

The Road to Best of Baltimore

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Getting on a “Best of” list is a wonderful compliment for your business and the accolade adds a healthy dose of credibility in this small town, but achieving the distinction does not happen by accident. In Baltimore, we have two well-known “Best Of” contests, one sponsored by the Baltimore City Paper and one sponsored by Baltimore Magazine. To achieve a nomination in either competition takes community recognition and support and a great deal of customer loyalty.

Wanna be a star next year? Keep these five points in mind.

It’s a journey, not a destination. “Best of” businesses are usually the best all year long, not just in the months leading up to the competition. That means you need good, solid marketing that keeps your name relevant, maintains your place on the map, and ensures your customers are thinking about your business.

Go ahead, brag a little. Or a lot. As part of your ongoing marketing plan, you should continually update the world with how you and your business are doing, via blogs, press releases, interviews, web site updates, news, and/or events. If no one knows if you’re still in business, they probably won’t call you the best of anything.

It’s all about who you know. (...and how you know them!)

The people you need to know aren’t just media folks; they are your customers and vendors you connect with every day. Making sure you are genuinely connecting with everyone you meet in your line of work means more people to recognize your name when it’s time to vote! And remember, you never know who is walking in your door: that punk you just waited on might be on staff at the City Paper.

Be a good neighbor. Some neighborhoods have a mini-family of businesses that love to see each other succeed – Hampden, Towson, Charles Village, etc. Be a good neighbor, cross-promote and be on their team, so they will be on yours! If you don’t have physical neighbors, consider peers and networking. After all, unless you’re a hermit, someone’s near you!

Be the best. (Seriously, how could that not be part of the equation?) But that’s not magic, either – it’s about sound business strategy, quality control and awareness, deeply satisfying customer service, and doing a great job at whatever you’re doing – and then making sure people know you, via your marketing.

Your annual marketing game plan should incorporate these five points – kinda like the five points of a star. If it all sounds too time consuming or difficult, consider outsourcing your marketing and public relations strategy to the experts at Helicopter. Our clients know us to be trusted advisors guiding their marketing efforts to support them in going wherever they want to go – including to the top of Best of Baltimore.

