

# Promoting Your Online Business -a Checklist of Effective and

## Affordable Marketing Techniques(Part 1)

By Angela Wu

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The Internet's full of hyped-up promises of the 'ultimate' marketing secret that will singlehandedly skyrocket your business to instant success.

Naturally, this is ALL it is: hype. There's no single 'secret' that will magically transform a fledgling business into a powerful money-maker. Instead, every business owner is responsible for testing and refining various techniques until he or she has developed a solid, effective base that produces the desired results.

What works for one business may not work for another! Likewise, another business may have poor results with one method, while others experience great success. Here's a quick checklist of some of the more popular -- and completely free -- marketing techniques to help you build your online business (note: this is a 3-part series).

### PART 1: FREE ONLINE MARKETING TECHNIQUES

1. Build and use your own opt-in list of targeted and interested prospects. Offer a free newsletter that provides fresh, interesting, and relevant content. You'll receive feedback from your readers about what's important to them, and over time they'll come to know and trust you. Your products, services, and even recommendations will then be taken much more seriously because you've developed credibility with your readers.
2. Contribute to newsgroups or discussion boards. Establish

yourself as a helpful member of a community. Other members of the community who come to know and respect you will often refer you to others.

3. Niche directories or search engines. Find all the highly-targeted directories and SEs for your market, and then work to get listed. You'll be surprised at how many niche sites there are! Good places to start looking are <http://yahoo.com/> and <http://www.dmoz.com/> .
4. Build your link popularity. For example, you can trade links with other businesses in your market so that you can 'share' each other's traffic. Most of the major search engines take link popularity into consideration when ranking your site.
5. Endorsed mailings to other lists. Find the editor of a great newsletter, and offer your product or service to him for free in return for a review or an endorsed ad to his list. Endorsements from the editor can far outperform regular 'ads', since they come from someone they know and trust (the editor).
6. Testimonials. It's fine for you to say that your product or service is wonderful... but there's far more 'punch' when someone else says it! Testimonials show prospects that you have happy customers and helps them to make the decision to buy.
7. Use autoresponders to follow-up with your prospects. It has been proven time and time again that autoresponders can dramatically increase your profits! They're also great time-savers, saving you from following up with each prospect manually.
8. Ad swaps. You can get extra exposure for 'free' (no out-of-pocket expenses) by swapping ad space with another editor that caters to your audience. Plus it's a great way to put 'remnant' ad space to good use.
9. Join a webring. Link to other sites like yours and build an online 'community.'
10. Offer coupons or gift certificates to entice visitors to make a purchase \*now\*.
11. Make good use of referral marketing. Ask happy customers to refer prospects to you. Many people are so busy these days that they're willing to rely on a trusted friend or contact's advice -- it saves them the time necessary to do all the research themselves.
12. Write and distribute articles in your area of

expertise. This is a great credibility-builder!

People who appreciate what you have to say are much more likely to check out your business. Another 'bonus' is that articles are often archived on websites for visitors to refer to time and time again.

13. Become an 'expert'. If you like to write and have the time to do so, consider partnering with a high-traffic site within your niche market and offer to write a regular column or article. You establish credibility and get exposure; your partner site and their readers get great content.
14. Use a 'Recommend-It' or 'Refer-A-Friend' script. These scripts let visitors send your URL to friends.
15. Make it easy for others to link to your site. Consider adding a 'Link to Us' section where you provide the HTML that visitors can simply cut and paste to their own web pages. Again, this helps to build your link popularity (see point #4).
16. Hold contests. For example, every month you could give away one of your products to a lucky subscriber or customer.
17. Use a signature. Also known as 'sig files', a signature is a brief blurb about your business along with your URL and/or contact information. Put a signature on every piece of email you send out, as well as on any message board posts (if appropriate).
18. Give away a quality free eBook or report. eBooks and reports can be excellent viral marketing tools. You can even offer them as a 'premium' to other businesses within your niche, so that they can give it away to their own customers or subscribers. This is an effective way to build a network that will willingly promote your business for you! More on promoting free eBooks and how they can help you can be found in the article, '10 Quick Tips on How to Create, Distribute, and Profit from Free eBooks':  
<http://onlinebusinessbasics.com/articles/ebooktips.html>

Hopefully this has given you a few helpful ideas on how to market your online business. In the next installment of this series, you'll read about several marketing techniques that may cost you money, but that can be worth the investment many times over. The final installment is all about marketing your online business in the 'offline' world! Stay tuned.

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**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:**

Angela is the editor of Online Business Basics, a practical guide to building a business on a beginner's budget. It's a proven hit with beginners, for the down-to-earth style and loads of instantly useable tips! For details, visit

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