

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING

IDEAS

A COMPLETE LIST

Contents

Online Marketing	4
Create Video Content & Promote It	4
Write & Promote Blog Content	5
Write and Publish an E-Book	6
Create Infographics	6
Leverage Google AdWords	7
Get Listed in Google Places	7
Start a Local SEO campaign	8
Start a National SEO campaign	9
Answer Questions on Quora	9
Plan a Webinar or Workshop	11
Make a Concerted Effort to Get Online Reviews	11
Engage in Relevant Forums and Online Communities	11
Sign up to HARO to get PR requests	11
Create a Press Release and Submit to Journalists	12
Comment on other blogs	12
Use Facebook Live	13
Run Online Contests	14
Leverage Affiliate Marketing	14
Create an Online Customer Referral Program	14
Submit a Guest Article	15
Repurpose content	15
Pay for a Sponsored Blog Post	16
E-mail Marketing	16
Create an Incentive for People to Join Your Mailing List	16
Add an Opt-In Box to Your Website	17
Create E-Mail Workflows	17
Send a Weekly Newsletter	17
Social Media Marketing	18
LinkedIn Advertising	18
Join & Engage in LinkedIn and Facebook Groups	19
Join & Engage in Google+ Communities	19
Social Bookmark Your Content	19
Generic Marketing	20
Network Locally	20

Create a Customer Loyalty Program.....	20
Industry Partnerships	21
Billboard Advertising	21
Survey Your Customers	21
Ask Customers for Referrals	21
Get Business Awards	22
Make Use of Free Advertising Opportunities	22
Create Stand-Out Business Cards	22
Host an Event and Give Out Freebies	23
Speak at Local Events	23
Partner Up with Local Businesses.....	23
Sponsor a Local Community Event	23
Use Direct Mail.....	23
Do Charity Work	24
Contribute a Prize to a Local Contest	24
Exhibit at an Event.....	24
Register For a Conference and Meet Like-Minded People.....	24

In a world of vast marketing budgets, newspaper ads and national T.V. spots, it can feel like a small business has very few options when it comes to advertising.

But the truth is, highly effective marketing *doesn't* have to be super expensive to be profitable. In fact, there are plenty of ways to put your offering in front of ready-to-buy consumers... And many of them are either **completely free** or **so effective** they immediately pay for themselves.

If that sounds like something that would benefit your business, read on - because you're about to discover 50+ ways to market as a small business, including one with an **industry average** ROI of 3,800% (or £38 for every £1 spent!)

Let's start by taking a look at the hottest way to promote right now: digital marketing.

Online Marketing



In the third quarter of 2016 alone, online ad revenues were a staggering £17.6 billion. That's a 20% increase from 2015, when a total of £59.6 billion was spent on digital ads... And it demonstrates just how important marketing on the internet is to all businesses, big *and* small.

The question is, can you market online with a small budget - or no budget at all? The answer is "yes", and below, you'll find some of the best ways to do just that.

Create Video Content & Promote It

64% of users are more likely to buy your product after watching a relevant video online. This means that making videos should be at the top of your priority list, especially with 87% of online marketers already using video content to promote their business!

And whilst most video marketers are heavily reliant on Youtube, something to really think about is now is the use of Facebook video to reach a wide audience.

The future of video? **Facebook.**

And after you watch this video, you'll understand why.

Just remember that your videos need to be seen to work and most companies FAIL miserably because they don't understand the basic concept of marketing.

So what is this basic concept?

To *give*, **without** asking for return.

Sorry to break the news, but no-one actually cares about you OR your business.

And please don't take that the wrong way, because once you master this concept you will start to see RESULTS.

It's that 'ah-ahh' moment you've been looking for.

People are BUSY so they don't want to be reading or watching 'salesy' content, they want FREE information and advice on how to achieve their end-goal. So give them what they want.

Youtube & Facebook are two FREE channels you can utilise to get your message out to your target audience, by sharing and promoting content that attracts their attention.

So once you know what typical troubles your audience is facing, you can answer these questions thoroughly to build **trust** and **authority**.

And guess what? Once they need your product or service - guess who'll they'll be coming to?

There's no reason not to use videos, regardless of your budget.

And even better, you can get lots of free traffic to your Youtube videos from Google if you learn a few basic SEO concepts from [a guide like this one](#) - so what are you waiting for?

Write & Promote Blog Content

'Content is King' right? Yes, but promotion is queen.

It doesn't matter how great your articles and blog posts are if nobody's reading them. This means you need to actively promote your blog content using organic channels as well as paid ads. So long as you learn to get a positive ROI on your ad spend, your marketing will pay for itself, so never hesitate to invest in promoting your blog.

Not sure where to start? We understand you may not be a wiz when it comes down to running promotions, so here are 17 advanced methods for promoting your new piece of content.

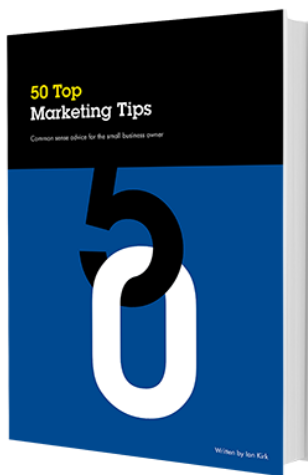
Write and Publish an E-Book

An e-book is a smart way to create authority while providing value to your followers. Whether free or paid, an e-book shows users you can help fulfil a need or solve a problem, guiding them further along the buying process and giving you sales and new customers.

You can get a professional [e-book created from just £3.98 on Fiverr](#) as long as you have the content ready.

If not, you can [hire a copywriter](#) to take care of that for you.

Here's one we created on the top 50 marketing tips.



To most, creating an e-book seems like a LOT of work, but in reality, when you get affordable freelancers involved it becomes a breeze.

If you're not sure what type of content should be in an e-book, then you should [download our free copy here](#).

Create Infographics

Blog posts with images [produce 650 percent more engagement](#) than text-only ones. Using infographics helps you take advantage of this effect while getting your marketing message across in a persuasive manner. Infographics may have been expensive in the past but with online services like Fiverr you can [hire a professional designer](#) to create you an infographic for an affordable cost.

But don't just look for the cheapest price, make sure you check out their services reviews and examples, if any.

Once you've created your infographic, you can get some free exposure by publishing to these [TOP 70 infographic submission sites](#).

Leverage Google AdWords

The click-through rate for the first Google ad on a user's screen is staggering: 19.3% for desktop computers and 27.7% for mobile devices. That's extremely effective marketing, and with [£50 vouchers available for all new sign-ups in the U.K.](#), there's no reason not to take advantage of it.

Google Adwords may seem extremely complicated for newbie marketers, but Google specialists are there to give you a helping hand setting up your accounts and targeting the right keywords.

If you're still not sure, take a look at this [step-by-step guide to Google Adwords](#) (made simple).

Get Listed in Google Places

Google [makes it easy to list your business](#) on their search engine for free. With [20% of the search engine's queries being for local information](#), that presents a huge opportunity for you to get free marketing.

But what exactly do we mean by Google places?

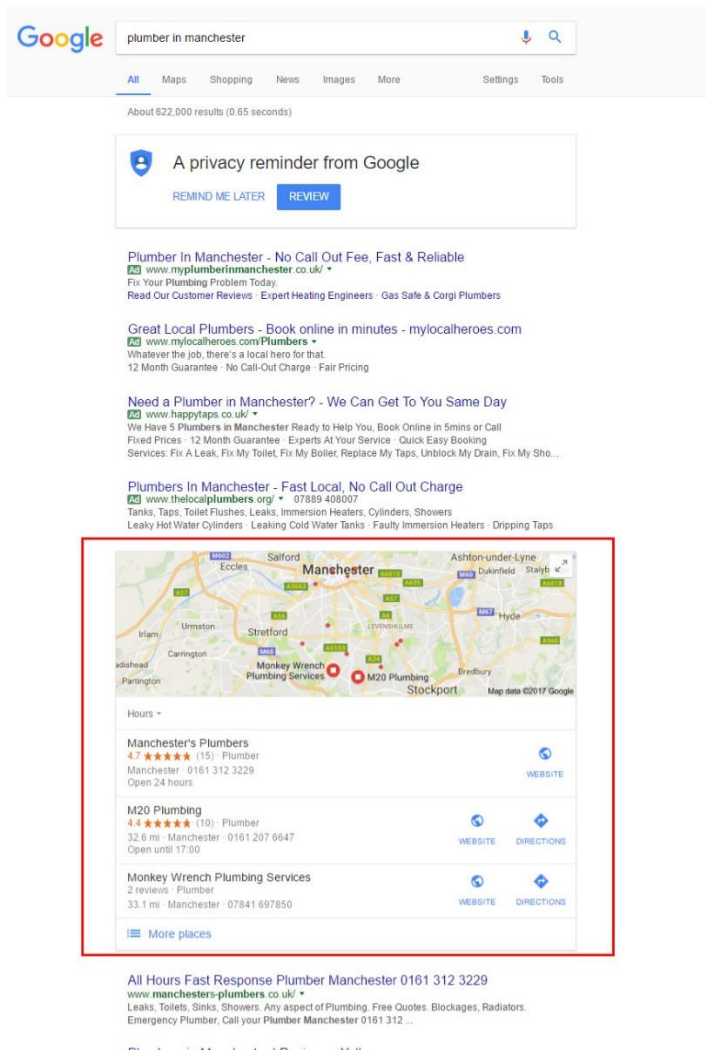
We're talking about the 'Maps' section just below the Google ads.

These are FREE listings which you can take advantage of to get more visibility from a local audience.

If you have a physical brick-and-mortar store or offices, then you can get your business registered with Google local.

Let's say you're a plumber located in Manchester, potential customers are searching for you so it's important that your business is listed.

Here's an example..



Start a Local SEO campaign

After doing a local search, 50% of mobile users and 34% of computer users visit a store the very same day. Making sure you're on the first page of Google and other search engines maximises the chances that your store or business is where those potential customers end up.

But, not all businesses require local SEO.

If you're an 'online-only' business, then local SEO isn't going to do you any favours.

Why?

Because local SEO is carried-out to reach more local customers who are looking for a LOCAL business.

But if your business is reliant on local-footfall, then local SEO can be a gold-mine.

However, getting listed in Google places may not get you the business you expect, especially if you're in a competitive industry and you're competing against numerous other businesses.

Local SEO is a specialist service so there's no quick fixes for this, however, it doesn't have to cost the earth and you can hire an expert in this field to enhance your websites local visibility, drive more foot-fall, improve sales or online enquiries.

Start a National SEO campaign

Up to 80% of users ignore paid ads, focusing on organic results instead. This means that getting to Google's top 3 on a national level can do wonders for your business, delivering an ROI that paid ads simply can't match.

National SEO campaigns undoubtedly will be more costly, but the ROI you can achieve from national SEO campaigns can be far more superior than local.

If you sell products to the whole of the UK (or worldwide) then you'll need to speak to an expert to achieve you the desired results you're looking for.

Google's algorithms are smart and they're very good at spotting cheaters, so there's no quick wins to an SEO campaign.

Google actually looks at more than 200 different ranking factors before ranking websites accordingly.

Answer Questions on Quora

Quora is a questions and answers platform that has over 700,000+ monthly visitors. Answering other peoples questions helps position yourself as an authority and demonstrate your business can solve needs and pain points.

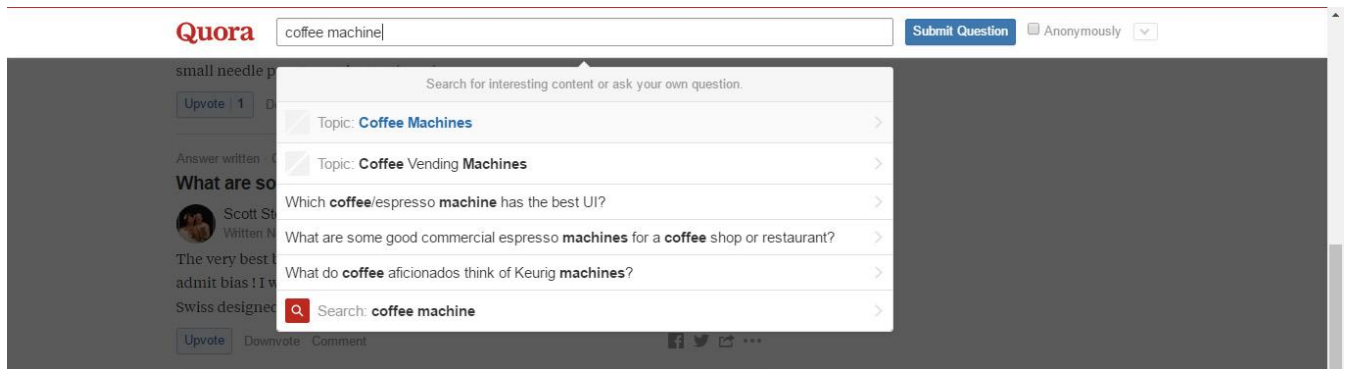
Set yourself up an account, start engaging with the community and search for keywords that are related to your business.

Assuming you're industry knowledge is up to scratch (which it should be)! Then there's no reasons why you shouldn't be a part of this community.

Providing long-form, actionable advice to people seeking advice on this platform can get you some serious results.

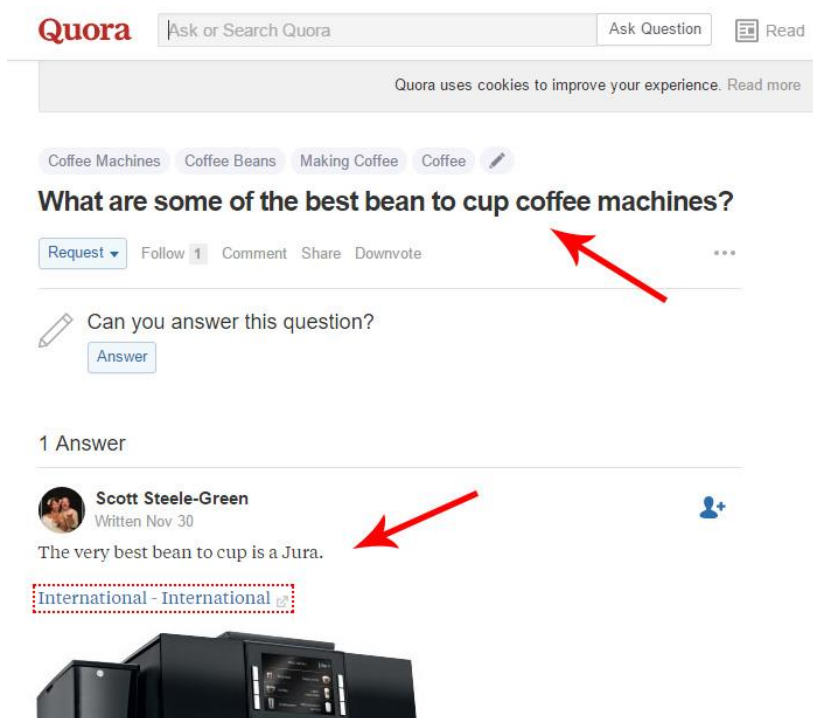
Let's say you run a coffee business selling coffee machines, so your target audience would be coffee shop owners.

By searching for "coffee machine" within Quora, you'll be provided with a list of related questions that require answers.



Then, take a look through the results and choose a suitable question to provide an answer to.

For example...



Do you see how easy it is to find potential customers from a simple Quora search?

Just make sure you don't use this as an opportunity to present a sales pitch! Provide helpful advice with a link back to your store for further information will do the trick.

Plan a Webinar or Workshop

61% of B2B marketers rate webinars [as the best content marketing strategy](#) and you can do a successful webinar by following these [10 exact steps](#). As an alternative, consider workshops which can also deliver an incredible ROI, but the takeaway is that both tools will help you drive sales and new clients effectively.

So how exactly do you plan and host a webinar? Watch this video to find out how.

Make a Concerted Effort to Get Online Reviews

According to Forbes magazine, [88% of consumers trust online reviews](#) as much as they would a personal recommendation. This means that making a consistent, planned effort to get reviews is almost as good as having raving fans promote your business to their friends!

Engage in Relevant Forums and Online Communities

Being visible in online communities - from old-school message boards to new-wave subReddit channels - is a way to reach more people while building your authority. As with Quora, make sure to offer value to users. That way, they'll know your business is qualified to fulfil their needs and wants.

To find some suitable forums to join and engage in conversations, head over to Google and search "keyword + forum".

So if you work in the music industry, you'd search for "music forum".

Then, create profiles, start engaging in some Q&As to build up trust and credibility with your audience before inserting any promotional links back to your site.

Sign up to HARO to get PR requests

[HARO](#), or "Help a Reporter Out", is where journalists go to look for information. If you take the opportunity to help one out, you'll get free publicity and a chance to say that you were featured in their publication as an expert. Best of all, HARO is completely free!

So what do you get as part of the free program?

Well, journalists send requests when they're looking for specific insights or news stories, and these requests go straight to your inbox.

If you think the requests are relevant to your business and you can provide some good answers, then you'll be on your way to some free publicity.

Create a Press Release and Submit to Journalists

A press release lets people know about your business and builds your online presence at the same time. A small business shouldn't expect to make it to the front page of the Sunday Times, but you can certainly get featured in local news with a little effort.

So, if you have anything newsworthy going on in your business, then you should make some noise about it.

Start by [downloading this free press release template](#), write up your newsworthy content and start submitting it to journalists.

But not just any old journalist, you have to do your research to find the most relevant news outlets and blogs, then search for the journalists contact information. Here's a [guide to help you find the right journalists](#).

Tip: Make sure your headline captures their attention - not only within the press release but also the email subject line.

Journalists are super busy people and you don't want your email sent straight to the trash after all that effort, right?

Comment on other blogs

Did you know you can drive FREE targeted traffic with blog commenting?

Commenting on niche-relevant blogs allows you to get noticed by businesses and consumers you'd never reach otherwise.

Even better, valuable comments will get noticed by bloggers, leading to new relationships and further marketing opportunities down the line.

Pro tip: Sign up to Google Alerts to receive notifications each time a blog goes live that contains targeted keywords that are related to your business.

For example, if you run an online store selling fashion for men, you'd set-up an alert to email you on a daily/weekly basis with a list of the best & most recently published articles on the subject of "mens fashion".

Alerts
Monitor the web for interesting new content

mens fashion

How often: At most once a day

Sources: Blogs

Language: English

Region: Any Region

How many: Only the best results

Enter email [] Create Alert Hide options

Each time you find an opportunity to leave a comment on relevant blogs, make sure you include a link back to one of your articles, to entice people to click through to the article and learn more about a related subject.

Use Facebook Live

Facebook Video has a viewing audience of up to 1.71+ billion active monthly users. With Facebook Live videos being watched 3x longer than regular ones, using the platform to stream gives you unprecedented access to that user base and all the potential customers in it.



Think outside the box when it comes to streaming a live video, you don't want to bore your audience as you will lose followers.

Remember, when you go live, all your fans will get an instant notification and when they like, comment or share it out, the live broadcast will then become visible to their friends, creating a viral marketing effect.

Consider giving your fans a behind-the-scenes look of your business, or give your fans a sneak peek of new products that are about to be released. Here's [6 more examples](#) to get you started.

Run Online Contests

Giving your product away for free while engaging users helps you grow your followers *and* get your product out there. If your product is digital, [services like KingSumo](#) make it easy to host contests and giveaways online, even if you aren't particularly tech savvy.

Whatever your prize, whether it's a physical or digital product, make sure it's enough to get people excited and get involved with the competition.

Leverage Affiliate Marketing

How much better would you do if 100,000 people learned about your business tonight? How about 200,000? 500,000?

These numbers may be astronomical to you now, but teaming up with an affiliate is a quick way to make this scenario a reality.

Some of the large affiliate publisher networks charge a hefty set-up fee and monthly management fee to become a part of their program, however, some networks such as [VigLink](#) allow merchants to sign-up totally free of charge and you only pay each time a sale is generated.

This is performance-driven marketing, and I'm sure you like the sound of that?

If you have low-value products, then affiliates are going to need a hefty 20-30% to entice them to start advertising your products.

However, if you sell high-value goods, you should get away with a 5-10% commission depending on the value it presents to their audience.

Create an Online Customer Referral Program

Giving users storage space in exchange for referring their friends was [a major component in Dropbox becoming a 10-billion dollar behemoth](#). Granted, you may have your sights set a little lower, but the point is that online customer referrals are powerful... And with tools like [InviteBox](#) and [ReferralRock](#), even your small business can use them to its advantage.

Word-of-mouth is possibly the most effective form of marketing, and creating a customer program will incentivise your fans to share your products with their friends and family to earn money off their next order.

This way, everyone's a winner!

Submit a Guest Article

Danny Iny wrote 80+ guest posts in the space of a month, and grew his local business's website from 0 to 23,000 monthly views **without paying a penny**. You may not be as prolific of a writer, but consistently writing for other people will still help you get oodles of free, relevant traffic.

If you're struggling to get traffic to your website, then guest posting can be a fantastic way to drive targeted traffic and conversions to your site.

But first, you'll need to prove you're already writing thought-leading content on your own blog, otherwise, if you don't have any samples, the editors are just going to ignore your request.

Once you have 3-4 good samples to share, start getting a list of credible and authoritative blogs together who accept guest posts.

If you're not sure where to find these blogs, here are [15 smart ways to find guest posting opportunities](#).

Repurpose content

Don't have time to write your own content? Don't fear; instead, make a blog post or video that lists, discusses or even simply shares valuable content someone else made. Alternatively, highlight your own content from the past.

This way, you can stick to your editorial schedule and reap the benefits of quality content without having to make it from scratch.

For example, [Sun Jones](#) had an excellent article on 'branding statistics' which includes a list of [facts and statistics about branding](#) and the value it presents in today's marketplace.

But rather than sitting around and waiting for traffic to hit, they went a step further and repurposed this content into an infographic which other sites could easily embed.

The results? 10+ links, more brand awareness and improved search rankings.

Pay for a Sponsored Blog Post

Getting a sponsored post featured in a relevant blog lets you reach lots of consumers interested in your niche. The best part is, you don't have to hard-sell your product; so long as you pick the right blog, your marketing effort will reach plenty of people inherently interested in what you're selling.

Once you've successfully reached and engaged an online user, it's best to get them on your e-mail list so you can market to them again and again for free. Read on to find out *why* you should be using e-mail marketing - and *how* you can do so effectively with a small-business budget.

E-mail Marketing



On average, every £1 spent on e-mail marketing brings back £38 (!!!)... And that's not a typo. Needless to say, if you're not taking full advantage of this marketing strategy, you should consider one or all of the following.

Create an Incentive for People to Join Your Mailing List

Giving consumers something in return for their e-mail address is the first step to successful e-mail marketing. If you can't message them, you can't sell to them - so start by creating an "ethical bribe", or lead magnet, that makes people want to join your list.

But what exactly is a lead magnet?

A lead magnet is a free offer you give to your audience in exchange for their contact information.

Once they leave their contact information, this can then feed into your email newsletter database and/or CRM.

Remember our e-book offer we talked about before? This is one example of a FREE offer which can be used as an incentive to collect more leads.

Add an Opt-In Box to Your Website

Once you've got something to give people in exchange for their e-mail, add opt-in boxes to your blog and/or website. The more people see of your free offer, the likelier they'll be to sign up for it, so make sure to add these sign-up forms to multiple pages!

Create E-Mail Workflows

According to Business Insider's interview with Dr. Jeffrey Lant, you need to reach an average consumer 7 times before they take buying action. The simplest way to do this is with an automated e-mail workflow, also known as an "e-mail series".

Use a platform like [GetResponse](#) or [MailChimp](#) to make sure each new sign-up gets the entire workflow, and watch new sales and customers roll in like the morning tide.

Email marketing is possibly the most effective form of marketing and conversion rates nearly always tend to outperform any other marketing channels.

Why?

Because your email subscribers are opted-in, so they already know who you are and they've shown a keen interest in your product/service offering, this means the likelihood of these people buying from you is much higher.

The importance of building an e-mail workflow is explained in this video, demonstrating the communication strategy YOU should be using to capture potential leads and nurse them through the conversion funnel into loyal customers.

It's truly a game-changer, so don't miss it.

Send a Weekly Newsletter

Once your automated workflow is over, you still want to keep your e-mail list engaged and responsive. The best way to do this is with a weekly newsletter that tells users about your best offers, new products and special deals.

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One particularly smart thing you can do to maximize your e-mail lists traction is synchronize your e-mail marketing with your social media marketing - which we'll show you how to do in the section below.

Social Media Marketing



The internet has 3.17 billion users. 72.6% of them are active on social networks. This means that social media marketing is no longer a fad, but rather a must-have that you can't afford to ignore as a small business. Here's how you can use it effectively and profitably.

LinkedIn Advertising

LinkedIn caters to careerists and entrepreneurs: two audiences you can count on to have money. The social network is big, too, with 1 in 4 of all adult internet users - and 46% of all college graduates - being on there.

If you're a B2B company, there's no better place to advertise than LinkedIn.

LinkedIn also released Sales Navigator has a secret sauce - the Lead-Builder tool.

This enables you build a prospect list based on criteria associated with your target audience.

Once you've build list of prospects, you can then use AnyGrowth email tool to import your leads contact information and send out personalised (automated) emails.

However, you should only use this as an opportunity to send out something of interest to your leads, and nothing salesy.

Please refer to a previous post about the [growth secret to LinkedIn Sales navigator](#) in-case you want to find out more about this process.

Join & Engage in LinkedIn and Facebook Groups

Another way to tap into the power of Facebook and LinkedIn is by being active in groups and pages on both social networks. If you offer value consistently, people will take notice and some will give your business a try. Pretty nifty for a free marketing strategy.

Join & Engage in Google+ Communities

Despite the negative stereotypes surrounding Google+, the platform has over 300 million active users of which 13% are small businesses. Engaging with user communities through the platform is another arrow in your quiver of free marketing tools. Do not underestimate it - especially since you can triple-post the same valuable content to LinkedIn, Facebook and Google+ communities.

Social Bookmark Your Content

Social bookmarking is essentially sharing your content on websites like Reddit, Digg and Twitter. With Reddit alone having 234 million unique visitors each month, there are plenty of users likely to engage with your articles and videos. Make sure to put your content in front of them; it's free, and on the off-chance something ends up going viral, you'll be glad you did.

Once you have published your content, start publishing to these top 30 social bookmarking sites.

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At this point, you may be wondering when we're going to get to regular, real-life marketing tactics. If that's the case, you'll love the section below, because it's all about brick & mortar tactics!

Generic Marketing



Needless to say, real-life marketing is still key, especially if your business serves the local community. The key is doing so in a fresh way that resonates with potential customers and turns you a profit. Here are 18 ways to do just that.

Network Locally

Getting to know other business people in your area can lead to free client referrals, productive partnerships, valuable business knowledge and better representation with local government. In the U.K., you can [find a local BNI meeting](#) or [Chamber of Commerce](#) online to start networking without having to go anywhere!

See related: [The 4 best networking groups for small business](#)

Create a Customer Loyalty Program

Depending on their age, 41-74% of consumers surveyed said they're encouraged to spend with a business that has a loyalty program. This means that the expense of offering loyalty bonuses and discounts should be more than offset by improved sales and returning customers.

Creating a successful loyalty program comes down to three important factors.

1. Set a goal for customers to achieve.
2. Decide what action they will take to progress.
3. Pitch an early advancement in the program as a bonus.

Turning any customer into a loyal brand advocate will help to ensure they [spend at least 3x more per order](#), without spending a dime on marketing.

Industry Partnerships

Working with businesses in your industry may seem counterintuitive. However, so long as you don't compete with each other, a partner can refer you to new customers, help you save money with joint marketing efforts and share valuable data that improves your advertising ROI.

Billboard Advertising

The stereotype is that billboards are expensive. This is often, though not always, true. However, remember that marketing efforts should have a positive ROI and pay for themselves. Use a [small business-friendly guide to billboards](#), and there's no reason this won't be the case for you.

Just like any other form of marketing, it's important to consider your audience demographics and behaviours before investing in advertising, and also [with billboards, the location plays a key role](#).

Survey Your Customers

Great **marketing** starts with knowing your **market**. This is how you create a perfect fit between consumers' needs and wants and your product. Even better, in 2017, there are plenty of ways to survey folks for free, like [Google Forms](#) and [SurveyMonkey](#).

Surveying both your existing customers and your target audience can provide you with that invaluable information you need to make smart marketing decisions.

Ask Customers for Referrals

[74% of consumers say that word-of-mouth](#) is key to their purchasing decisions. This means it's worth your while to ask customers for referrals - and possibly reward anyone who brings a new client to your business.

Get Business Awards

Getting a business award, especially a local one, doesn't have to be hard. Hundreds of them are up for grabs in Britain alone each year, and having a few plaques and trophies on your proverbial wall will do wonders for how potential customers perceive you.

Winning business awards can provide you with a platform to raise your profile via the media, and also build instant trust with your target audience, which will result in more conversions.

Make Use of Free Advertising Opportunities

From branding your vehicle to always having business cards with you to carrying useful freebies for potential clients, there's a myriad ways to advertise for free. All that's required is a little foresight and planning.

Create Stand-Out Business Cards

Speaking of business cards... They're often the only thing a potential client has to remember you by. They represent your business once you're gone, so make sure they're high-quality and niche-relevant. Your customers *will* notice.

Have you thought about rounded business cards before? Moo provide many different shapes and styles to help you make a superb first impression with your connections.

Just take a look at these Yoga Trainer business cards for example - this is creativity taken to a whole new level.



Advertising Agency: Marked for Trade

Host an Event and Give Out Freebies

A live event is a great way to draw attention to your marketing message and reach influencers and media members. At the event, give out freebies - branded if possible - to demonstrate value and make sure people remember your business once they leave.

Speak at Local Events

Interacting with the local community is a mostly-free strategy that raises awareness and gives you an opportunity to present yourself in a positive light. You may not make any immediate sales, but you will likely engage potential customers that *do* end up buying from you over time.

Partner Up with Local Businesses

Find businesses whose products complement yours, e.g. a car wash for a car dealership. You can pass leads between each other and even have a joint customer loyalty program that encourages consumers to bring more business to you and your partners.

Start by writing down a list of potential partners, these can be existing connections or you can begin to build new relationships by engaging with potential partners via social media before pitching the concept.

Sponsor a Local Community Event

Large businesses know the marketing value of sponsoring big sporting and entertainment events. You can do the same on a local level, drawing attention to your business and generating goodwill that leads to new business in your area.

Use Direct Mail

Here's a little-known fact: in the early 20th century, Pepsodent taught the whole Western world to use toothbrushes daily with clever direct-mail marketing. A hundred years have passed since then, but 70% of respondents are still curious to see what's in their mailbox... So why not put your marketing message in there?

Do Charity Work

Many small business owners believe that charity is for larger, richer businesses. This doesn't have to be the case; for example, you can reach out to your customers and the local community with a food or clothing drive that costs you virtually nothing. All you need to generate goodwill and visibility through charity work is a little time.

If you're struggling for testimonials then providing free services or goods to a charity can give you that all-important endorsement you've been looking for.

Also, you should show off the work you've done for charities on your website to present your values, make sure that you clearly show the community you care about giving, not just taking.

Contribute a Prize to a Local Contest

Giving a prize to a competition in your area accomplishes two goals. First, the winner will generate word-of-mouth promotion so long as your product is good. Second, the feature gives you free publicity.

Here are a few ways to [find local contests and sweepstakes](#) you can take part in.

Exhibit at an Event

Being at a trade show puts you in front of consumers inherently interested in your product niche, giving you an opportunity to acquire hot, ready-to-buy leads. It's also an opportunity to meet businesses you can partner up with to save money, exchange leads or run joint promotions with.

Register For a Conference and Meet Like-Minded People

Did you know that [75% of Google's mobile ad revenue comes from Apple devices](#)? The two companies may be competitors from a certain point of view, but that doesn't mean they can't make mountains of money together. The same applies to your business!

Going to a conference and meeting like minded people - yes, even the competition - will almost always result in new marketing and business opportunities.

As a business owner, it's important for you to identify which of these are most relevant to your business - so you need to consider your objectives, target audience, positioning, and messaging before you can maximise potential returns from any of these channels.

Opportunity Marketing is the fastest growing SME Marketing Consultancy in the UK.

All of Opportunity Marketing's consultants are fully qualified marketing specialists with a minimum of 5 years marketing management experience who love helping SME businesses fulfil their potential.



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