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BARE-KNUCKLE

MARKETING STRATEGIES

GENERATE BUZZ, LEADS AND PROFITS **QUICKLY** WITH THESE
FREE OR LOW-COST MARKETING TOOLS AND IDEAS



INTRODUCTION

With the constantly growing range of marketing techniques and technology available, **it's easy to get overwhelmed.**

Everyone wants to avoid getting lost in the jungle of different ideas and we are frequently asked for our most recommended strategies.

The truth is there is no one-size-fits-all answer. Some people prefer to jump on the latest tactical trends, and others swear by strategies that have been tried and tested over many years.

The one thing we know for sure: there is no shortage of marketing strategies and tactics that you could be using today to generate buzz, leads and profits for your business.

And you certainly don't need to spend a fortune to start attracting more customers.

[We created this guide to share some of our favorite bare-knuckle marketing strategies with actionable ideas that you can start implementing right now.](#)

And the best part of it is that they are all free or very low cost. So we hope you'll use some of them to start making more money today!

1 USE YOUR BUSINESS CARDS

Okay, we know this tactic has been around for ages but it's still one of the most powerful as long as you actually use it. For as little as 1 cent per card, you have a powerful marketing tool.

To get best results, make sure your business card is [easy to read](#) and includes all the ways people can contact you — not just your address and phone number but also your [blog](#), [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and [LinkedIn accounts](#) (We'll talk plenty more about all of these later).

2 MAKE YOUR BUSINESS CARD MORE CREATIVE

Perhaps you've already got a great business card — think about what you could do to make it more effective. Here are a couple of ideas:

- **Use both sides of the card** — put a compelling message about your business on the back, or include an invitation for people to contact you [for a special offer](#).
- **Choose an unusual shape, format or color to make it stand out.**

3 START NETWORKING

There are hundreds of networking opportunities in every major city in America — from Chambers of Commerce to simple clubs and groups.

All you need to do is perform a web search using “local networking events” and you'll find tons of opportunities.

But be sure to have a strategy before you go to your first event. We recommend targeting your efforts. In other words, make sure you go to events where the prospects you need to meet are most likely to hang out. Don't waste time at events that are off-track or you'll end up with a ton of dead-end leads. And we suggest you avoid getting hooked into any networking that requires a commitment yet provides poor results.

And here's the key that most people miss — [don't sell at networking events. Simply ask people what they do. Be interested in their business.](#) Ask lots of questions. If there's a fit, it will emerge. Of course that's when you'll want to trade business cards.



4 SPEAK AT EVENTS

Attending networking events is good but there's one way to get even more out of events — [become a speaker](#).

If you have a little bit of courage, there's no better way to get yourself in front of lots of prospects.

By doing this well, you could garner instant credibility as an expert in your field.

And you'll almost always come back to the office with a pocket full of business cards and leads.

5 USE THE TELEPHONE TO MAKE COLD CALLS

In these days of email and online networking, many businesses overlook one of the most powerful business tools out there — the telephone. Dollar-for-dollar it's one of the most effective marketing tools you own.

Although many of us admit we hate making — and receiving — cold calls, [when done right \(with respect, care, concern, sophistication and a desire to help others\) the cold call is without question, a very inexpensive and powerful marketing technique](#).

Don't let anyone tell you there's something wrong with engaging with your prospects in this way. It may be an old method but it still works.

6 IMPROVE YOUR TELEPHONE ANSWERING SKILLS

Is the person who answers your phones also your least-trained employee? If so, why?

And furthermore, does that person understand the value of an inbound lead?

If you put one of the most important parts of your business in the hands (or ears) of a “receptionist”, be sure to train them. [Give them pointers on politeness and empower them to do what is necessary to route a call to the right person](#). Especially if it's a new business call!

Also, teach them the importance of writing down names and phone numbers without any errors. One missed call could be a missed opportunity for a million dollar client.

7 ADD SOME “ONSERTS” TO YOUR OUTGOING MAIL

You’ve heard about inserts — what about onserts?

[These work because your best business and best referrals will come from your past customers.](#)

Onserts are offers placed directly ON your invoices. If you send out lots of invoices by direct mail or email, why not throw an offer on there?

Everyone MUST read their invoices right? So it’s the perfect opportunity to up-sell, re-sell or cross-sell your best, most targeted list of your past customers. This is also a great place to offer a customer service survey or an opportunity for your clients to refer your business and reap referral rewards.

8 USE YOUR WEBSITE FOR LEAD GENERATION

Your website should be your most effective marketing tool for lead generation and education.

At the very least, make sure your phone number is on every page of your site. But if you want to get the best results, be sure to add conversion opportunities such as:

- **Sign up form** (offering a newsletter, notifications of special offers, etc. in exchange for their email address)
- Opportunity to download **discount coupons**
- **Free report download**
- **Webinar invitation**
- **Way for prospects to email you with questions**
- **“Chat now”** button for online instant messaging



9 OPTIMIZE YOUR SITE FOR SEARCH ENGINES

If you need people to find your business easily — and the competition in your market is fierce — [you ought to invest in optimizing your website so Google and other search engines understand what you sell.](#)

By doing so, you will rank higher than your competitors. The goal is to be on the first page of any search engine results, right?

Big books have been written about the subject of search engine optimization (SEO). There used to be lots of tricks that worked on search algorithms, such as adding numerous back links and metatags. However, search engines have adapted, and no longer rate sites with excessive, useless links highly. [The BEST way to ensure a prominent search result ranking is to offer valuable content on your website, and update it regularly.](#) Search engines want to promote websites that offer users the information and answers they seek.

A blog is the ideal vehicle for offering visitors relevant and timely content — see #14 for more on adding a blog to your website.

10 ADD VIDEO TO YOUR WEBSITE

[Moving pictures and words are unbelievably powerful when combined together.](#) That's why television was the most powerful medium for so long.

Videos are easy to make these days. All you need to do is turn on your webcam or point your phone at yourself and talk for a minute or two. Let people know what you have to say. Plus, rich media, such as videos help your SEO ranking.

Don't like to be on camera? Upload a presentation of some PowerPoint slides to your website, blog or SlideShare (www.slideshare.com). It's fast, easy and a very compelling way to get your message across.

If you upload presentations to SlideShare, remember to try and drive traffic back to your website and social media pages by adding those links to your SlideShare profile.

11 UPLOAD YOUR VIDEO ON YOUTUBE

Once you see how easy it is to make a video, you'll be ready to upload it to YouTube.com. This means you can create your own promotional videos and TV commercials that people can view on their laptops and smart phones.

Whether you want to demonstrate your product or service or talk about how you can help humanity, it's free and very effective.

[Plus, if your information is interesting and valuable, people might spread it around making it viral.](#)

12 RUN A PAID SEARCH PAY-PER-CLICK CAMPAIGN

Google (and other display networks) make a fortune selling premium advertising space on the top and right-hand side of their search listings.

Business owners need to be careful. It's tricky. You can lose money quickly paying for clicks if you don't know what you're doing.

Paid search marketing requires a very well-designed web page that is built to convert clicks to leads, known as a landing page.

The clicks should be monitored closely in order to which key words provide the highest quantity of quality leads for your advertising dollars.

We recommend employing an approach that closely reviews the results of every single lead our clients get.

Look at whether the lead is a good one or a bad one. Examine how much revenue results from each sale — then back-track to see what keywords were originally used in the search bar by the consumer.

Test numerous keywords and keyword strings to see which get the most clicks with the greatest ROI. Also look at the placement of your ads. Why pay a premium to be at the top spot (the “vanity spot”) if the ROI is the same when your ad is found on the bottom of the right side of the page?

Once you have a whole bunch of this kind of data, bid more on the keywords, keyword strings and placements that deliver the most revenue.

Sound like too much work for you? If so, there are many firms that will manage your paid search campaign for you. That way you can run your business and let your marketing campaigns work behind the scenes.

13 DOMINATE YOUR LOCAL SEARCH

Local search maps are becoming an increasingly important part of the search engine results. Research shows that most people go online and do a search when looking for a local business.

A high percentage of these people end up buying from businesses that show up locally for the relevant keywords.

To ensure your business appears on local map searches, start by registering your business with Google maps. Go to www.google.com/local/add and follow the instructions.

For many businesses, this has the potential to be a huge source of revenue and it's worth taking a few minutes to make sure your business is on the map (literally).



14 GET YOURSELF A BLOG

Blogs are free. When tied to your website they offer a more engaging glimpse into your industry, philosophies and expertise.

A blog is one of the easiest and quickest ways to share new, fresh content with your followers. One advantage of blogging regularly is that Google and other search engines love websites that have frequently updated content.

At MarketSmart, we use our blog to help prospects and clients learn new ways to tie marketing and fundraising together to achieve greater ROI.

You can read our blog at <http://imarketsmart.com/smartideas/>. Feel free to post comments and engage with us.

In the next few tips, we'll share some ideas to help you get more out of your blog.

15 POST COMMENTS ON OTHER BLOGS

You can get noticed by interacting in the blogosphere with relevant, valuable comments. People will wonder who you are and follow you back to your website to engage.

However, blog subscribers are not impressed by spam. Make sure that your comments provide value and enhance the conversation or discussion.

16 LINK YOUR BLOG TO YOUR OTHER PROFILES

Make your blog the central point for all your other profiles such as LinkedIn, Facebook and Twitter. Be sure to update these other sites to keep people in touch with what you are doing and share your latest blog content.

17 GET INTO TECHNORATI

Technorati.com is a free blog distribution service. With a few fairly simple steps, you can get "indexed" by the Technorati search engine. That way people who are searching for information about topics you have already written about can find your blog and engage.

18 RUN SOME PODCASTS

If the idea of video seems too much for you, it's possible to get many of the same benefits using audio. You can record your own podcasts and post them on your blog and syndicate them through popular channels such as iTunes.

19 ENGAGE WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Let's look at how to harness one of the most exciting marketing opportunities today — social media.

The great thing is that it's free. And it's becoming ever more important.

In the next few tips, we'll look at social media in more detail, but here are some general tips on how you can engage with people using social media, and how to leverage that engagement.

First, you should fish where there are fish in the water. [Make sure you are engaging with your target audience, and focusing on social media platforms that your target audiences uses most frequently. Otherwise your time and efforts will be wasted.](#)

Then, give them what they want.

Here are some notable suggestions*:

- **49%** of those studied want **more printable coupons** from the brands with whom they engage
- **46%** want **notifications of sales and special deals**
- **35%** want **information about new products**

20 MAKE THE MOST OF LINKEDIN

For business, LinkedIn has quickly become everyone's online resume.

But it's much more than that. If you use it, you'll find it's actually [a very powerful new medium for evangelizing your business and your most precious brand — yourself!](#)

So, the first step is to go to www.Linkedin.com and set up a profile if you don't have one already. Next we'll share several tips on how to get the best results from using it.

21 COMPLETE YOUR PROFILE

An incomplete profile looks unprofessional. It makes you look disengaged. You spend a lot of time working on your career. But [if you don't fill out your profile, it could give people the impression that you aren't doing much at all.](#)

LinkedIn also offers the ability to highlight references and showcase past work projects. To really stand out and show your qualifications in the best light, try to get at least one reference for each past employer on your profile, and upload samples of your work.

*Statistics taken from ROI Research's June 2010 study of 3,000 social network users titled "S-Net: The impact of Social Media"



22 JOIN GROUPS AND CONNECT WITH PEOPLE

It's easy to join groups and it's a great way to connect with lots of people in your field.

Who knows? One of them could deliver that new lead you've been waiting for to grow your business.

Once you've engaged with people in your groups, seek to connect with them directly. But don't rush into this — no one likes the person on a mission to gather the highest number of useless LinkedIn connections.

Seek out people you could truly help — not just people who can help you. You have to give to receive.

23 ANSWER QUESTIONS

Now that you've joined groups relating to your business and industry, it's time to see what other group members are talking about.

If you can answer questions or contribute to discussions on LinkedIn, you'll gain a reputation as an expert in your field. That's good PR for you and your business!

But one note of caution: Only answer questions if you have a REALLY good answer. Don't rehash other people's answers or say "I agree with the previous answer!"

That's not helping anyone and could actually downgrade people's impression of you and your firm.

24 GENERATE LEADS

If you've got something really worthwhile to offer — such as a great, free report — you can use it to generate leads. You can post a link to your report on your company page, on group pages, and even through sponsored LinkedIn ads. When posting to group pages, make sure your report adds value to existing discussions, and that you write a blurb about why group members may find the report useful. Otherwise it will come across a spam!

Be sure to keep this report download behind a "gated" landing page that captures visitor information before offering the downloadable report.

By staying active in the LinkedIn community, you'll build awareness of yourself and your business in your core market.

25 BUILD YOUR REPUTATION WITH RECOMMENDATIONS

By giving positive, honest, informational recommendations on LinkedIn for people with whom you have done business, they will likely give you a positive recommendation too. You can have people recommend you (essentially a virtual reference) or specific products and services.

Nowadays, prospects may go to LinkedIn to learn about you, and your products/services, before they buy from you. If you have a dozen (or more) positive recommendations and your competitor has none... guess who your prospect will contact first?

26 USE LINKEDIN PAY-PER-CLICK ADVERTISING

You can create an ad, or even better, several ad variations, for your business that will be shown to LinkedIn members or groups you want to target. It only takes a few minutes and you pay only for the times people click on your ad — meaning impressions are free. This method does require you to open your wallet, but it's fast, easy, highly targeted, and you can start and stop it at any time.

27 MAKE USE OF THE YOUR CONNECTIONS' CONTACT INFORMATION

LinkedIn offers the ability to contact your connections, either on the website through InMail, or by email. The ultimate goal of LinkedIn is to build beneficial relationships with other professionals in your field. Once you've established a connection with someone on LinkedIn with whom you feel has the potential to build a mutually beneficial relationship, try to grow that relationship with InMail or email.

28 JOIN INDUSTRY AND ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

These groups offer a great opportunity to reconnect with old friends and find new connections.

People like to do business with those who have attended the same college or belong to the same industry association. There is comfort and trust among those who belong to the same organizations.

Join those groups and search for people you might know. Then connect.

29 PROMOTE YOUR RECENT WORK ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Share your status with interesting (make sure it truly is interesting) information about your business accomplishments, meetings with interesting people and awards. You can showcase your work on your LinkedIn profile and on industry websites, such as www.Behance.com. This is PR in the new age.



30 USE THE SEARCH FACILITY FOR PROSPECTING

Use LinkedIn's search feature to find people who might need what you sell. Search by company, industry and city. Search for groups and discussions relating to the challenges that your services help overcome. Or, better yet, search through your primary contacts' networks to see who they know. Then ask them for an introduction via LinkedIn.

31 FIND INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS

LinkedIn offers the ability to search by groups and companies, but most interestingly, by influencers. LinkedIn has done the hard work of identifying credible sources of content relevant to you, your business and your industry. Spend some time perusing the influencer posts and channels hunting for great content to share. Then, add your own take away, opinion or context.

If you really want to leverage the power of LinkedIn, share the content you've gathered and your own two cents with relevant groups, and see if you can engage other group members in discussions.

32 RESEARCH YOUR PROSPECTS

You can learn a great deal about a person on LinkedIn.

***FOR EXAMPLE:** wouldn't it be great if you had a meeting with someone and found out that she graduated from the same university as you two years prior? Instant bonding and rapport, right?*

You can ask questions to get a feel for what prospective clients want, need or think about a product or service.

Of course this is no replacement for traditional quantitative research, but you can certainly garner a general "feel" for the receptivity of your offerings and ideas from among those in your network.

33 RESEARCH YOUR COMPETITION

Suppose you are competing for a big project and you get wind of the names of your competitors. Use LinkedIn to research them and their potential weaknesses. Then, [craft a strategy to sell your competition on the benefits exclusive to your products and/or services.](#)

34 MAKE OFFERS

Our final tip for using LinkedIn is to [post messages about your sales, special offers, packages, deals, seminars, webinars, free reports, white papers and more on your company page.](#)

If you're looking to gain more followers, and don't mind opening your wallet, you can pay LinkedIn to sponsor your company page updates. By doing so, your company page updates will appear in the homepage newsfeeds of highly targeted users.

35 GET ON FACEBOOK

Users typically log in to Facebook several times a day and it has become a more important method of communication than email for many.

The importance of Facebook as a community and for communication is expected to continue growing. The key to understanding Facebook is to recognize that it functions as a media vehicle for "word-of-mouth" discussions in the digital age.

Many of the points made about LinkedIn apply also to Facebook, but we have highlighted a few extra points that are specific to Facebook.



36 GET PERSONAL WITH YOUR PROFILE

The first way to get into Facebook is to establish a personal profile and start inviting your friends and contacts to connect with you.

You need to make a choice about whether you want to keep your Facebook profile totally personal — i.e. for family and real friends only — or whether you want to open your personal profile up to business contacts and customers.

37 SET UP A BUSINESS PAGE

In addition to your personal profile, you should set up a Facebook page for your business. You cannot use a personal profile to promote your business.

You can use your page as an information portal where people can find out more about your business and what you are up to.

You can publish articles, videos and virtually anything that people might want to know about your business.

You want to invite people to “Like” your page and you should find reasons to attract them back regularly — such as giveaways and contests.

38 ADD APPS

Facebook has a wide range of applications that can be added to profiles and pages to increase the opportunities for people to connect. New applications are being created almost daily. They range from games and utilities to productivity widgets and tools.

Look for apps that capture visitor information while providing value to fans.

39 GENERATE LEADS

While many people will choose to communicate with you directly on Facebook, you want to get as many as possible of your Facebook visitors to sign up to your email list so that you can contact them directly.

You can do this by offering incentives such as free reports, coupons, special offers and deals when they visit your page.

40 MAKE GOOD USE OF OTHER SOCIAL NETWORKS

Someone once told us that we needed to be on Twitter/Pinterest/imgur/Tumblr/Instagram/StumbleUpon or we'd be dead in business.

Well, three years later we're still in business — and growing fast. [Remember: fish where the fishing is good. Identify which social media platforms your target prospects use, and focus your time there.](#)

There are many industries where Twitter/Pinterest/imgur/Tumblr/Instagram/StumbleUpon are very powerful tools and highly appropriate for business and marketing. Ours isn't one of them, but yours might be.

FOR EXAMPLE: *we know of a Taco Truck that has built a following in its home city. They tweet where they are as they drive around the city and their faithful customers come running out from their cubicles in time to catch the truck as it arrives at the nearest stop.*

That's a pretty darn effective use of Twitter.

Next are a few tips for making the most of a Twitter account for business.

41 TWEET REGULARLY

A tweet is simply a post of less than 140 characters and can be a short interesting message — such as a motivational quote — or a link to an online resource that you have found useful.

Over time, your aim is to establish yourself as a respected source of information.

There is no point in setting up a Twitter account and then not tweeting (or setting up a profile on any other social media profile and then abandoning it, or leaving it inactive). Make sure you share information regularly — even sharing links to useful resources a few times a day establishes you in the routine and will encourage you to get more involved. Best practices recommend the 4-1-1 rule for Twitter, specifically. For every piece of content you share that promotes your business, products or services, retweet 1 comment and share 4 pieces of valuable content from others.

[The whole point of having a Twitter account is to build up a group of followers, and help share useful information and content. If you are not tweeting regularly then no one is going to follow you.](#)



42 FOLLOW YOUR IDEAL CUSTOMERS

The key to being an influential presence on Twitter is to build a list of followers. In order to do that, you need to start by following others. You will often find they follow you back.

Keep in mind that this is yet another situation where quality is more important than quantity. You could have 10,000 followers but there is no point if they don't fit in your target market.

It's far better to have 100 of your ideal customers or prospects following you than thousands of people who will never be interested in you or your business.

So start by identifying people that would be your ideal customers and follow them — one quick way to do that is to look at who is following your competitors or respected experts in your market and follow them.

43 USE INDUSTRY HASHTAGS

Real success on Twitter comes when you make contact with people, or organizations, you might otherwise not be able to reach.

You can do this by sending them a personal message, by re-tweeting one of their messages, or by joining “twitter parties” with a common, unifying hashtag. You can also search for industry thought leaders and influencers by seeing who is tweeting using industry hashtags.

You might be surprised at the kind of people you can make contact with on Twitter that would never respond if you contacted them in any other way.

44 USE SLIDESHARE

Slideshare.com is less well-known than Facebook or Twitter but *it's a neat, free tool for promoting your PowerPoint presentations and building your credibility.*

Plus, you can link your posts back to your website. So if someone stumbles on your Slideshare presentation and likes it, they may go to your website and engage with you by calling or seeking more information on your products or services.

There's also a widget for automatically promoting your Slideshare presentations through your LinkedIn account. This is a great way of enhancing the content in your LinkedIn account quickly and easily.

45 SEGMENT YOUR EMAIL LIST

Smart spam filters are making it more difficult to get your messages through to your prospects and clients. So now, more than ever, [it's important to make sure that your emails are truly helpful, targeted and informative.](#)

Don't anger your hard-earned database of prospects with information that is useless to them. If possible, [try and segment your list based on client preferences and interests.](#)

You can also program your emails using Marketing Automation by preplanning a series of messages that will go to a prospect based on a series of assumptions and desired reactions.

FOR EXAMPLE: *if you're selling home remodeling services, your first email could be about all your services. But based on where each respondent clicks when they visit your website (such as kitchen remodeling or painting or wallpapering), you could deliver automated emails that are entirely relevant to the respondents' individual needs.*

That way, a prospect interested in kitchen remodeling would subsequently get emails only on that subject. Also, the follow-up emails can be set up to deliver better and better offers over time.

This tactic requires a lot of preplanning and is sometimes only effective for large lists, but certainly worth looking into.

46 CREATE A GREAT EMAIL SIGNATURE

[Don't forget about your email signature, or the space at the end of the emails you send out.](#)

You can, of course, leave it empty. But we recommend you take advantage of the free space as a marketing opportunity.

[Add your logo for branding purposes. Then make it easy for people to contact you by including all of your contact information.](#)

Here's a list of some of the things you should consider including in your signature:

- **Name**
- **Title**
- **Company**
- **Phone numbers (all of them)**
- **LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and other social media links**

Also, it is best to include a link to your latest blog post, report, or content. People will click it if your post titles are interesting and engaging.



47 USE DIRECT MAIL

Although direct mail requires printing and postage, we have to include it in our list because it's still one of the most effective marketing media ever. [Don't discount the traditional methods, especially when trying to reach a more mature audience.](#)

Often it is best to combine direct mail with online marketing activities. Drive respondents online for more information — then give them opportunities that convert into leads through use of a landing page.

As with email marketing, you must send highly targeted, relevant offers and information to your prospects. Otherwise, it's just “junk mail”, and a lot of marketing dollars wasted on postage.

[If you use your data to send the right person the right offer, at the right time, direct mail will deliver an exponential return on your investment.](#)

48 CREATE SOME POSTCARDS IN BULK

While postcards are a form of direct mail, they are cheaper to produce and mail than full-blown direct mail packages or sales letters, and they are great for generating leads.

You can use them to drive traffic to your website or to a phone number to promote your offer. This is a highly effective way of building a list of prospects.

[Postcards are also a great way to stay in touch with your customers and prospects.](#) We suggest you create 3-5 key messages emphasizing your unique selling points, competitive advantages, and inviting the recipient to go online to learn more and to download a free report. Then design and print them all at once, dropping them in the mail every few weeks or so.

That will build awareness in a turnkey fashion. Create the plan once and just let it run all year long.

49 ADD RELEVANT PERSONALIZED URLs

Direct mail works best when it is relevant. So we recommend you send targeted messages to each person based on their preferences.

Say you have 612 people in your database who like red boats and 410 who like blue boats. Send the 612 an offer for a red boat — “Special Sale on RED Boats Ends in 7 Days!!” And of course, the other 410 should get a message for a blue boat.

We also suggest you ask your prospects to respond using a unique, personalized web page created for each individual target.

FOR EXAMPLE: “Special Sale on RED Boats Ends in 7 Days!!! Go to www.JohnDoe.redboatsale.com for Deep Discounts!”

You can use each prospect’s name as the anchor and some nifty technology to create 612 unique landing pages for each person who likes red boats and 410 unique landing pages for each person who likes blue boats.

That way, when they arrive at the page, their name will appear. But even better, the unique web pages will show them their favorite colored boat.

And best of all, you will be able to see who logged on (name, address, phone number) since the personalized urls will have been created from your original database.

That way you will be able to track each individual visitor, when they visited, where they clicked and what their interests are. For bigger ticket items, this is great information for your sales force so they can follow-up armed with information.

50 CREATE AND TEST OFFERS

Generally speaking, it’s easier to sell something if you come up with an outstanding offer.

But make sure you have a strategy. *The offer should be unquestionably relevant to the product or service you are ultimately trying to sell.*

We’ve seen many businesses offer a free meal or a generic gift card to get people interested in hearing about their product or service. By doing so, you’ll only get people who are interested in free meals or gift cards — not your products — so I would only try that if you own a restaurant or retail store!

Make sure your offer draws people in to ultimately buy what you sell.

Here are few offers to get your mind thinking:

- **Provide free samples**
- **Offer discounts**
- **Provide a free newsletter**
- **Give alerts for special deals**
- **Offer free reports, white papers or eBooks**
- **Affinity rewards points/programs**



51 DEVELOP REWARD PROGRAMS AND AFFINITY POINTS

You know you love your credit card points and frequent flier miles. And, you probably get excited when your card gets punched so much at the local coffee shop that you finally earn a free cup of coffee.

Rest assured, your clients feel the same way.

Developing a reward program or affinity point system is a great way to keep people excited about and engaged with your product or service. These strategies work. If they didn't, credit card companies wouldn't implement them so aggressively.

52 RUN SURVEYS – ASK WHAT CUSTOMERS THINK

It may seem like a very obvious step, but it's surprising how often businesses neglect to ask customers what they think.

If you ask your customers about their problems and desires, you'll be more able to give them what they really want.

Similarly, by asking non-customers their opinion on a product or service, you may gain valuable insight into their needs that will help you give them what they want in the future.

Even if the responses point to negative feelings about your products or services, you'll get a chance to change things. Go back to those respondents to let them know you listened and took their advice.

Then you can sell them on your new and improved offerings.

53 WRITE THANK YOU LETTERS

When was the last time you received a genuine, heartfelt, handwritten, truly engaging thank you letter? It's probably been a long time, right?

MarketSmart worked with a charity to show them how to get a 14% response rate from direct mail by sending thank you letters to every donor immediately after the organization received a donation.

In that note, they say “thank you” of course. But they also show the donor how well they administer the donations they receive. And, they ask for yet another donation.

By doing so, their return on investment for the initiative continues to remain at over 1,000%.

Everyone thinks about sending thank you notes but most people (and businesses) never get around to it.

54 ASK

A wise man (my dad) once said, “If you don't ask, you don't get.” No one hands you anything in this world. And too often we try to be humble or patient. But we can't forget to ask for the order.

Depending on how you do it, you could ask for it early and frequently as long as you keep your antennae up to make sure you are not upsetting your prospect.

Generally speaking, you can't go wrong if you ask for the order with respect, compassion, caring, dignity and class.

55 ASK FOR REFERRALS AT EVERY OPPORTUNITY

Just as we have to remember to ask for the order, we should never forget to ask for referrals from happy customers.

In fact, we recommend asking for referrals from any and all prospects that don't become clients.

Sometimes our business model doesn't align with a prospect's needs. However, if we both come to that conclusion, there shouldn't be any anger or frustration.

So, at this point (before parting ways), ask the prospect to consider who they know that could benefit from your services.

Very often prospects will provide a few names to call.

Again, if you don't ask, you don't get.



56 RUN A RETENTION CAMPAIGN

Retention marketing maintains and grows existing accounts. It's easier to grow organically than to find new business. But many of us put more effort into finding new customers than we do in to building existing relationships. That's a big mistake. Perhaps you've heard of the 80/20 rule, which states that 80% of your revenue comes from 20% of your clients.

If you have 1,000 customers who haven't come back to you for over a year, you could contact them all with an offer giving them an incentive to come back now.

Make sure you create a sequence of messages, and don't expect them all to sign up on the first mailing.

Of course sometimes people have turned away from you because they were dissatisfied for some reason. You should ask them for the opportunity to make things right. Give them a special deal if they agree to give you another try.

57 JOINT VENTURES AND PARTNERSHIPS

One of the best things you can do is find businesses that are complementary to yours and ask to partner with them!

FOR EXAMPLE: You could make a deal with another organization that says you will pay them a commission, or referral fee (typically 5-10% of the sale, depending on margins and your industry), for any prospects they send your way, who buy your product or service.

Following are some ways you can make the most of it.

58 SEEK OUT BUSINESSES THAT SERVE YOUR CUSTOMERS

There are likely to be other businesses out there that already have access to the customers you want.

FOR EXAMPLE: *if you're a realtor, make a list of businesses who want and need a constant flow of leads: lawyers, doctors, dentists, realtors, home remodeling services, carpet cleaners, pest control services, etc. See if they want to offer a special discount or incentive to people who have just purchased houses from you.*

Broker deals between them where there is a fit to generate leads.

59 RUN JOINT MAILINGS

Sometimes direct mail can seem prohibitively expensive. However, you can always partner with a non-competitor (or two or three) that offers a complementary or similar product/service to the same target market.

By splitting the cost of the mailing, all organizations get their messages out, but at a much-reduced cost.

60 GET ENDORSEMENTS

Endorsements from third party organizations are powerful. Do you remember the campaign that says that 9 out of 10 dentists recommend Crest toothpaste?

If you can get a well-known organization or source to endorse your product or service, do it. Fast!

61 RESPOND TO PROBLEMS QUICKLY

Yes it's true! Problems can actually be marketing opportunities.

We've heard that if a customer is angry but has the problem rectified, they are five times more likely to continue to use your product or service again because they KNOW you fix problems — and they'll be more loyal.



62 RESPOND TO PROBLEMS SHARED ON SOCIAL MEDIA

It's tempting to simply delete negative comments on your brand's Facebook page. If you cover up the problem, it goes away, right? *Wrong.*

Deleting negative comments is one of the biggest no-no's for businesses on social media. Instead, view this as an opportunity to demonstrate your company's outstanding customer service skills to all of your followers. [Nothing says "we value you as a client" like an organization publicly responding to a negative comment or complain.](#)

Still not convinced? Check out these stats*.

After a poor customer experience:

- *26% of consumers posted a negative comment on a social networking site.*
- *21% of those complaints DID get a response.*
- *46% of these who received responses were pleased.*
- *And, 22% of those pleased consumers actually posted a positive comment about the company or brand they had been blasting not long before.*

63 FOCUS ON YOUR BEST CUSTOMERS

One of our clients recently found that 91% of their most profitable revenue was generated from just 11% of their clients (That's not unusual).

Meanwhile, the other 89% of their clients were generating only 9% of their revenue (and usually with very slim margins).

So, they refocused their marketing to be sure they attract and find more buyers that look just like their top 11%.

When was the last time you took a look at where your business is really coming from? If it's been more than a year, get your CFO on the job quick.

[Tweaking your focus to concentrate on your top performing clients \(while dropping the weak performers\) could improve the efficiency of your business while increasing profitability by leaps and bounds.](#)

*Statistics taken from Oracle 2011 Customer Experience Impact Report

64 CREATE A MEMORABLE SLOGAN

Create a simple slogan that communicates what you do. Don't get too cute with this. Make it simple, and don't be too vague unless your brand is huge.

Coca-Cola can vaguely say, "Coke is it!" but a mid-sized insurance agency that specializes in a specific area of business can't get away with such an ambiguous concept.

Think about what you do and say it. But keep it simple. A few words work best.

65 GET SOME FREE PUBLICITY

Publicity is a great way to reach a lot of people with a limited budget. Following are some ways you can do that.

66 WRITE A REGULAR COLUMN

Whether it's in a newspaper, ezine or offline newsletter, this is a great way to establish yourself as an expert in your field. Also, consider doing guest blog posts for leading blogs in your industry.

67 ISSUE A PRESS RELEASE

Garnering good, free publicity for your business is much better than paying for advertising. And sending out press releases is part of that process.

The trick is to make sure your press release is newsworthy so it gets read. Everything depends on your target audience and the publication(s).

Editors pick up press releases if they think there is news for their readers. They do not care about you or your company.

Your press release must be framed to show them what's in it for their readers. Your press release should be written in a way that pitches a news story rather than a hard sell of your latest product.

So don't send out a press release when you paint your office but do issue one if you have a new product launch or you have strong views on a topical issue. And make sure to use the web to distribute your press releases. Don't rely on the traditional media to print your news. They won't. And most people aren't reading traditional media anyway.

Press release distribution requires a fair amount of technical know-how, and frequently a small monetary investment in order to get your information distributed widely on the web. If you don't know how to do it, seek out a competent professional who does.



68

CREATE A NEWSWORTHY EVENT

Setting up an interesting event has many benefits. As well as generating lots of publicity, it can bring in new customers and generate lots of “word of mouth” buzz.

Events that are linked to something happening in the news can be especially attractive — for example, holding a seminar about how to deal with a change in the law. If your attendees are active on social media, be sure to create a unique hashtag for your event to help with content sharing and networking.

69

PUBLISH AN ARTICLE

Articles can be anything from a short essay on a topic, to a feature article in a magazine, newspaper, or newsletter.

When your articles are published in printed publications, you can order reprints and send them to your contacts.

Articles published online can generate hits to your website and improve your search engine ranking.

70

START A NEWSLETTER

Newsletters are a great way to keep in touch with your customers, offer them special discounts and coupons, inform them of upcoming events, give them tips on making the most of your products/services and much more.

You can include case studies, success stories, testimonials, and pitches for other products and services. You should deliver your newsletter online, via email, but there’s a great deal to be said for supplementing your email newsletter with an old-fashioned hard copy newsletter.

In these days of email overload, people like to have something they can read over a cup of coffee at a cafe or on the bus. In the end, we find that doing both an email and a direct mail piece that complement each other is most successful.

71 HOST A WEBINAR

A webinar is essentially an online video that may or may not have elements of audience participation. You've probably attended one, or at least received invitations to webinars.

Webinars can be composed of content for strengthening relationships and building awareness, or they can involve a demonstration of your products and services. Generally, there is a moderator and a speaker or multiple speakers. Frequently, the audience will be able to submit questions online for the speaker to answer.

Webinars have many advantages over live events. They are easier to organize, cheaper to produce and appeal to a less flexible audience who may not have the ability to travel for an event.

You can also record your webinar so your prospects can watch it at a later date, which is particularly helpful in extending the life of the content and reaching busy prospects.

72 GATHER TESTIMONIALS

There are few more powerful statements about your business than a third-party testimonial.

People will feel much better about doing business with you if they can see details from previous satisfied customers. This is particularly true online.

On your website, video testimonials are the most powerful of all. If you don't have video, try to include audio or at least some photos. However, simple text testimonials are much better than having nothing at all.

One key point about testimonials is to make sure they are genuine and they sound "real".

The more information you can include about the person providing the testimonial the better — such as their Name, Title, Organization, City, State and Web address.



73 WRITE A BOOK

Technology now makes it easy to write your own book.

Ebooks, (which are essentially downloadable pdf documents) can be created for people to easily download from your website. [You could create a short book, just like this one, to help generate leads and build customer relationships.](#)

However, you can go even further. Print-on-Demand services mean you can even have your own printed book in a few days.

[Books are a great way to position yourself as the expert in your field.](#) There's something very special about sending your clients an autographed copy of your latest book. You gain credibility and they are more likely to want to do business with you.

74 GIVE AWAY PREMIUMS AND NOVELTIES

Put your message on T-shirts, hats, coffee mugs, pens and pencils, mouse pads — you name it.

The trick is to have a compelling image or slogan. A clever message or picture with a web address will get noticed and used more. We opted for a light-bulb shaped stress ball that reads “TAKE THE STRESS OUT OF MAJOR GIFT MARKETING”, since our latest product is a software solution designed to increase major gifts to non-profits (and because our logo is a light bulb).

Remember, don't put only your logo on novelties — include your phone number, website and slogan on ALL your business materials, products, trucks, etc.

75 LINK UP WITH A CHARITY OR OTHER GOOD CAUSE

Aligning your business with a charity or other non-profit organization can have many benefits. One is that it can give you many opportunities for free publicity.

Another is that you get the chance to organize events where you get the benefit of lots of word-of-mouth publicity. People will see your business in a positive light and this will make them more inclined to work with you.

[Often, being aligned with a charity is a great way to meet important contacts and it establishes you as a key person in your community.](#)

And of course, never forget that choosing a good cause will make you — and your staff — feel good about what you are doing.

76 BE PERSONAL

Aside from all the automated emails and social networking gimmicks, never forget that it's personal relationships that actually make the sale.

Below, MarketSmart's CEO describes how he adds a personal touch to networking:

"I look at business magazines to see who is winning awards for growing their business or doing good deeds. Then, before the award event, I write them a personal note offering "congratulations" and I state that I will be at the event too and hope to meet them there.

At the event, of course I look for that person and make sure to introduce myself. Then I follow-up with a phone call a few days later to see if perhaps we can do business.

This just recently paid off when a contact received my card, shook my hand at an event and called me the very next day. It turned out he needed our help."

For those who don't care to engage in such a intricate approach, you could send a simple email to your regular contacts with helpful links to interesting articles. But make sure it's a personal message — don't spam.

For special clients, a birthday card or a lunch invitation shows that they are important to you.

Be personal. It makes you "real". And we all want to work with caring, personable people (not robots).

77 DELIVER SUPERIOR CUSTOMER SERVICE

The greatest marketing secret of all is to give your customers great service — that's what they really want.

As long as you keep them happy, they will keep coming back and they'll tell others about you.

What more can you ask for?



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We're a donor-centric strategic marketing firm with digital innovation at our core. We understand that 80% of an organization's revenue comes from less than 20% of its donors or clients, so we fish where the big fish are. Our unique, trail-blazing technologies and marketing services help you raise more money from the crucial 20%, efficiently — delivering unparalleled results. Get more major gifts for today and more planned gifts for tomorrow.

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Take the guesswork out of marketing by using proven technology to rank, score, and automatically nurture leads with relevant, timely, personalized messages. You'll maximize your gift disclosures by spending your time with the most qualified and interested donor prospects, and letting Legacy Giftmaker+ take care of the rest.



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