

# Get Viral For Painless Marketing

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Summary: Permission and viral marketing promise simple and effective ways to market your business painlessly.

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When you run your own small business, you're often just too busy to market your business effectively. You may put off marketing altogether until your order book is almost empty.

The secret to avoiding disaster is to craft a realistic marketing plan: a plan which takes into account your time, your budget, and most important of all, your emotional makeup.

I hit upon this secret because for years I thought I was plain rotten at marketing. I wanted instant results, didn't get them,

and so avoided marketing altogether. You can imagine how successful that strategy was; I learned to love rice and baked beans.

Finally I made a deal with myself: I would create a new marketing plan, focusing solely on those marketing activities which I enjoyed, and which were easy to implement. If I felt an activity I didn't enjoy was vital, I'd outsource it. I decided to outsource telemarketing, for example, because I only have to think about making a cold call for my palms to sweat. I did a deal with a friend: she'd make cold calls for me, and in exchange I'd write news releases for her business.

If you'd rather do your own dentistry than market, investigate these two options: "permission marketing" and "viral marketing". Both these activities cost little, yet can get big results.

Permission marketing basically means that a customer has given a business permission to contact her with news about the business, special offers, and so on.

Permission marketing is easy to implement. In its simplest form, you send out an email newsletter to your customer database once a month. The newsletter contains news, helpful information and small adverts for your products and services. If someone has bought from you, they like what you have to offer and will buy from you again. A newsletter shouldn't take more than a couple of hours of your time once a month, and you should see a rise in sales almost immediately.

Permission marketing works online and offline. Viral marketing is more of an online marketing tool.

In viral marketing, the business creates a free product of some kind, which it hopes that its customers will send to others, with the business's marketing message intact.

Think in terms of something which you can offer free at your Web site. Information products are ideal. Consider electronic reports, ebooks, and e-courses. Alternatives include screensavers, free software, and images.

Just make sure that your business name and contact details are prominent, and then encourage your Web site visitors to share the items with others.

If you hate marketing, accept this fact about yourself. Then find painless ways to market.

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Veteran multi-published author and copywriter Angela Booth crafts

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