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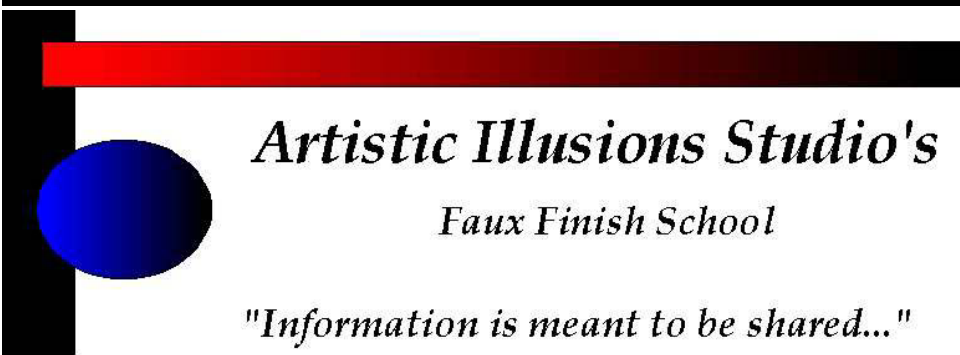
# Advertising on a Shoestring Budget

Or

(“How When and Where To Expose  
Yourself in Public for Nearly Free!”)

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**By Dan and Amanda Folster**



*Artistic Illusions Studio's  
Faux Finish School*

*"Information is meant to be shared..."*

**FREE INDUSTRY NEWS FOR FAUX FINISHERS OF ALL LEVELS!**

Join FAUXSTERS FORUM, a free quarterly newsletter that includes information on faux finish techniques, industry news and events, money making ideas and more!

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*"This is just a **sample** of wealth of information available in the ebooks found in [Artistic Illusions Studio's faux finish school](#) online e-library."*

*"These ebooks on faux finishing and running a successful faux finishing business have turned my business around! We haven't had a slow week in months!"*

*"Who knew there were so many different ways to advertise for free?! These ebooks are just what I needed. Thanks for sharing what you know with the rest of us!"*



*"A **MUST-HAVE** for anyone even thinking of starting or expanding their business!"*



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## **ADVERTISING: THE KEY TO YOUR INCOME!**



Advertising is the life blood of any business, and harder to nail down than a bowl of Jell-o!

The fact is- *no advertising, no customers, no sales, no business, right?*

Millions of dollars are spent each year in advertising, and gobs of man hours are spent trying to figure out what advertising avenue works best for which business.

The truth is, effective advertising is done by getting your name in front of your intended audience on a continual basis, not just once!

According to the experts, a person has to see something *a minimum of 20 times* before it becomes part of their conscious mind as opposed to being tucked away in the back of their mind! YIKES!!

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So this brings us to the question:

*“How do I get my business into the public eye so many times if I don’t have a huge budget?”*

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We spend a lot of time in class and on the phone during business consultations with other faux finishers discussing this very thing.

Most faux finishers do not have thousands or even hundreds of dollars at their disposal to start an advertising campaign.

Knowing this is a real issue for most artists/artisans trying to start a business, Dan and I have put together this e-book to give you some suggestions for getting more exposure for your company *without spending a fortune!*

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## **COMMON ADVERTISING TRAPS TO AVOID**

- **YELLOW PAGES**

Yep, you read it correctly...the phone book.

We've fallen into that trap in the past and found the majority of phone calls received were from "price shoppers" and painters trying to figure out how to price *their* finishes!

You'll get a free listing when you get your business phone number, so don't spend money where you don't need to for now.

When counting your pennies, a large ad in the phone book is not a smart expense in the first year or two of your new business!

This should be saved for later down the road, when you have a real advertising budget to work with.

For now, let's concentrate on the faster, PROVEN, less expensive ways to promote your business.

## **NEWSPAPER/CLASSIFIED ADS**

As tempting and logical as this may seem, newspaper ads are NOT a good source for business.

Think about this for a minute- when you are looking for a mechanic, do you look in the classifieds? When you are looking for a doctor or an attorney, same thing-what would you say if your spouse said "Let's go see this lawyer, I found him in the classifieds?"

No, you get referrals from friends, neighbors and people you trust.

You are offering a specialized service, one that not everyone on planet earth can offer. You must represent yourself accordingly!

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## **THE BEST ADVERTISING IS QUITE OFTEN *FREE!***



### **PRESS KIT**

The first thing you should do is put together a “press kit” (sometimes called a “media kit”).

**A press kit should include:**

- **Details about you and your business**
- **Include your logo.**
- **1 or 2 8x10 photos of you (Editors prefer head shots)**
- **8x10 Pictures of your work if you have them.**
- **Your contact phone number, web address, business card, and any other contact information you have.**
- **Package your press kit in something memorable (see our e-book entitled [\*“The Perfect Press Release”\*](#) for original ideas).**

Make several! Mail or hand-deliver your press kit to the editors of the ***Home, Community/local events, Real Estate and Small Business*** sections of your local newspaper.

**If you intend to email your press kit,  
DO NOT send it as a vague attachment.**

If you do, your media kit will probably just be deleted instead of the editor risking a virus. Always include an “ethical bribe”! (See “***Schmoozing 101***” for details on ethical bribes!)

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Wait about a week, and then follow-up with a phone call to be sure the intended person received your package or e-mail.

Be sure to be respectful of the receiving parties schedule...in other words; don't call in the afternoon when deadlines are looming on the horizon, etc!



## **FLYERS**

I know you think this is crazy, but it really works when you are just starting out!

You can place your flyers *ON* individual mailboxes, but ***DO NOT*** put any flyers *IN* the mailbox...that's a federal offense! **NOT GOOD!**

Be sure to list things such as:

- **Contact number**
- **Web address**
- **Insured by...**
- **Free consultations (or the fee you charge)**
- **Any discount you intend to offer**
- **Any specialty finishes you offer, etc.**

Another idea you might consider as opposed to flyers is making "hangers" (like the "Do Not Disturb" hangers for hotel room doors) in a cute shape and hanging them on the mailbox flags.



## **DEMONSTRATIONS**

Never pass up the opportunity to do a demonstration at a local mall, paint, or art store.

You will be amazed at all the interest you can generate by just painting and glazing a sample board!

For example, one of our local paint stores is required by their home office to put on “How to Faux Finish” workshops.

The guys at the paint store don’t know, and don’t want to know, anything about the art of faux finishing! They *are* however, interested in selling the faux finishing products to their customers. Sooo...guess who conducts their workshops for them?

We teach the workshop; they let us pass out business cards and school brochures. Guess who gets work from the people attending the workshops that decide they want more faux finishing in their home than they have time to do themselves?

Seize those opportunities where you can find them!! You can find more on this topic in our e-book, [\*\*“Power-Bartering”\*\*](#).



## **CONTRACTOR BULLETEN BOARDS**

Don't overlook one of your most obvious free advertising opportunities-the paint and hardware stores!

Every paint and hardware store has a "contractor board" where you are free to tack up your business cards.

You may find there are a lot of cards on the board, and it might feel as though your card will be lost in the jumble. (This is where a well-made card saves the day!)

Don't let that stop you from adding yours to the pile-the idea is get your company seen by all the eyeballs you can!

Remember the logo recognition I talked about in the [ebook on advertising](#)?

A good logo will help separate your card from the rest. Take a look at a crowded board of cards and see which ones jump out at you. What catches your eye?

*Color?* **BOLD LETTERING?** *Cool logo?*

Keep those features in mind when designing your own cards.

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Ultimately, why will customers know about your services before they know about the other guy?

Easy- you know what you're doing, and you will have enough savvy to use your "ethical bribes" on the guys behind the counter! They will happily recommend your company when a customer asks for help choosing from all the cards on the board!!



### **PARADE HOMES**

Here's the granddaddy of all free advertising opportunities!

Contact the local homebuilders association to find out who is building, where and when the parade will be.

Contact the builder by phone if you have to, but we've always had great success just popping out to the jobsite in the morning and catching him in person.

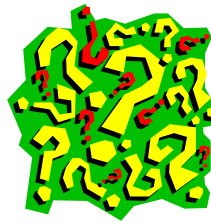
Do whatever you have to do to get your work into a Parade Home. Hopefully you can get paid for your time as well as your materials, but if you must work for free- so be it.

***BE THERE IN PERSON*** during the parade to talk to the public about the finish/finishes you did for particular home. ***Face-to-face contact will get you remembered and chosen for work more than any printed advertising on the planet!*** The public likes to meet the person or persons behind the work they are seeing.

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When you spend time talking with a potential client at a Parade of Homes about a technique, you have just removed yourself from the category of “stranger”.

You are now a “real person” to them, not just a name on a business card. They now have someone they “know” to call to do work for them in their home.



### BROCHURES

Another important tool you can use is a brochure containing information on your company and your services.

***Be sure to include photos of the work you did in that particular Parade Home.***

This will cut out the confusion if there are other faux finishers doing work in other rooms in the same house you are.

I mention this because we have experienced a situation in the past where a guy managed to get his work into the same Parade home we were working in, and then did a technique in his area very similar to the one we had just completed in ours.

During the first day of the Parade he positioned himself in a high-traffic area where he could make a couple of vague statements and lead the public to believe our work was done by him. (We found out he was doing this from a couple of our students who were touring the home with their families.)

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**(BROCHURES continued...)**

So, using a digital camera and our PrintMaster program we quickly created brochures with pictures of the rooms and finishes we had done and began passing those out as people toured our area.

He did manage to get a couple of jobs using this dishonest tactic, but when he was “found out” the word-of-mouth caused him a lot of trouble!

*Your ethics will make you or break you...*



**CHARITIES AND FUND RAISERS**

Donate a room color/design consultation or a finish for a Powder Room to a worthwhile charity auction in your area.

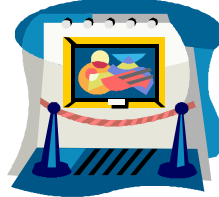
There are several charity auctions held each year for groups such as one of my favorites, the ARC (Association for Retarded Citizens), Red Cross, children’s hospitals, etc that hold charity auctions to raise money.

Not only is this a wonderful way to use your powers for good, not evil, it’s also a great way to get exposure to the community.

***Remember, 20 times to be remembered-remembered-remembered...***

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## PLACES TO SHOWCASE YOUR WORK



### Local Home Remodeling Shows

Home Shows can be a little expensive for someone just getting started, but if you can afford to get a booth it's definitely worth it for great exposure.

#### **Ideas for your booth could include:**

- **Samples of your work displayed on easels or “gallery” style on the wall of the booth.**
- **Write up a half-page flyer with information on you and your company. Make sure you include all your contact information!**
- **Set up a table with a Picture Portfolio and business cards.**
- **Have a drawing for a free room consultation, etc. The possibilities are limitless!**

Talk to the members of the show management and ask if they have stage time available, and would like you to give a short demo or talk about your specialty.

Now this is not the time or place for an “infomercial”; however, if you put together a “tips” sheet to distribute to your audience, or have a question and answer session, you will make a favorable impression on your audience.

They will see you know your stuff, and will be that much more willing to keep your information for future use.

They are also more likely to come to your booth to talk to you about getting on your schedule right then and there!



### **UPSCALE BEAUTY SALONS**

I can't think of any other spot in town where women sit for hours and stare at the walls.

***Be SURE to sign your walls with your company name and web address.***

Hairdressers come and go, and the business cards may run out in your holder on the front counter, but your painted signature will stay there for years with no maintenance!



### **HIGH-END RESTAURANTS AND CAFÉS**

Here's a great spot to barter your services!

Dan and I have a spot or two where we like to take our big league accounts to lunch or dinner and impress their socks off!

We have done enough in these particular restaurants to have an "open tab" for dinner etc for many years to come.

Having techniques to show in a restaurant is also a good thing to have handy when you need to show you have done work in a "commercial" setting.

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The only real risk when bartering your services with a restaurant is the possible sale of the restaurant. The new owner will be under no obligation to honor your barter with the previous owner, so choose your restaurants wisely!



## **REAL ESTATE OFFICES**

Common sense here!

Real estate agents pride themselves on having their fingers on the pulse of the community.

Offer to do a technique in the company lobby.

Ask them to put your information into their new client “welcome packet” along with other resources available to the new homeowner. (This is where you utilize the information you have already compiled in your [MEDIA KIT](#)).

Referrals are the lifeblood of real estate industry.

The more contacts a real estate agent has, the better informed they are, the more desirable they are to a client and they know it! If their client can rely on the agent for all their needs when moving to their new town, they are very likely to recommend that agent to their friends and business contacts moving to the area too.

Reputable faux finishers are never easy to find quickly if you are new to an area! So get to know the agents who have the executive community in their sights. You’ll find they are great allies to have!

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## **LAW FIRMS/DOCTORS OFFICES**



Ok, so this is another spot people spend hours staring at the walls!

- **Doctors**-Keep your presentations to this crowd focused on ease of care for the walls as well as durability. They usually want lots of “bang for the buck”, a soothing environment for their clients, etc.

If you are a muralist, Pediatricians are a great source for work and/or free advertising! Be sure to sign your work...

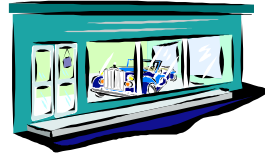
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- **Lawyers**-Keep this crowd in mind for your upper-end elegant finishes.

They are quite often already aware of the power of an impressive lobby, not only to give their clients confidence, but to intimidate the other guys clients! (Oh! Don't forget the conference room.)

Do you know any contract attorneys who could use an office make-over? This has the markings of a *great* bartering situation!! Especially if you need a contract. Hmmm...

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## **SHOWROOMS FOR HIGH-END FURNITURE STORES, TILE COMPANIES, AND LIGHTING COMPANIES**



It has been our experience in the past that the high-end accessory stores are always willing to “let” you put a little something on their walls.

Remember it’s all about *image* for their industry, and you are just the person to help them set their showroom apart from the “other guys”!

***When dealing with these establishments make SURE you are allowed to sign the wall where it will be visible to the customers shopping there.***



**SIGN YOUR WORK IN A HIGHLY VISABLE PLACE.**

Don’t rely on business cards on the counter-they will continually run out, or get misplaced, and you will soon be too busy to keep dropping in the check up on the status of your cards!



## **BANKS**

*Prestige! Prestige! Prestige!*

Don't forget about your local bank president's office. These men and women have an image to project, as well as a bank to promote.

The entry lobby and waiting areas are also good candidates for a faux finish face-lift! Be sure to pick a high traffic spot if you have the option.

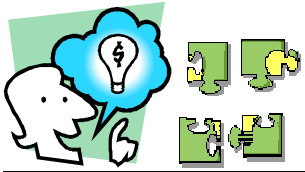
More than anything, the banks are in the business of sales-the more customers they have, the more money they make.

A successful bank is an attractive bank...and an attractive bank is a successful bank.

Think about it...corporate accounts are VERY nice to have. Doing a wall for a reduced rate for the bank president could lead to a great contract when it comes time to remodel all the branches!

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The key is keep your eyes open for hidden opportunities. Opportunities are everywhere; you just need to think on your feet so you can spot them when they present themselves!





## **ADVERTISING STRATEGIES**

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Alrighty then, you know *what* you're going to do to advertise, so now in *what order* do you do it?

Here's what we suggest:

- 1. Print business cards and distribute them in your local paint and hardware stores.**
- 2. Design your information flyer/brochure and print it on colored paper or hangers.**
- 3. Design your press kit and mail it to every newspaper in your area.**
- 4. Look for "Community News" sections in smaller papers.**
- 5. Distribute your flyers/brochures in the wealthiest neighborhoods you can find.**
- 6. Approach the upscale businesses we discussed with your picture portfolio and book work with them. Barter if you choose to; donate your time if you *HAVE* to. Don't forget to get them to cover the cost of materials, at the *VERY* least!**
- 7. Contact your local paint stores and see if they need someone to run a faux finishing workshop for them using their products *with the understanding you get to distribute your cards and flyers during the presentation.***
- 8. Contact designers and also local builders who build "spec" homes and offer them your services for a "great rate." Be careful not to go too low on your pricing though-remember you are setting a precedent with this circle! You don't want to get yourself into a repeated "work-for-next-to-nothing" situation!**

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## THEY'RE CALLING!!! YIKES...NOW WHAT??



Get yourself a user friendly planner with a weekly calendar in it.

When you begin to receive phone calls in response to your efforts, tell your prospective clients you can “squeeze them in” in couple of days.

Don't be *too* available-that will send out the message you are not busy, therefore are not “good”.

I know that sounds silly, but that's the way it is! (See our ebook entitled [“Professional Portfolio Development and Presentation”](#) for details.)

Get directions to their place, grab your portfolio and your business cards, take a deep breath and go get ‘em!

Keep your appointments short and to the point, be cheerful and attentive, but be in motion at all times.

Keep thinking to yourself there's always the next appointment to get to, because very soon that will be case!



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## **IN CONCLUSION...**

**Keep in mind when approaching places of business to find out first if they are considering remodeling or updating their establishments.**

**If the answer is “no”, then these are the places to consider BARTERING the *retail value* of your services for the *retail value* of theirs.**

**Be sure to “sign” the wall with your company name and web address in an easy-to-see location.**

***ALWAYS PUT ANY DEAL YOU MAKE IN WRITING!!*** You can find an example of a contract useful for bartering situations in the ebook entitled “Power Bartering” found in our e-library.



**Of course there are many other ways to find your spot in the sun, just be creative! I suggest reading books on advertising as well. Don't overlook the public library as your ultimate free resource for advertising guides.**

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**So, what are you waiting for?  
Get out there and expose yourself!**

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**ACTION CURES FEAR – GET MOVING!**

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