

Small Business Sense

Presents....

101

Simple and Actionable Marketing Activities for Small Businesses

A LOW COST MARKETING AND PROMO GUIDE FOR SMALL
BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS



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Introduction

What is Marketing?

“Marketing is the process of communicating the value of a product or service to customers, for the purpose of selling that product or service (Wikipedia)”

For small businesses, marketing should be used to:

- **Educate prospective customers:** Give your prospects information on how your products and services will benefit them.
- **Attract new customers:** Your marketing and promotional materials should create awareness about your products and services so that when prospects are ready to buy, they will reach out to you.
- **Promote your products and services:** Business cards, brochures, stationary and [marketing kits](#) are all effective items that you can use to promote your products and services.



Photo Credit: thecampuscareercoach.com



THE AIM OF MARKETING IS TO KNOW AND UNDERSTAND THE CUSTOMER SO WELL THE PRODUCT OR SERVICE FITS HIM AND SELLS ITSELF.

- Peter Drucker

101 Simple and Actionable Marketing Strategies for Small Business

If you are a small business owner that is operating on a tight budget and looking for effective, yet inexpensive ways to market your business, This Free Report is For YOU!

This report is intended to get your “marketing mojo” going giving you a list of 101 simple and actionable marketing and promotional strategies that can be used to kick your business into high gear. ***And off we GO!***

- 1. *Get a WEBSITE pronto!*** Getting your business online is essential to marketing your business. A website can be used to attract customers to you and also to market and advertise your products and services. Small Business Sense is now offering affordable website packages. You can find out more about our packages [here](#).
- 2. *Start a Blog*** on your website. Blogging is a great and inexpensive way to get your message out about your business and can also be used to boost your Search Engine Rankings on the Internet.
- 3. *Create a marketing video and add it to your website.*** When it's complete, upload it to YouTube and then embed it on your website, and other places on the web.
- 4. *Write an E-Book and*** give it away for free on your website.
- 5. *Run a Contest*** from your website to generate some buzz for your small business.
- 6. *Get SOCIAL!*** Setup Social Media Accounts on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Twitter for your business.



- 7. *Add Tutorials, Helpful Tips and Videos to your Facebook Fan Page.*** Facebook is the #1 Social Media Giant and currently holds **955 million** users. If there is one place that you should market your business, Facebook should be one of them. *Brian Honigman* from LunaMetrics put together a great list of [facebook marketing tips](#). Be sure to check it out to get some ideas for marketing your business.
- 8. *Leverage the power of LinkedIn.*** I can definitely attest to this statement. I have received business referrals, invites for speaking engagements and other opportunities that resulted in new business from LinkedIn. Here are some helpful tips on [leveraging LinkedIn to generate business](#).
- 9. *Tweet it up!*** Use twitter to promote your blog posts, announce discounts, promotions and other newly launched products or services for your business.
- 10. *Create [E-mail Newsletter campaigns](#).*** I highly recommend sending e-mail newsletters to your current and prospective client list on a monthly or bi-monthly basis. Here is an article that features [30 content ideas for email newsletters](#).
- 11. *Use Canvassing in your business!*** That's right....gas up your car, get some Door Hangers, flyers and other marketing materials and pay a visit to local business parks in your neighborhood to leave information about your products or services.
- 12. *Add Discounts and Promotions to your Invoices*** as you send them out to your clients.
- 13. *Here is an EXTREMELY powerful Tip.... Use the [Every Door Direct Mail Retail Program](#).*** The Every Door Direct Mail Retail is an affordable program designed to help small businesses market their products and services to a large number of local businesses in surrounding areas. With this program, you can send up to **5,000** mail pieces a day per Zip Code and only pay 16 cents for postage per marketing piece. Please be sure to read more about the Every Door Direct Mail Retail Program [Here](#).
- 14. *Team up with your vendors and suppliers.*** They will be more than willing to provide assistance to you with marketing your business.

15. **Consider Cold Calling.** Purchase a list, and begin cold calling local businesses in your target market to give them information about your services. If you're not comfortable with cold-calling, consider outsourcing this task to someone else.
16. **Give Calls to Actions and Deadlines on your Promotions.** Most people don't know this, but creating Urgency for prospects to respond to your offers will give them a push to respond to your offers faster than usual. Check out examples of calls to action [here](#).
17. **Offer a Free Service Coupon or Consultation** on the back of your business cards.
18. **Ask for Business referrals** from your current clients, friends or family members.
19. **Create a customer referral program for your business.** For example, you can offer your current clients discounts on your products or services or even small cash awards in exchange for a business referral. Here is an example of a great referral program incentive:

“Enter each referral of yours and we will send them a special certificate for 10% off their first service visit. Once the certificate is redeemed we will issue a \$100 service credit to your account. It's that simple. Refer them before somebody else does. Thank you for your business and your vote of confidence”. [Source](#)
20. **Purchase promotional items with your company logo on them.** Some of the best promotional and advertisement items to purchase include: **T-Shirts, Hats, Tote Bags, Buttons, Mouse Pads, and Decals.** [Vista Print](#) is a great resource for purchasing promo items for your business. Be sure to check out their website.
21. **Purchase a laptop cover** with your company logo on it.
22. **Add stickers and decals with your logo printed on them to your vehicle.** If you have employees, ask them to add them to theirs.
23. **Submit your company to online local [business directories](#).** Business directories are great sources for branding and can help increase your Search Engine Rankings on the web.

24. **Write a press release for your business** and publish it online to a [press release](#) submission site.
25. **Develop an integrated marketing strategy.** Contact your prospects through a number of marketing channels including direct marketing, Web site information, email, telemarketing and, of course, personal meetings. For example, you can use direct mail to drive traffic online to your Web site for product information, rate calculators and financial goals worksheets. – *Daniel Williams*
26. **Consider signing up as a guest speaker** at local events.
27. **Sign up for Meetup.com and attend [meetup](#) groups.** These groups give you opportunities to market your business and come in contact with like-minded business professionals.
28. **Join a local chamber of commerce.** Your local chamber of commerce can help exponentially with your small business marketing efforts.
29. **Offer to do a free seminar or webinar for the Chamber.** Make sure you create a custom landing page for the attendees and offer an opt-in for something of unique value. [Source](#)
30. **Host Free Teleseminars** to spread the word about your product or services.
31. **Register and attend Free Conferences** in your local area.
32. **Rent a booth at a local tradeshow** to market your products or services. Here is a list of [100 Trade Show Lead Generation Ideas](#) that you should be sure to take a peek at.
33. **Join in on Forum Discussions.** Find and sign up to forums on a related topic to your business. Actively take part and get to know your fellow posters. Try searching for “Your Topic + Forum” in Google to find relevant conversations. - [Source](#).
34. **Get with creative with E-mail signatures.** This one is a biggie! Intuit created a very useful article on tips for using your email signature to grow your business. Here is a link to that article: [Link](#)
35. **Add subscription based lead generation resources to your website.** These include Free Resource Guides, Free Reports, and etc. This will help you build up a list of qualified leads that you can market your services to.

36. **Create an Elevator Pitch.** As you probably know, marketing isn't a one-time thing – you've got to be marketing your business all the time. Come up with an interesting, but brief, pitch that you could give in just a matter of seconds. [Forbes](#) offers advice on how to write a killer elevator pitch.
37. **Host an Event.** Why not try hosting an event at your place of business? Everyone invited will want to meet you and thank you for hosting it, which will give you tons of opportunities to meet people and network.
38. **Donate.** Try donating some of your products or services to some type of charitable event. This will give you exposure among the community.
39. **Get a magnetic sign for your car.** Even if you're just out doing personal errands, you could still be marketing your business by having a sign on your car.
40. **Do a giveaway.** You could do a contest (like how many "likes" can someone get on Facebook for your company) and then give away a free product or service to the winner.
41. **Hire someone to hold a sign.** Ever seen those sign-twirlers on the side of the road? Hire a teenager to hold a sign for your business for a few hours a day. It's actually a fairly effective strategy – check out this [article](#).
42. **Offer free hot cocoa or coffee on cold days, or free lemonade on hot days.** Advertise that you are offering free drinks, and make it clear that it's free for everyone, not just paying customers. If you can get them in the door, you've got a better chance of getting them to become customers.
43. **Hire a local cheerleading squad.** See if the local high school's cheerleading squad would come and cheer outside your business for an hour on the weekend. You could pay them, or even give them free products and services depending on your business.
44. **Buy dinner for someone.** This is a fun one because you don't even have to give a sales pitch. Buy their dinner, and then hand them a business card and be on your way.
45. **Go crazy with holiday decorating.** When different holidays come around, really get extravagant with your décor – this will catch people's attention.

47. **Write good reviews for local businesses.** Visit local businesses and then write them some good reviews online. They'll appreciate it and possibly return the favor, plus potential customers will see your name on the review.
48. **Give away balloons.** Have some balloons printed with your company's name and logo, then go to some community events and give them away – kids will be drawn to you, which means their parents will be, too.
49. **Write expert articles for local publications.** Get in touch with the editors of some local magazines or online publications and see if he or she would be interested in publishing any of your articles.
50. **Create a tip sheet.** Whatever it is you specialize in – write about it. Make a page of helpful tips that you can pass out or mail to people.
51. **Do a demo.** If you have your own office space or retail location, host a small event where you can do a demonstration of your product or service. If you don't have your own location to do this, see if a related business would team up with you and let you use their space. Check out what this [article](#) has to say about the benefits of demonstrations.
52. **Send handwritten thank-you notes to new customers.** Include a coupon for a discount on their next purchase.
53. **Send "we miss you" notes.** If you have some regular customers that you haven't heard from in a while, send a nice, handwritten note letting them know you miss their business.
54. **List on [Google Local](#).** This will ensure that your business is listed in local search results.
55. **Create a loyalty program.** Reward loyal customers with discounts or freebies.
56. **Ask for testimonials.** Get your customers to write testimonials, then use them on your website.
57. **Use friends and family.** Have your friends and family members help promote your business by giving them business cards or flyers to hand out.

- 58. Register with MerchantCircle.com.** Membership is free, and with it you can create a member page, write blogs and newsletters, and create coupons.
- 59. Coffee Shop video shoot.** Try partnering with a local coffee shop and shoot a video segment there. You could work out an agreement with the coffee shop to have free coffee available for those in the video, and then you can promote the coffee shop throughout the entire shoot. Plus, anyone frequenting the coffee shop at that time will be a captive audience to your video.
- 60. [HARO](#) (Help a Reporter Out!) Reporters often need help. There are websites dedicated to this where reporters can post requests for sources and guests to appear on radio and web shows.**
- 61. Place ads in unusual locations.** You can often put up ads in less popular locations for less money. You can often still reach your target market in these locations.
- 62. Purchase Unsold ad space.** Monthly publications sometimes have unsold ad space that they will offer at a discounted price.
- 63. Unique advertising.** Conventional advertising can be expensive, so it's time to think outside the box. See about advertising on parking meters, balloons, and grocery shopping carts. Even bulletin boards at apartment complexes could be an option.
- 64. Link exchange.** A link exchange is kind of like having some of your customers' business cards displayed on a desk for people to take. Links to your website are important and the more that are out there, the more business you'll get.
- 65. Visit your own website frequently.** A boring or difficult-to-navigate website will chase customers away. Make sure you're visiting your website regularly to make sure there aren't any issues and always be looking for ways you can improve it. Check out some tips for freshening up your website [here](#).
- 66. Reduce the size or length of your ads.** If your 60 second radio spot is costing you too much, why not go down to a 30 second ad? A longer ad isn't necessarily going to be worth it as far as customers are concerned.

67. **Do an editorial ad.** These ads look like newspaper articles. According to smalltownmarketing.com, 50% more people will read the article than would read an ad of the same size.
68. **Use BlogTalkRadio.** Do a search for radio shows on your topic, then email the hosts and see if you can get an interview. You also have the option of starting your own show.
69. **Sealed envelope.** Give customers a sealed envelope and instruct them not to open it. If they come back the following week, you will open it for them and they will receive whatever prize is listed inside.
70. **Conduct a survey.** This is a great way to find and create new sales opportunities. Surveys can work in a variety of different functions including customer satisfaction reviews, customer product evaluations, and instant polls.
71. **Barter with local TV or radio stations.** Offer your services or products in exchange for some air time or advertising.
72. **Teach a workshop.** Offer to teach a workshop in your area of expertise for your community. Click [here](#) for information on how to teach an interactive workshop.
73. **Hire interns.** You could consider hiring a college student to work with you as an intern. You can often find students who will do this for no pay, or very little pay. An intern can help you with research, studies, web development, and a variety of other tasks.
74. **Utilize all your methods of communication.** Take advantage of every interaction and contact you make. Sending a fax to someone? Have a promotional message on the fax cover sheet. Email footers, paystubs, and even invoices could all be stamped with some type of message endorsing your business.
75. **Acts of kindness.** Pay for someone's parking, then give them one of your business cards.
76. **Partner up.** Go for a walk or drive downtown and check out some of the local storefronts. If there are any that are being under-utilized, talk with the store owner and see if you can pay a small fee to advertise your business.
77. **Today-only deal!** If business is slow, send out an email to your customers instructing them to call you right away for a special deal that is only valid that day. People will want to take advantage right away because they know it won't be good later.

- 78. Charge a fee for marketing events.** It might sound weird, but seminars and workshops that charge a fee almost always get more participants than free events. Even if you're only charging \$5, customers will feel they are getting more because they have paid for it.
- 79. Sponsor a local sports team.** You may be able to send out a press release about the team and get your company's logo on their uniforms.
- 80. Conduct a focus group.** Find out how to do this [here](#).
- 81. Participate in a local street fair.** Regardless of whether your business provides a service or sells a product, street fairs are a great way to gain exposure. Service providers can offer coupons, or you can give out samples of your product.
- 82. Free samples.** Find out where your target audience spends time, and go there to hand out free samples or coupons.
- 83. Record a podcast.** Here's a great [article](#) on how to record a podcast.
- 84. Create a consumer guide.** Create a free guide full of informative content about whatever it is your business does. It should be high-quality, and should focus on the reader (not on promotion of your business.) You can then distribute the guide through social media and offer it as a free download on your website.
- 85. Use Pinterest.** This is basically like a virtual bulletin board that lets users pin pictures onto "boards." You can use this for marketing by creating boards that are related to your business
- 86. Lunch bags.** If you have lots of clients and business partners that you'd like to take out to lunch but can't afford it, here's an idea from [startupnation.com](#): "I bought small bright red gift bags from Wal-Mart (.49 each) that happened to match the red of my company logo. I filled them with bottled water, granola bar, string cheese, candy, crackers, and a small apple, stapled my business card to them, and included a note: 'If you're busy enough to work through lunch, you need this. If you want a mortgage lender who works as hard as you do, you need me.' I delivered them to new companies and they worked like a charm."
- 87. Online phone directory.** There are free online phone directories such as [yellowpages.com](#) or [yellowpagecity.com](#).

- 88. Donate a prize to a radio station.** Why not try donating a product or service to a local radio station for a contest or giveaway? It will get you some on-air promotion!
- 89. Place an ad on [Craigslist.com](http://craigslist.com).** You can choose whatever city you live in and place an ad for your business in the correct category.
- 90. Pay-per-click advertising:** Create an ad for search engines and it will run in the specific city or region that you choose. A good choice for this type of advertising is [Google AdWords](http://google.com).
- 91. Promotional invoice.** Here's an idea – when you send out an invoice, attach a discount for next time.
- 92. Enter a parade float.** Does your city have a special parade on July 4th or some other holiday? See if you can enter a float into the parade – this will get you a ton of exposure to the community!
- 93. Network with other companies.** Get to know other companies who do the same type of work as you and let them know you are willing to handle their work overloads if needed.
- 94. Register your business in your local phone book.** Some people actually do still use a paper phone book to find services.
- 95. Offer a [Groupon](http://groupon.com) deal.** This is a great way to get local business and first-time customers.
- 96. Slideshow.** [Animoto](http://animoto.com) allows you to create a free 30-second slideshow to advertise your product or business.
- 97. Cable.** I know it sounds expensive to advertise on a cable TV station, but you can do crawls, full-screen ads, and above-program listings very affordably.
- 98. [StumbleUpon](http://stumbleupon.com) Ads.** Chris Wise, online marketing directors at CustomerRave, says, “They cost as little as \$0.05 a click, so for \$5 you can get 100 unique visitors to your site.” (smallbusinesscomputing.com)

99. Find bloggers. Look for some prominent bloggers in your industry and see if they'll review your product or service.

100. Guerrilla advertising. This is an interesting method of advertising, and it's becoming quite popular. Come up with a great idea, create your marketing materials, and plaster them around town.

101. Sign advertising. If you have a brick and mortar shop, create some signs that you can place outside your business. This is a good way to get some attention, and could certainly increase sales.

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I hope that you have found this free resource guide helpful and that it will get your Marketing Mojo going. Cheers!

As a fellow small business owner and subscriber, I would like to offer you **access to my “Blueprint for Small Business Blogging”** a 10 Day Crash Course that can help you start and grow your small business blog.

With this crash course, you will learn how to build a blog for your small business to:

- Get more customers and build up your online business presence
- Provide quality information to provide to your readers
- Quickly increase awareness, traffic and growth for your business

You will also find out the strategies that I used to increase my business exposure and get noticed by some of the worlds largest online publications that include: The New York Times.

Click [here](#) to learn more about the [Blueprint for Small Business Blogging](#)

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