

# The Guerrilla Framer

Because It's A Jungle Out There

by  
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## Heat Up Spring and Summer Sales

May and June are traditionally two of the best sales months for the custom picture framer. Sales are driven by Mother's Day and Father's Day gift giving, diploma framing, wedding gifts, and home improvement projects, such as painting and remodeling. By tailoring your advertising messages to the holidays and consumer trends that occur during these months, you can maximize sales and take full advantage of a prime opportunity to develop new customers.

### Planting Seeds

Although I prefer to communicate a more generalized advertising message throughout most of the year, one that emphasizes my business' products and services for the consumer's own use, I vary from this twice during the year: once in the Spring, and again during the fourth calendar quarter. Each time I shift gears, it's to put the focus on gift giving, or what I like to refer to as frames for OPW's (Other People's Walls). I do this using "Seed Planting" ads, which put forth the idea of giving custom framing as a gift.

Seed planting simply means sending your advertising message at a time when the product is most likely to be most useful to your potential customers. Since your customers are thinking about Mother's Day and Father's Day presents at this time of year, a suggestion to custom frame a family picture, for instance, can produce widespread and immediate response.

There are many ways to convey the message of giving frames as gifts. One that I've used successfully for years is, "Give the gift that's put on display—not put away." I'm sure you can think of other, equally effective slogans to convey this message.

As with gardening, the key to effective seed planting is to do it in a timely manner. Advertise too soon and you're planting seeds in hard, frozen ground. When this happens, you waste your advertising dollars on seeds that won't germinate.

However, if you advertise too late, the results can be even worse. Not only will you fail to generate many sales, but the sales you do produce may arrive so close to the holiday that you can't get the work out the door in time.

### Peak Season

The peak time for weddings stretches from early spring to early autumn. Framed invitations and stitchery are amongst the most popular framed items given to the bride and groom, but don't overlook bridal party gifts, art, and gift certificates when designing your advertising campaign.

Spring and summer also mark the height of the home improvement season, which creates an opportunity to further increase sales with event-targeted advertising. Consider co-promoting your framing business with local home improvement businesses such as wallpaper and paint stores and lumberyards.

### Designing Framing for OPW's

There are special considerations to keep in mind when you design framing that is intended for someone other than the customer making the purchase.

Since the gift recipient is generally not present to help choose how the frame will look, I try to be very conservative in my designs. In this situation, I'll usually recommend neutral matting and simple frames since that fits in with most people's

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taste. This is also an opportunity to suggest a gift certificate that enables the recipient to select their own framing.

## Heat Up Your Sales

It is imperative to heat up your sales so your business continues to grow. By planting advertising

seeds, this is sure to happen. Spring and summer are always good seasons to start an advertising campaign. The customers, when satisfied with their work, will continue to come back and this will carry you through the fall and winter. Remember, a little seed can grow into a thriving tree. ■

## Guerrilla Tips

- New customers who have never purchased custom framing have no idea how long it takes for an order to be completed. Using a time-limited sales promotion is a good way to encourage customers to place their orders early. Customers who wait until the last minute to purchase gifts are less price sensitive than those consumers who shop early.

Mother's Day and Father's Day gifts pose the biggest challenge for framers because of the need to produce the frames in a relatively short period of time. Graduations and weddings are spread over a wider time span.

The graduation season spans from late April to late June. However, many college graduates do not receive their actual diploma at the graduation ceremony. Instead, they are mailed at a later date. Often the real diploma does not arrive in the graduate's mailbox until weeks or even months after the ceremony. For this reason, I advocate promoting gift certificates as the ideal graduation gift. Gift certificates offer the benefit of allowing the graduate to select framing that suits their individual taste, while letting you make an immediate prepaid sale.

- Recent college graduates are some of the most valuable new customers you can acquire—they have a lifetime of framing purchases ahead of them. Whoever frames their diploma has a good chance to retain their future business too.