



50 Low-Cost Advertising Tips



1. Place your TV, radio, newspaper or other print ads during off hours or in unusual locations for a lower cost. Many times you can still reach your target market with these spots.
2. Instead of a one-time big splash ad, be consistent with frequent small ads. Advertise within a 2-hour driving time to where the Weekend will be held.
3. Local monthly or quarterly magazines sometimes have unsold ad space at the end of the month/quarter that they will sell at a discount.
4. Put our toll-free number, 1-866.633.3862, in every ad to make it free for people to respond immediately, but please be sure to notify our 866 number couple about the ad, so they know how to respond. (Current contacts are Rich and Susan Batchelder; rsbatch@sbcglobal.net)
5. Try advertising consistently in the classifieds. These ads may draw more customers than more-expensive display ads.
6. Piggyback advertising or “buckslips” are the ads you receive with your credit card bill. Is there a company in the area of the Weekend that sends out a lot of bills? Can you put a small flyer in with their bills and split the postage? Or pay a small fee?
7. Ask for a discount for paying cash upfront for the advertising.
8. Try reducing the size of your ad or length of your radio spots. A 60-second spot does not cost twice as much as a 30-second spot, but you also won't get twice as many people signing up for your Weekend when using a 60-second ad versus a 30-second ad. Going with small ads or shorter spots may allow you to do more ads, which normally attracts more customers. It's better to be there every day with small ads than every month with one big one. Ask if the station will throw in any free PSAs (public service announcements) in addition to your paid advertising.
9. Will any local businesses give you point-of-purchase space (by their cash register)? Posters, stand ups, handouts, etc. Some have excellent display racks you can use. Or perhaps they'd be willing to let you add a flyer to the sacks/bags they give customers to carry their purchases home?
10. Can you sponsor a community event? A fun-run, golf tournament, or other event that will be well publicized in the community. Your name may not be prominently displayed but sometimes the positive exposure in the community will bring in new customers. Or if you can't afford to sponsor the event, maybe offer to pay for disposable coffee cups or coffee cup wraps, napkins or pens and have them printed with your Weekend dates and contact info.
11. Ask advertising salespeople to show you exactly how their media reaches your target audience.
12. Exploit the media you choose to the fullest. Use radio, billboards and newspapers to the fullest.
13. Consider direct mail. A postcard or letter and brochure before making an in-person contact can increase business.

14. Try an editorial style ad. These are ads that look like actual stories in the newspaper. They will have "advertisement" at the top of the article. Develop a good headline, and 50% more people will read the article than would read an ad of the same size.

15. Can you advertise on parking meters, taxi boards, balloons, blimps, and grocery shopping carts? How about community bulletin boards, movie ads and weekly newspaper shoppers?

16. Consider including a unique code in every type of ad that will let you know which media an inquiry is coming from. On coupons, put a code that will record the paper and date of the ad. In radio or TV, have them mention the ad to get the discount. Ask every couple how they found you. Next time, spend more on the types of advertising that works, and less on the things that didn't work well.

17. Place business cards, postcards, flyers or brochures under windshield wipers of cars at church, a local event, or on a busy street. But be sure to contact the local government office and ask if there are any restrictions. Typically, distributing flyers on public property is allowed under free speech laws. You may find that while distribution is allowed, government officials want to approve the content before letting you post in some public areas. In other cases, officials won't allow distribution because of littering laws — leaving flyers on car windshields in public parking lots or stapling them to utility poles may fall under anti-littering ordinances. Local ordinances may also impose a time limit on how long you can leave any posted flyers up in a public place.

18. What about sidewalk chalk? Write announcements on the sidewalks in front of churches, along city parks or other locations — but get permission first!

19. Write a press release about your Weekend and send it to local papers and radio stations, plus, publish it on free PR websites. Here's a link to an article listing 50 free press release sites: <https://www.creativelysmart.com/top-50-free-press-release-sites-for-2015/>

20. Offer a FREE Weekend as a prize at a local TV or radio station, a local fundraiser, auction or fair or other event. Perhaps at a local store where they benefit from happily married couples would be willing to co-sponsor a contest? Check with places like your local Christian bookstore, a romantic restaurant, a flower shop, etc.

21. Take advantage of discounts or coupon codes for first-time use of Facebook or other social ads. They might be sent to your email inbox, or you may find some by Googling/searching for them online.

22. Ask a local company to partner with you, perhaps a flower shop, restaurant or spa might want to advertise a romantic discount on half of the ad or direct mail piece while you advertise your Weekend/s on the other half? Maybe they'd co-sponsor a contest with you? Maybe they'd promote your Weekends at their store if you'd mention them on the Weekend or use their services on the Weekend? Maybe they'd let you include info in their emails, newsletter or invoices/bills? Maybe the hotel you use for the Weekend would co-market with you?

23. Or maybe your local Christian radio station or bookstore would partner with you? Perhaps they'd co-sponsor a contest with you? Maybe they'd promote your Weekend/s at their station if you'd mention them on the Weekend or buy a certain amount of advertising from them?

24. Host an event or class. Use the information from Marriage Encounter or Engaged Encounter presentations to create a short mini-presentation on listening or guidelines for productive

confrontation and offer it as a free class through your church, a local community college or some other organization.

25. Use the same information that you taught in your class to write an article and offer that to your local newspaper, magazine or community newsletter. They're always looking for good content. Close with a short paragraph about you and include the Weekend location, date and contact information.

26. Have balloons or bubbles printed with the logo and phone number and hand them out at local events, free concerts, art festivals, etc. Tie on a note with the dates for your upcoming Weekend.

27. Place an ad on Craigslist.com in your city's edition under the appropriate business category.

28. Enter a local parade by creating a float or getting your Encountered community to walk together as a group, handing out flyers, candy and/or other giveaway with the 866 number on it.

29. Volunteer or participate at/in a community event wearing ME or EE t-shirts.

30. Call, email, mail a letter to ME/EE community and/or anyone who has attended a Weekend within the last two years, tell them about the upcoming Weekend, provide them with brochures, flyers, postcards, whatever you have, and ask them to invite 3 people to the Weekend. Provide them copy they can put in their own church bulletin, and ask them to talk to their minister about including it in the program and slides.

31. Make an announcement at every church in your town (get other couples involved so you don't have to do every announcement yourselves).

32. Ask your local TV and radio stations if they have a community calendar listing events and announcements where you can list your Weekend information. Don't forget about your local cable company's channel — they might even give you a free commercial where you can talk about the Weekend! If so, do a pulpit talk on there. Also ask if they'd do a free PSA (public service announcement) for you.

33. Will your local library allow you to print bookmarks with your logo for them to use? Include Weekend dates and contact info.

34. Leave flyers or brochures at local garage sales if they're willing to offer them to their customers.

35. Add the Weekend location, dates and contact info below the email signature on your personal emails.

36. Mention the Weekend location, dates and contact info on your own social pages, and encourage your Community members to do the same. Mention it more than once. Include a link to the web page for that Weekend.

37. Don't forget to personally invite your OWN friends, family and co-workers!

38. Follow up! If you do any of the above, follow up to be sure the correct information was received, that it's still posted/available, that they have all the info they need to follow through for you.

39. Offer to waive the application fee (or your Area's portion of that fee) as an incentive (be sure your local Area Board has approved doing this). You can do this for an event (anyone who registers at annual conference), for a certain period of time (anyone who registers by X date), for a certain group of people (all church staff or all military couples), etc.
40. Give scholarships to priests, pastors and ministers, so they may experience the Weekend.
41. Ask your church to add the information and a link to your Weekend's ecounter.org page on the church website. Ask all local churches if they would also be willing to do this.
42. Have yard signs printed with your Weekend information on them and ask friends, family, Encountered couples, churches and businesses at major intersections if they will post the signs in their yards. Be sure to check on local regulations about how far the signs have to be from the street.
43. See if you are eligible for a listing in the yellow pages of your phone book in the "marriage" section. (We wouldn't advise under "counseling"). Use 866.633.3862 or your registration or executive couples phone number, if they are willing to have that listed. Try the white pages and list as: "Marriage Encounter"
44. Set up meetings with priests/pastors/reverends/district superintendents, etc. to educate them about ME and EE and be sure to leave a brochure/brochures and other information so that they can promote the Weekends. Offer to provide them with whatever materials or information they might need. Offer to provide a Thursday-Saturday Weekend, or a Marriage Encounter Experience (or test pilot a 3RE) to avoid a Sunday and/or offer to do something just for their church.
45. For Engaged Encounter, contact wedding companies (florists, DJs, printers, rental companies, band management companies, event and venue companies) to see if they will co-market with you, or let you provide materials for distributions in their stores, or let you buy space in their emails, newsletters and other promotions — but ask them to consider donating it before offering to pay for it.
46. Also for Engaged Encounter ... advertise in local college newspapers and magazines. The cost is usually much less than the standard local papers.
47. Speak to adult Sunday schools and marriage church classes about ME/EE, perhaps offer to present on a topic from one of the Weekends' presentations.
48. Use a resource like <http://www.cute-calendar.com/category/weird-holidays.html> to find an interesting reason to celebrate a holiday, and then plan your marketing around that. For example, International Kiss and Make Up Day is August 25th in 2015. Send emails to promote Weekend gift certificates in honor of that day, or co-market with a flower or candy store on that day. Be sure to send a press release out about it, because this would be one of those quirky, human interest stories newspaper, TV and radio stations like to cover as a "feel-good" story.
49. Offer a sweepstakes prize for the first X number of people who apply for the Weekend, or for everyone who applies before a certain date. The prize could be anything from a gift card to a local restaurant to a cash card to a donation for the cost of the Weekend. Choose something that will be affordable for you, but appealing to potential couples.

50. Make comments (also called posting) on blogs, forums and social media sites that attract the attention of the people/couples most likely to attend a Weekend. This doesn't mean to go to these sites and just post your Weekend dates and contact information. That would likely be considered SPAM and will turn off the people you want to attract. Instead, make relevant, consistent comments to build your credibility. When it's natural, share that your information and insight come from your Marriage Encounter experience.