of a store. It's quite common for new owners to save and display the first bills of currency behind their respective counters. These bills, although commonly seen, tend to diminish the fresh new design of the store. Let new owners know you provide

a service where new bills are framed to fit and look perfect behind their counters. The framing here is easy; the service is unique.

One more idea for year-round business may be successful for those with frame shops near retirement homes. These homes are



*Displaying pre-framed magazine covers can also inspire customers to bring in their own favorite to be framed. (Framerica Museum Silver and matching fillet.)*

constantly welcoming new residents, many of whom find themselves within a dreary, less than personal room. Make a deal with the home to allow each new resident and their families the chance to purchase a framed picture suitable to their own tastes. The proper marketing plan will ensure each party knows these custom frames will make the move more pleasurable.

For those more interested in conventional ideas, fellow businesses in your area are an outstanding means of advertising your services. Offer to frame a menu for display in a local restaurant in exchange for signage (a plaque often looks best). Patrons will see and love your work. This idea is not limited to restaurants and can be successful in any high

traffic location. Finally, for repeat business, offer a five year tune-up whereby discounts are offered to those customers seeking conservation mats, new moulding, etc.

Regardless of your location, size, or marketing plan, new and creative ideas are always a means to grow. Although some of those contained within this article are fresh and unproven, they are all possible. Whatever ideas you choose for your business, may you enjoy success and good fortune. ■

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