

How to Market Your e-Business on a Shoe String Budget

By Herman Drost

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Here are some of the most effective ways to promote your online business without spending a fortune and gaining great results.

To get the best out of these methods, you need to:

- Target your market - make sure you are "on target". Don't try to market to everyone.
- Promote consistently - start a daily, weekly and monthly regimen or promotion.
- Track your progress. Test out different ads. Keep a record of your marketing plans and which method is the most effective.

1. An Effective Web Site - I put this first, because even if you get thousands of visitors to your site, if it is not easy to navigate, doesn't look attractive and is not clear in its purpose, you will not have any sales or repeat visitors. Here is what you need:

- a. A heading that immediately catches the visitors attention
- b. A description or sales letter that states (in easy to understand words), what your site is about.
- c. Easy navigation - your visitors must be able to tour your site with ease
- d. Ask for your order or what action you want the visitor to take.
- e. Contact information - make it easy for people to contact you.

2. Search engines - If you wish to get listed, here are some very important things to do first:

- a. Have a title that states clearly the benefits of your site containing some of your keywords.
- b. Meta Tag "description" should describe exactly what your site is about, using your main keywords.

- c. Meta tag "keywords" all the keywords that someone may search on to find your site.
- d. First paragraph - should also contain a description leading into your site using more of your keywords in your sentences. Make sure you do not repeat the same keywords in all of your descriptions more than 5 times.
- e. Submit to the main search engines by hand (don't use automated software because all search engines have different requirements.)

3. Opt in Newsletter - capture names and email addresses on your web site for your newsletter to send out updates, tips, contests etc to your customers. Always offer something for free in return for their email address.

4. Writing articles - Write articles in your area of expertise, submit them to article announcement lists, ezine publishers in your niche market. Put the article on your web site, make your meta tags keyword rich with your article and submit to the search engines.

5. Classified Ads in AOL and Yahoo

- a. These are the best email classifieds on the Net. Create a catchy title for your ad. You can submit up to 10 ads. Create each ad with a different heading or submit to a different category listing.
- b. Use a follow up auto responder to create automatic follow up messages to your responses - one follow up is hardly ever enough for the Internet Marketer who is easily distracted or very busy with other things.
- c. Change your ad title every 24 hours, so that the ad stays at the top of the list.
- d. Track all your ads, to see how many hits they each get, then change the ad until you get a winner - then you can move onto paid advertising.

6. Free Ezine Ads - here's another way to test market your ads. Submit to ezines that accept free ads in return for signing up for their ezine. Here's an example:

- a. Subscribe to 21 ezines of your niche market - try to go for ones that publish weekly or biweekly.
- b. Track each ad you submit - some will take a while to publish your ad since they already may have back log of ads to be submitted.
- c. Once you have found those ezines that gave a good response, then you can use them again in the future.
- d. Your next step will be to advertise in low cost ezines.

7. Participating in Forum Discussions -

- a. Find a forum where your target market visits.
- b. Offer friendly advice (don't advertise), ask questions, provide helpful information, most of all have the attitude of helping others, not taking - this will give you better results and you make friends as well.
- c. Leave an email signature at the end of each message, giving your name, title of your business, web site address, email address. Visitors to the forum will know where to look, if they wish to find out more about you.

If you implement these methods on a consistent basis, you will definitely see an increase in traffic to your web site.

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