

# 200 FREE Marketing Tips

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## **Advertising**

1. Advertise during peak seasons for your industry.
2. Get a memorable or freephone number for your business.
3. Get a simple, memorable domain name and email address and include them on all marketing materials.
4. Promote your business jointly with other professionals via cooperative direct mail.
5. Advertise in a business or trade directory.
6. Advertise in your local paper
7. Consider placing ads in your newspaper's classified section.
8. Put a separate media code in each of your ads (ie: 'SU1') and keep records of results.
9. Keep a file of adverts that caught your eye – ask yourself why they were eye-catching and use similar techniques next time you place an advert
10. Improve your building signs and directional signs inside and out.
11. Create a new or improved company logo or "upgrade" your traditional logo.
12. Sponsor and promote a competition to give away free products or services, to get extended media coverage.
13. Do not have the local newspaper design your ad. It will look and sound like everyone else's when you want to stand out.
14. Display your hours, which credit cards you accept if applicable and current promotions in a very visible manner.
15. Create and update an annual advertising spending plan.
16. Ask for better ad rates from publications you advertise in.
17. Obtain voucher copies from the advertising departments of all media that interest you.
18. Keep in mind what you want someone to do when they are exposed to your ad: what action do you want them to take; what thoughts do you want them to have?
19. The most cost effective advertising exposes your ad to parts of the market that would be most likely to buy.
20. Don't forget the phone books and the World Wide Web in your advertising budget.

## **Direct Mail**

1. Mail "bumps," photos, samples and other innovative items to your prospect list. (A bump is simply anything that makes the mailing envelope bulge and makes the recipient curious about what's in the envelope!)
2. Create a direct mail list of "hot prospects." Collect e-mail addresses.
3. Test a new mailing list. If it produces results, add it to your current direct mail lists or consider replacing a list that's not performing up to expectations.
4. Use coloured or oversized envelopes for your direct mailings. Or send direct mail in plain white envelopes to arouse recipients' curiosity.

5. Announce free or special offers in your direct response pieces. Include the offer in the beginning of the message and also on the outside of the envelope for direct mail.
6. Reduce response/turnaround time. Make reordering easy. Provide pre-addressed envelopes.
7. Collect good examples of direct mail. Keep a file of ten inspirational items, and update it each month.

## **Offline web marketing**

1. Make sure that all of your staff know your website address. They know your telephone and fax numbers, they know your snail mail address - they should ALL know your web site address too. Make sure that any new staff have this information along with the usual contact details.
2. Print your domain name and e-mail address on all letterheads, business cards & compliment slips, in the format 'www.yourcompany.co.uk' as soon as your web site is launched.
3. Make sure that everyone that you ever come into contact with has your web address.
4. Business closed for the day? Why not put up a sign - "Open 24 hours a day on the WWW - www.yourcompany.co.uk"
5. Include your domain name in your answerphone, or line holding message. Let people know that they can find information/buy products/enquire about services via the World Wide Web.
6. Type your domain name into your screensaver to remind staff of the address while they are on the telephone. This way even temping staff know the address.
7. When potential clients call for information about your company, ask them if they have Internet access and send them to your website. This means they can have the information immediately, without waiting for the postal system, and may help cut down on your postage costs. Ensure you get their name and telephone number, so you can call them back
8. Send out e-cards on disks (with the obligatory link to your website) - the choice is endless and it all draws attention to the fact that your company is taking advantage of the latest technology.
9. Make sure that any newspaper and other offline ads feature your domain name prominently - don't hide it away in the small print!

## **Promotions**

1. Distribute promotional products such as pens, pencils, sticky writing pads, or mugs with your web address on.
2. Give away promotional gifts to your best valued customers, with your company details on.
3. Consider cherished number plates with your company name and web address, for fleet vehicles.
4. Include print materials, mailings, give-aways, and miscellaneous expenses in your marketing budget.
5. Have T-shirts printed with your web address and logo - then give them out as prizes or promotional items.
6. Have caps and/or office wear printed or embroidered with your logo for employees to wear.
7. Get a stand at a fair/trade show attended by your target market.

8. Hire a plasma screen and show an animated business presentation in the background at your show stand.
9. Visit trade shows, similar to your business so you know what your competitors are doing.

## **Signs**

1. Use flags or balloons outside to attract attention. Themed events introduce fun into the workplace and help customers relax and have fun.
2. Invest in a neon sign to make your office or storefront window visible at night.
3. Read your existing signs to check that logos, phone, fax, e-mail, website details etc are all current.

## **Customer Relations & Service**

1. Be respectful to each customer; be fair; be courteous.
2. Your internal customers (your employees) and external customers should be treated similarly
3. Think about how you could implement service enhancements that complement your business and that your customers would appreciate.
4. Get to know your customers. Be a good listener and observer. Make notes.
5. Make sure there is a comfortable way for customers to make complaints; do your best to ensure that every customer is a happy customer; act on complaints; reward complaints. Conduct ongoing customer satisfaction surveys.
6. Avoid irregular hours of operation that could cause customer disappointment. Try to operate year round as steadily as possible.
7. Ask your clients to come back again. Reward repeat customers. Thank them.
8. Do something nice. Low-cost goodwill efforts like handwritten cards, gift baskets, restaurant gift certificates can make all the difference to clients, suppliers and employees. It also keeps your company name in the forefront and can encourage repeat business and generate referrals.
9. Return phone calls promptly.
10. Set up a fax-on-demand or e-mail system to respond easily to customer enquiries.
11. Use an answerphone or voice mail system to catch after-hours phone calls.
12. Include basic information in your outgoing message such a business hours, location, domain name, etc.
13. Record a memorable message or "tip of the day" on your outgoing answering machine or voice mail message.
14. Redecorate your office or location where you meet your clients.
15. Ask clients what you can do to help them.
16. Hold a seminar at your office for clients and prospects.
17. Send birthday cards and appropriate seasonal greetings.

## Media Relations

1. Newspapers: ideal for action and sales messages, and for tie-ins with promotions to local audiences.
2. Consumer magazines: when it's important to match your message with a targeted audience and colour reproduction.
3. Radio: the frequency medium when you need selective, short-term exposure among pinpointed audiences.
4. Television: best for broad exposure, high-impact, product demonstrations, name awareness, image and lifestyle building campaigns.
5. Outdoor: a great broad awareness medium used to reinforce the name and image of a main campaign.
6. Direct mail: perfect for sending your customers a personalized advertising message.
7. Invite the media and pull off a stunt.
8. Hold a press conference to announce new products or services or developments or news.
9. Create a press kit and keep its contents current. More media are now using the Internet to download stories, logos and pictures.
10. Conduct original research and release findings.
11. When negative publicity arises, as it sometimes does, be forthright with information, act to correct the problem with integrity, and answer media calls.
12. Use props in media photographs that create an image for your business.
13. Organise or attend a trade show related to your products and services.
14. Issue a media statement related to a news item.
15. Ask publications for their editorial and deadline list for the next 6 months or year and produce a press matrix so you can plan ahead for your press releases.
16. Send out media releases on trends related to your business and offer to be an editorial resource or spokesperson.
17. Give informational presentations and write articles that relate to products, services or other areas of expertise.
18. Update your media list often so that press releases are sent to the right media outlet and person.
19. Write a column for the local newspaper, local business journal or trade publication.
20. When you get an article published, circulate reprints.
21. Send timely and newsworthy press releases as often as needed.
22. Publicise your '500th client of the year' (or other notable milestone).
23. Create an annual award and publicise it, ie: 'the outstanding employee of the year'.
24. Get public relations and media training or read up on it.
25. Appear on a radio or TV talk show.
26. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or to a trade magazine editor.
27. Take an editor to lunch.
28. Get a publicity photo taken and enclose with press releases.

29. Consistently review newspapers and magazines for possible PR opportunities.
30. Submit "tip" articles to newsletters and newspapers.
31. Conduct industry research and develop a press release or article to announce an important discovery in your field.

## **Networking & Collaboration**

1. Join a Chamber of Commerce or other organisation.
2. Join or organise a breakfast club with other professionals (not in your field) to discuss business and network referrals.
3. Mail a brochure to members of organisations to which you belong.
4. Create your Advocate list. Notice who thinks highly of you. Which friends, clients, associates think you are great? These people will be great referral sources for you because they believe in you. Explain to each of them how they can send you business. Be sure to stay in touch with them at least every thirty days. Call them, send them a note, have lunch with them or send them business.
5. Participate actively in business networking & trade organisations. Volunteer to serve on the board.
6. Follow up from networking events, and maintain connections over time with occasional phone calls or by sending along articles or information or referrals.
7. Team up with other businesses.
8. Put a page of links on your web site to help promote businesses you're collaborating with.
9. Encourage and support others. Be a resource and a leader.

## **Colleagues**

1. Create a Marketing Ideas suggestion box for employees or colleagues. Read them and recognise ALL contributions
2. Offer profit- or sales-based incentives to employees.
3. Involve employees in marketing related creative brainstorming and goal-setting.
4. Make marketing a part of employee job descriptions.
5. Establish employee award and reward programs.
6. Keep your best people with raises, praise, and responsibility. Show them that you appreciate what they do.
7. Send employees to training sessions. In new and interesting skills.
8. Create an employee handbook with how to approach customer service and sales scenarios/problems and demonstrating the level of service that you expect.
9. Conduct hiring and interviewing with great care to bring in the best. Be sure to have and to highlight ways in which working at your establishment is more attractive than elsewhere.
10. Be prepared to spend more money for better people.
11. Work with creative, positive, motivated people who smile.

## **General & Time Saving Ideas**

1. Never let a day pass without engaging in at least one marketing activity.
2. Save time, handle each piece of paper only once – use the waste paper basket
3. Put together a daily 'to do' list
4. List all the tasks you need and wish to do each day on one piece of paper.
5. Determine which actions are priority, by analysing the 'urgents' and the 'important's'.
6. At the end of each day, copy over the list on to your next day's 'to do' list.
7. Work with your biological time clock... Vary your working day by alternating daily tasks with team achievements.
8. Concentrate on difficult mental tasks for 60-90 minutes then take a break to do something less taxing to recharge your batteries.
9. Where possible, leave work at work – this will keep you fresh and motivated.
10. Try to vary your working day by alternating routine jobs with more creative ones.
11. Prioritise, work on your most important tasks first and make inroads on them whenever you have 15 minutes of uninterrupted time.
12. If you determine the six most important parts of your job, they should comprise 80% of your time
13. Determine a percentage of gross income to spend annually on marketing.
14. Set specific marketing goals every year; review and adjust quarterly.
15. Maintain a reminder file of ideas for later use.
16. Carry business cards with you (all day, every day).
17. Create a high-quality personal name badge with your company name and logo on it and wear it at high visibility meetings.
18. Write a "How To" pamphlet or article for publishing.
19. Stay alert to trends that might impact your target market, product or promotion strategy.
20. Read market research studies about your profession, industry, product, target market groups, etc.
21. Ask clients why they hired you and solicit suggestions for improvement. Listen.
22. Act.
23. Ask former clients why they left you. Listen. Act.

## **Sales ideas**

1. Start every day with two cold calls, one hot coffee.
2. Read newspapers, business journals and trade publications for new business openings and for personnel appointment and promotion announcements made by companies. Send your business literature to appropriate individuals and firms.
3. Give your sales literature to your lawyer, accountant, printer, banker, temp agency, office supply salesperson, marketing agency, etc. (Expand your sales force for free!)
4. Put your fax number on order forms for easy submission.

5. Set up a fax-on-demand or email system to easily distribute responses to company or product enquiries.
6. Follow up on your direct mailings, email messages and broadcast faxes with a friendly telephone call.
7. Extend your hours of operation - making use of the World Wide Web.
8. Display product and service samples or examples, case studies, etc at your office, and on your website.
9. Remind clients of the products and services you provide that they aren't currently buying.
10. Call and/or send mail to former clients to try to reactivate them. (If you want them back!)
11. Make some fun fax sheets. People receive faxes in abundance. Why not lighten their day with a cheery message or cartoon that relates to your business? Of course the design should conform to your corporate standards, but a bit of entertainment value can go a long way.
12. Take sales orders over the Internet.
13. Create coupons for your customers, with a special offer on your products or services
14. Identify a new market for what you sell - but make sure they have money to spend!

## **Education, resources and information**

1. Attend a marketing seminar.
2. Read a marketing book. Try subscribing to a business book or tape club and listen in the car or on the train.
3. Subscribe to a marketing magazine, newsletter or other printed publication.
4. Subscribe to a marketing list-serve on the Internet.
5. Subscribe to a marketing usenet newsgroup on the Internet.
6. Train your staff, clients and colleagues to promote referrals. Always. Never be shy to ask.
7. Hold a monthly marketing meeting with employees or associates to discuss strategy, status and to solicit marketing ideas. Report it all afterwards.
8. Join an association or organisation related to your profession.
9. Maintain a consultant database for finding designers, writers and other marketing professionals.

## **Location & Atmosphere**

1. Brief your staff before a client arrives, and ensure one staff member welcomes them personally by first name and makes them conformable.
2. Be sure that you and your staff are good hosts: welcoming, accommodating, professional, personable, etc.
3. Improve your signs inside and out.
4. Be sure your premises are clean and neat.
5. Put a new coat of paint on your building.
6. Get more comfortable modern furniture for your customers.
7. Offer refreshments to your customers.
8. Add or upgrade landscaping in front of your business.



9. Display credentials (diplomas, etc.), informational (news articles, brochures, etc.) and/or fun stuff (cartoons, antiques, pictures, etc.) related to your business.
10. Improve indoor and outdoor lighting.

## **Communications**

1. Publish a newsletter for customers and prospects. It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive. It can even be delivered by e-mail.
2. Develop a brochure of services, but describe customer benefits rather than technical features.
3. Include a postage-paid reply card with your brochures and other company literature. Include check boxes or other items that will involve the reader and provide valuable feedback to you.
4. Remember, business cards aren't working for you if they're in the box. Pass them out! Give prospects two business cards and brochures, one to keep and one to pass along.
5. Produce separate business cards/sales literature for each of your target market segments (e.g. government and commercial, and/or business and consumer).
6. Print a slogan and/or one-sentence description of your business on letterhead, fax cover sheets and invoices.
7. Include "testimonials" from customers in your literature.

## **The Web**

1. Get a professionally designed website, and keep changing the content.
2. If you already have a website, get a web facelift to freshen it up
3. Stay away from yellow text on a light background in your site – it will be unreadable
4. If you have images on your site, ensure they can download quickly on a 56k modem
5. Make your site 'sticky' - encourage your visitors to return to your site to read updates and see what has changed, e.g. have a window showing 'Today's Breaking News'
6. Have a subscribe for free option for your monthly Newsletter or Tip of the day to be emailed to them
7. Encourage visitors to become members of your site by giving them a free gift
8. Collect the email addresses and names of visitors to your site using an opt-in mailing list form so you can keep in touch with these prospects.
9. Maintain a current marketing database of existing and prospective customers using database software.
10. Have an online enquiry form or order form for your products.
11. Do an audit of the performance of your site on search engines and review user statistics, using Matrix Stats.
12. Get more ideas by surfing the net; see what other businesses like yours are doing online.
13. Increase interactive features on your web site.
14. Add free educational information to your web site related to your products and services.
15. Purchase banner ads or agree reciprocal links on sites with user traffic that you want to attract to your site.

16. Create a "signature file" to be used for all your e-mail messages. It should contain contact details including your website address and key information about your company that will make the reader want to contact you.
17. What not to do: buy bulk e-mail lists and send unsolicited messages to people who will probably just delete your messages unread. Unsolicited bulk emails are called SPAM
18. Add your website for free to online business related directories
19. Get links on your site, or even easier, a links page on your website, with reciprocal links if possible
20. Getting other sites to provide links to your site is an important way to build traffic. If, for example, you have an online tool store, you might benefit from reciprocal links to sites about home repair, gardening, do-it-yourself projects, home restoration and so on.
21. The most important part of publicizing your site is to do it steadily over a long period of time. Publicity is an ongoing process with a cumulative result.

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