

**I**n the 1870's Thomas J. Lipton of the Lipton Tea company got his original start in the grocery business in Glasgow, UK.

As one of his first marketing ideas he hired a fellow to guide a large pig bearing signs proclaiming: "I'm going to Lipton's, the best shop in town for Irish bacon!" This was started outside of Glasgow and wound through town all the way to Lipton's grocery store. This event gathered people all the way through town which developing into a very large parade of a laughing public enjoying the difficult time this fellow was having as he guided the pig through town.

This stunt caught the attention of the local newspaper which carried the story. It also proved a boom to his business and by 1880, Lipton had twenty stores, and by 1890 he had a total of three hundred. He was using a new idea in business and was leaving his competition in the dust. Building into the largest grocery chain in the UK for its time.

Lipton's idea can be summed up as a marketing plan. Taking advantage of what he had to work with during his time and place in history. There is something so simple about walking a pig through town with a sandwich board sign on it. Yet the simplicity of it is not really the secret of its success. The success comes from the fact that he actually went and did it. He took a marketing step. It was a risk he was willing to take to have a chance at growing his business. This was long before the time of trucks with signs on the side, and before yellow pages, TV, radio, and the Internet. Talk about cheap advertising.

# A Pig and Some Paint



He later built up his newspaper ads to look like something that the Barnum & Bailey Circus would put into print. Word of mouth is created from this type of thinking. His competition in the mean time stood by and watched. They

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## An unusual marketing idea that worked.

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saw the newspaper, the signs, and advertising, but did nothing except say that "My customers know who I am" and then they were pushed out of business by someone that was reaching out to their customers.

The main focus of this is that he used what was available and he set about to make it work. Today we have all types of media available, but we all want "word of mouth" advertising. Though

we all would like everyone to talk about what a great job we did as a locksmith, it does take more than doing just a good job in today's market. It is using the current forms of advertising to their most creative potential. Most locksmiths spend well over \$10,000 just on yellow pages. But at the same time are not taking advantage of a very inexpensive website.

A website needs to have pictures of products available in your showroom, not just of your showroom. Someone should be able to go to your website and pick a door closer and call you, ask for the model and color and set an install appointment. That doesn't mean you need to post prices, because the purpose is to generate a phone call. That generates a service call, or causes them to come into your store for a closer look. That generates a sale which generates a happy customer.

