

50 free ways to promote your business

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Thank you for requesting your copy of our report “50 free ways to promote your business”. Many small business owners have really benefitted from these ideas and I hope you will too.

The reason I put these ideas together is because many small businesses were asking me for ideas on how to promote their business: it seemed that people really struggled to think of things to do! Most business owners start off with the main four ways of promoting their business which are:

- Advertising
- Direct mail or leaflet drops
- Cold Calling or Telemarketing
- Networking

And then when they've tried these methods and become frustrated with them because they don't work particularly well, they're really stuck as to what else to do.

That's why many people just rely on word of mouth and referrals, which don't get me wrong, are great because they're free and easy, but they do put you at the mercy of others who may or may not refer business to you.



So, because I recognised this was a problem, I put these ideas together to help people like you find new ways to promote their business. Most importantly, all the ideas in here are either free or low cost to do which is vital as they may not work for you. You would be even more frustrated with marketing if you'd just spent £4,000 and it didn't work, wouldn't you!

The ideas are divided into 4 sections:

1. Things to do if you like writing
2. Things to do if you like talking
3. Things you can give away as samples or to demonstrate what you do
4. Things to do if you like walking and meeting people

That way, you can pick those marketing ideas which suit your personality.

Oh and I may well have added a final section with 10 more ways to promote your business too – that's 60 different ways to market and promote your business!

Not all of the ideas will appeal to you or will be suitable for your business, so feel free to discount them if you need to.

Finally, because marketing works best if you do more than one thing at a time, I recommend you try 5 ideas at once. Remember, they won't cost you anything to do apart from your time so you really don't have anything to lose.

What you'll find is that some things will work really well and some won't work at all. After a month or so, drop the things that aren't working and choose some other ideas to replace them. That way, by the end of the year, you'll have 12-15 ideas that really work for you and your business.

Good luck and let me know how you get on. And if you find you need some more help and advice or indeed someone to do your marketing for you, either give us a shout or download your free CD (just pay for P&P) which you can get at

<http://www.exceptionalthinking.co.uk/CDVol1.htm>

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If you like writing things down and getting your point across on paper, some of these ways to promote your business will definitely appeal to you.

1. Letters to the editor

If you read anything in the paper that relates to your business and you have an opinion on it, why not write into the editor telling them what you think. You can put your business name at the end of the letter, giving yourself some great free publicity.

2. Create a newsletter

A newsletter is a great way to keep in touch with your customers and remind all of them that you're there. You can write different articles in here to demonstrate your expertise too.

3. Write articles

Why not write articles and then submit them wherever you can? You can put them online (just type "Free article websites" into Google), send them to the press or use them in your newsletter or other people's newsletters.

4. Have a regular column

Many publications and places online are looking for people to become experts, writing regular columns and answering people's questions. Doing this for your business establishes you as an expert in your field and makes people aware of your business.

5. Post in forums

Forums are places people go on the web to ask questions – search in Google to find one related to your industry. Why not answer people's questions in forums? You'll definitely make people aware of your business and show that you can be helpful.

6. Write a blog

Blogs are online diaries. You can set one up for free at www.blogger.com or www.wordpress.com and then you can share your opinions, tips, articles, news and anything else you want in there too.

7. Write a press release

Press releases are a great way to publicise your business and tell the local press some news. Have a go at writing one and send it out to the press.

8. Email Marketing

Email marketing is a really great way to tell people what you do, give them useful tips and information and of course, hopefully sell to them. Plus, it's much cheaper than mailing everyone too!

9. Send out postcards

Postcards are a very cheap way to stay in touch with people. Plus people often pay attention to them because you don't very often see postcards these days. Very effective for getting a short message out to people.

10. Send out greetings cards

Greetings cards are a bit different too. At Christmas, they'll be common place, but could you send out greeting cards at different times of the year? What could you do?

11. Use every outgoing piece of paper

Make sure whenever you send out anything from your business, it contains your contact details and your website. Never miss an opportunity to promote your business.

12. On-line Directories

Search on Google for on-line directories and you'll find tons where you can add your business for free. Add your site to as many as you can to build awareness on-line.

13. Social Networking

Social Networking has really developed in the last few years – just think of Facebook, Twitter, Linked In and so on. The more you get yourself and your business known on these sites, the better. You can write a profile on these sites, post tips and opinions and share any articles you write.

things to do if you like talking

If you like talking to people, some of these ideas will be great for your business.

1. Local radio

Your local radio station will always be looking for people to speak on a particular topic. Why not contact them and see what you can contribute?

2. Local Television News

If you have a 'visual' product or service, why not contact your local television news? They may very well come and film you and your business and show it on the local news.

3. Speeches & Seminars

Local groups are always looking for great speakers to speak on different topics. Why not contact them to see if they'd like you to come and speak for them? Also consider joining your local Toastmasters to give you practice in this area.

4. Telesales or Cold Calling

While this is an idea many business owners may have considered, if you're feeling brave it may be worth giving it a go for your business. If you don't want to do it yourself, you could always hire someone to do it for you.

5. Tell everyone!

You may be surprised to learn that not everyone will know what you do, even if you think they do. Make sure you tell everyone and keep telling them. The more people know what you do, the easier it will be for people to refer business to you.

6. Use your contacts

How many contacts do you have from previous things you've done? Do they all know what you do now? Make sure you touch base with everyone who has known you and really use your contacts.

7. Be a guest on a talk show

OK – this one's not for everyone, but if you're feeling confident this can be a fantastic way to demonstrate your expertise and really show you know what you're talking about.

8. Create a podcast

A podcast is an audio recording. You can use a dictaphone to record tips and information that you can use to give away to your contacts or even charge them for.

9. Create a video

If you're feeling a brave, you may want to create a video containing tips and helpful information. Once it's done, you could post it onto You Tube, meaning that lots more people could come into contact with you.

10. Send out a CD / DVD

If you take the time and trouble to create a podcast or a video, you could use the material to send out to your contacts on a CD or a DVD.

11. Provide the press with quotes

Contact the press whenever you see, read or listen to something relating to your business and provide them with a comment they can use from an expert (you!) The more they get to know you, the more they'll be contacting you to provide them with things.

12. Follow up with people

Make it your policy to call and touch base with different people every day. Particularly call them if you haven't heard from them for a while just to see how they're getting on.

things you can

give away as samples or demonstrate what you do

Demonstrating what you can do, either by showing people or by providing a sample can be a great way to promote your business. Here's some ideas.

1. Volunteering

I have got some of my best clients through volunteering. Volunteer your time or a product or service to a charity – who will they come to when they need a proper job doing?

2. Awards

Entering awards is a great opportunity for you to demonstrate what you do. You should enter as many awards as you can – you never know, you may win and how great for your business would that be!

3. Give away samples

If you sell a product, create some low cost samples and give them away to people in exchange for the permission to contact them in the future. What better way is there to show someone what you can do?

4. Give away free information

If you sell a service, give away free information (like this report) – the more you can be useful and helpful to people, the more they're going to want to work with you.

5. Create your own workshops

Running your own workshops is a fantastic way to demonstrate what you can do for people. They'll get to know how you work and what you can do to help them.

6. Run Teleseminars & Webinars

A teleseminar is a workshop over the phone and a webinar is a workshop over the internet. Either is a fantastic way to show people what you can do in a unique and different way.

7. Attend Exhibitions

Exhibitions can be a very expensive way to promote, but can be much more cost effective if you team up with others and work on their stands. You can also demonstrate your expertise by being a speaker at the exhibition or just simply turn up and meet as many people as you can.

8. Craft Shows & Market Stalls

If you have a product you can sell, craft shows and market stalls can be an excellent way of showing others what you can do.

9. Have a store on e-bay

E-bay is a great, low-cost way of showcasing what you do on the internet and can be used even if you're selling goods by more traditional methods.

10. Loyalty Cards

Loyalty Cards are fantastic to reward people for using your services and your products. Everytime they buy, use you or recommend someone, they get a stamp. When they have so many stamps, they get something for free.

11. Run a competition

Competitions are a good way to showcase what you do. The winner will get to experience your product or service and you will be able to build a relationship with all the others who entered but didn't win as you have their contact details.

12. Display stands

Set up display stands in different places where you know your customers visit. Leave leaflets, samples and useful information in there for people to take – a great way to demonstrate what you can do.

13. Apply for Tenders

If you want to get into the government, you should apply for tenders. Tenders are written documents telling you that companies are looking for products or services. Find relevant ones for you by visiting www.skillfair.co.uk

things to do

if you like walking or meeting people

If you like walking around and meeting up with people, you'll like some of these ideas to promote your business.

1. Networking

Networking is a fairly low cost way to get business. Tons of actual networking events are organised every week that you can attend and don't forget about more informal ways too such as weddings or just talking to people when you're out and about.

2. Sponsorship

Sponsoring organisations and charities is a great way to get known. Remember, you don't have to give them money – if you appeal to parents for instance, you could give the School's local football team t-shirts with your company name on the back.

3. Use Leisure Activities

If you regularly do a leisure activity, why not print t-shirts with your company name on them and wear them while you're participating.

4. Walk around the neighbourhood

If you appeal to businesses, visit local business parks and drop in to meet them. The more you do this and get to know them, the more likely they are to use your services.

5. Team up with similar businesses

Could you team up with similar sorts of businesses and promote together? For instance a vet could team up with a pharmacist, a physiotherapist and a chiropractor and all promote together. What could you do?

6. Hold an open house or party

Invite people to join you for an evening where they get to visit you and see what you do. You can network, pass around samples and give demonstrations – a great way to get known.

7. Leaflets and Flyers

Leaflets and Flyers can be a cost effective way to promote your business. Walk around and do a leaflet drop or just put some through a few doors if you're in the neighbourhood.

8. Links with relevant organisations

Get to know local organisations that could possibly refer business to you. The more you try to help them and add value, the more they'll try to help you in return.

9. Car Stickers and T-shirts

Get some low cost car stickers or t-shirts printed and give them out to family and friends to wear while they're out and about or stick on their car. Why not get others to promote for you?

10. Word of mouth & referrals

To get people to refer business over to you means you need to get to know them and build a relationship. Work on doing this and you should find referrals come through the door thick and fast.

11. Celebrity Visits

Do you know any celebrities? If you do, talk to them about endorsing your product or service. Celebrity endorsements can go a huge way to promoting your business.

12. Get involved

Get involved in your community and the things that are going on around you. The more you do, the more people will get to know you and like you. Then they're more likely to do business with you.

10 other ideas to promote your business

Here are ten more ways that you could try to promote your business...

1. Car Signs

Car signs can be used by every business as a really low cost way to promote. People will see you around and will get to know who you are and what you do.

2. Website Reciprocal Links

Swapping website links is a great way to both build awareness on the internet and build a relationship up with the people you swap links with. For instance, a photographer could swap links with a wedding organiser and a printer could swap links with an accountant.

3. Yellow Pages

People use the yellow pages if they've forgotten your contact details so never pay for a yellow pages advert. But, you can have a free entry in there, which every business owner should explore.

4. Posters

Posters can be a very good way to promote a product or service quickly and easily. Print some out and then stick them up whenever you visit a place. That way, many different people will become aware of your business.

5. Offer a guarantee

If people feel there's no risk to using your product and service and that they'll get their money back if it doesn't work, they'll be more likely to take it up. Don't worry – very few people will ever take you up on the guarantee!

6. Thank your customers

How often do we get thanked for buying something or for continuing to use the same supplier? Not very often. How could you thank your customers for doing business with you?

7. *Collect testimonials*

Make sure you collect a testimonial from every satisfied customer you work with.

Testimonials are great to convince new customers to work with you.

8. *Sign outside your premises*

If you own your own property, why not think about putting a sign outside your premises to advertise what you do? Always check with your neighbours first though to make sure they don't mind.

9. *Low cost advertising*

Most advertising can be expensive, but you can always look for low cost places to advertise such as community and church magazines and post office windows.

10. *Website banners*

Some websites allow you to advertise on their site. This can be a very low cost way to advertise, particularly if the site you advertise on has similar customers to you.

So, there you have it – there are not just 50, but 60 ways to market and promote your business.

Which ones appeal to you? Tick them, circle them and set yourself an action plan to implement them in your business. Just choose 5 or 6 at a time and give them a go.

If they don't work, don't worry. Just drop those and pick some more ideas. Keep going and eventually you'll find the ideas that work for you.

Good luck and remember, if you find you need some more help and advice or indeed someone to do your marketing for you, give us a shout.

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