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**Donald Cooper** is respected by clients in over 40 industries as both a “thought leader” and a passionate visionary in the areas of marketing, service and business excellence. Drawing from his real life experience as a world-class manufacturer, award-winning retailer and business speaker, he has helped thousands of businesses throughout the world to add more real value to their customers’ lives...and more dollars to their bottom lines.

To subscribe to Donald’s thought-provoking, idea-generating, **FREE** monthly electronic **Newsletter**, email us at [newsletter@donaldcooper.com](mailto:newsletter@donaldcooper.com).

His website, [www.donaldcooper.com](http://www.donaldcooper.com) also offers free articles and business tools.

## **What creative, amazing and inexpensive things could you do to promote and grow your business?**

My friend Eric Hellman writes from Vancouver with a great example of a business getting out and telling its story. While walking along Vancouver's bustling Robson Street, Eric spotted one of those new Segway scooter-like personal transportation machines dressed up like a chariot with an ING Bank banner.

The driver of the ING chariot was putting money in parking meters for motorists while telling them about the advantages of banking with ING. His promotional leaflet stated, "Free parking is good. But earning higher interest on your savings is even better! Park your savings in an ING Direct Investment Savings Account and get a \$13 bonus."

This is brilliant marketing! Robson Street is a hot, trendy street; the Segway powered scooter is a hot new market-forward product and parking meters are an annoyance that gobble up our money. By designing this promotion as they did ING positioned itself as a hip bank that saves you money. And my guess is that they got a ton of free media coverage.

This very clever marketing reminded me of another promotion using parking meters that made a real estate agent in London Ontario famous. This agent went around downtown London putting quarters into expired parking meters while leaving a little note on the windshields to say that he had done so to prevent them from getting a \$20 parking ticket. His note went on to say, "If you think that's great service, you should see what I can do for you if you're buying or selling a home!" Then he gave his name and contact info.

Now here's the really neat part. Putting money in someone else's parking meter is illegal, so he was arrested and charged for his act of public service. Of course the media picked up on this big time. He was interviewed on TV and radio and written up in the London Free Press...all of which made him an instant celebrity. He looked like a hero, he got about \$100,000 of free publicity, paid a small fine...and his business skyrocketed.

As fashion retailers in the early 90's we had to deal with the cross-border shopping craze that sent half of Toronto to shop in Buffalo every weekend. One Saturday in June two of our customers said to me, "With your service, selection and great prices, the only reason we'd go to Buffalo is for the chicken wings!" It took me about five seconds to figure out that if we had great chicken wings, there'd be no reason to go to Buffalo at all.

So, we ordered a huge quantity of absolutely fabulous, already prepared chicken wigs; we bought a couple of barbeques to heat them up; rented a colorful marquee tent to increase visibility; painted a wide white line across the driveway in front of our store and painted USA on one side of it and CANADA on the other to create our own "border". When customers drove up to our store they were crossing the "border" from the USA into Canada for great deals on clothing ...and "better than Buffalo" chicken wings. We rented a chicken costume and a Mountie outfit for two of our staff to wear, all of which added to the fun.

I wrote and recorded a radio commercial that told people that we were now officially better than Buffalo and, in fact, we invited everyone from Buffalo to come on over to Toronto to see for themselves. We were interviewed by dozens of radio and TV stations, including national networks. We were written up in all the papers, got a full page write-up in Marketing Magazine and a marketing excellence award from Retail Council of Canada.

Our customers loved it, it energized our staff and we sold about 50,000 chicken wings in one month, raising over \$10,000 for The Children's Wish Foundation. The media helped make us "famous" and business boomed!

So, what's holding you back? What creative, or even bizarre ideas could you come up with to promote and grow your business, get some media attention and become "famous"?

For more information on how Donald Cooper can help you redefine and reinvent your business to create, deliver and communicate compelling, customer-owning Value, visit our website at [www.donaldcooper.com](http://www.donaldcooper.com) , email us at [info@donaldcooper.com](mailto:info@donaldcooper.com) or contact us by telephone in Toronto, Canada at 1-(416) 252-3704.