



**Business -  
Understanding Your  
Value and How to  
Market it - Telephone  
Directory Advertising**

By Dr. Linda Hancock

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Dr. Hancock has written a regular weekly column entitled “All Psyched Up” for newspapers in two Canadian provinces for more than a dozen years. Over the years, her readers and clients have said that they have benefited from her common-sense solutions, wisdom, and sense of humour. Dr. Linda Hancock, the author of “Life is An Adventure...every step of the way” and “Open for Business Success” is a Registered Psychologist who has a private practice in Medicine Hat. She can be reached at 403-529-6877 or through email [office@drlindahancock.com](mailto:office@drlindahancock.com)

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Sole practitioners do not usually have full-time staff to serve receptionist duties during open hours. There are several ways that you can use the telephone to promote your business even without staff. One of these is to carefully consider the way that you promote your business in telephone directories.

The costs for listing your telephone number in a telephone book can be shocking and it is therefore important that you know your choices and make choices wisely. There are three basic types of listings - white pages, yellow pages and internet yellow pages.

Before you agree to any telephone directory advertising begin by studying your telephone book. Notice the things that draw your eye and attention to specific listings. In the white pages, I have paid extra, for example, to have my business name and number highlighted in yellow. This not only grabs the reader's attention but also helps when dialling the number without losing your focus on it.

Yellow page ads vary by category, size and colour. Some include graphics, pictures or symbols. I found that the costs for more than a couple of lines in the yellow pages was more than I wanted to pay. Resolving this was easy. First of all, I chose a package which allowed me to place two lines in three separate categories in the yellow pages. The first line of my listing states my business name, credentials, address and telephone number. The second line is my website. I paid extra to have my name highlighted in blue so it stands out in each category.

Clients have told me that when they are searching for a psychologist they turn to the yellow pages and usually begin calling the ones listing from the top of the list downwards. While they are waiting for their message to be returned they check out my website. This allows them to start developing a personal connection with me as they can read my bio, background history, view a map which shows them the location of the office and outlines the types of services that I provide. As a result, if I haven't returned their call before they review the website, they frequently leave me a second message in which they request an appointment.

This year, I was contacted by the company that owns yellow pages online and a proposal was made for me to have a video on their site. After careful consideration I decided that there were other places where the advertising dollars would likely benefit me more. Many of my clients would turn to a printed directory before going online or do not have computer access. You will need to think about the people who would be looking for your services and make a decision with that in mind.

Promotion using this technique not only saves me a great deal of money, but also allows the client to have an opportunity to learn far more about my business than an advertisement would provide. The added bonus, of course, is that I have control over my website and can make changes whenever they are needed. You can't do that with a printed directory or an internet directory that is owned by another company.

Telephone directories can help the public to begin the wonderful adventure of being involved with you and your business once they dial the number listed.