



## Testimonials

"I didn't realise how much marketing is actually free!" - MD Interior Designers

"So many good tips to take away from this!" - MD MOT & Service Centre

"I believe that I am also in the situation where I presently waste 50% of my marketing budget, I just don't know which 50%!" - MD Activity Centre

"So helpful. I am going to go and start doing most of this tomorrow!" - Tree Surgeon



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## Marketing Improvement Tips







### Know your customer

The first mistake many businesses make is not knowing their customers. A critical part of your marketing plan is targeting the right customer. Define your customers carefully through research and segmentation, then create a profile of your customer.

What type of person buys this service most frequently today? What other factors make them a likely customer? Where are they most likely to look for the service or hear about it? Who might they ask for a referral?

**"make the customer the hero of your story." - Ann Handley**

### Target your audience

Now you know who your customers are target your marketing at that audience; position yourself as different and superior to your competitors. Trying to appeal to everyone does not work; untargeted and unfocused marketing is wasteful and counterproductive. For a low budget, high impact marketing plan to work, find customers who are easy to identify and affordable to reach; forget the mass market and go for small niche markets.

### What's the message?

A great way to do this is to do a SWOT analysis of your business. Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. Write it all out on a piece of paper and you'll be surprised at how focused this will make you in writing your message to your potential customers.

**"Clarity trumps persuasion" - Dr Flint Mc Glaughlin**

### Be credible

If something sounds too good to be true it probably is. Too much hype will turn people away. Be credible. Deliver on your promises.

### Clear marketing messages

Marketing messages that are obscure, contrived, vague or confusing will be lost on your potential customers. The best and cleverest marketing is wasted if nobody understands your message. Try different marketing messages as some will work better than others, when you find one that works, stick with it.

### Focus on your benefits

Your marketing will be more effective when it focuses on what's important to your customers. Customers are interested in only one thing - what's in it for them. **Here's a really helpful hint, pay attention to this little detail.** Count how many times your messages talk about your customers and how much they're about you; and get the balance right. **Talk about what you can do for your customers, they don't want to hear about you.**



### Don't Advertise Like a Big Business

A small business can't afford to do that. Instead, design your advertising to produce sales NOW!

### Plan and schedule

Don't be arbitrary about your selection of a variety of marketing ploys, plan carefully. If you blow your entire marketing budget on one campaign in one month what are you going to do for the next eleven? Sensible marketing is building awareness and credibility over time through regular and consistent exposure. If you want to link campaigns to new products, services, seasonal events or other occasions that will attract business, give yourself time to execute your plans well in advance.

**"The greatest enemy of a good plan is the dream of a perfect plan." - Carl von Clausewitz**

### No single marketing effort works all the time for every business, so rotate several marketing tactics and vary your approach

Using media advertising, social media, direct marketing etc on their own will reach only a portion of your prospects. Use a cross section of media channels so that customers become familiar with you and your products, at different times and in different places. Your customers tune out after awhile if you toot only one note. Not only that, YOU get bored. Marketing can be fun, so take advantage of the thousands of opportunities available for communicating your value to customers. Just remember, it's about consistency and the total marketing package. You need to have the same look, tone and feel across all of your advertising, direct marketing, websites and marketing materials; that way prospects and customers will identify your business more easily.

### Get feedback from customers and adapt your efforts accordingly

Just because you are tired of your marketing and it has been around for a while doesn't mean it has stopped being effective. Many business owners make changes because they think they have to ring the changes: If it ain't broke, don't fix it. Use feedback and measurability, listen to what your customers say worked. Capture and record feedback and which of your marketing channels are generating the most business. Test new ideas against what you know works.

### Give your customers a compelling reason to act immediately and make it easy!

You've created a need for what you're selling, now motivate your audience to take immediate action, while they're still excited. Wait too long and the average buyer will forget about your messages and move on to the next offer. If you want readers to call or visit your place of business make sure you give them a way to do it. Include address details, phone numbers, Freepost, email addresses and simple

to pay procedures. You'd be surprised how many campaigns or adverts fail to close the loop with the readers. The best marketing in the world will be useless, if buying your product, is not easy to do.



### The Importance of Follow Up

You've just done all of the hard work and attracted the customer to your product or service, spoken to them and engaged their interest, you have a lead..... So what do you do next? A lead typically is a highly perishable material with a low shelf life, given the competition and low span of attention of customers, so you must follow up. Always set out what's going to happen next and agree on an appropriate timescale. Conversion rates can be dramatically improved just by following up thoroughly.

### Keep in touch

Just because someone hasn't responded to one of your campaigns doesn't mean that they don't have an interest in your product or service; it may not have been convenient for them to act when they received your email. It's important to realise that you will get business from these prospects if you stay in contact with them. In fact, prospects need to hear from you multiple times before they actually buy, so keep them in the loop for special offers, discounts and other promotions.

### A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush

Did you know it costs six times more to make a sale to a new customer than to an existing one? Your customers already know and trust you, so look after your existing customers and they will produce repeat business at a fraction of the cost of recruiting new ones. Repeat business can account for up to 80% of sales in many businesses. Too often marketing activities focus on winning new customers and not on building relationships with existing ones.

### Use testimonials

Testimonials are an incredibly powerful tool, they build credibility like nothing else on this planet yet, they are often overlooked by business owners. Whenever you receive any positive feedback from a customer ask them if you can quote them, use these quotes in all forms of your marketing. A testimonial impresses potential customers because it is independent third-party validation that a business really is as good as it claims to be. So get out there and ask some of your best customers to write you some letters of recommendation on their stationary.

### Maximise Referrals

The most cost effective method of reaching new customers is by referrals from satisfied customers. Not all customers are referral candidates, find the top 20% that are ecstatic about your business and ask them for referrals. A satisfied customer telling others about your small business is more effective than any large advertising campaign. Spend time getting customer referrals on a weekly basis.

**"The purpose of a business is to create a customer." - Peter Drucker**

### Don't stop marketing

Once business starts coming in on a regular basis it's tempting to ease off on some of the marketing and networking you do. Even if your first efforts bring you five customers at once keep your marketing efforts going, if you stop marketing your business will become very quiet again. You need to market continually to keep interest and awareness levels up, generate enquires and leads so that you have a pipeline of future business.