

7 Low-Cost Ideas for Promoting Your Business

By Joe Gracia

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You don't have to empty out your bank account to market and grow your business. Here are seven low-cost ideas to help you increase your sales:

1. WRITE ARTICLES

Newspapers and magazines are always looking for free, interesting stories and articles that would benefit their readers. You could write articles and submit them to publications for consideration.

Always include contact information at the end of your articles so that people will know how to contact you about your services or products.

2. OFFER TO BE A SPEAKER

Business and civic organizations are constantly on the lookout for people to speak at their meetings and get together. Make yourself available by offering to speak to these groups, for free, about your area of expertise. Pass out contact information to all attendees.

3. ASK FOR REFERRALS

Referrals are an excellent way to grow your business. Proactively ask for referrals from happy customers, business acquaintances, friends and family members.

4. START A WEB SITE

It's a great time to jump onto the information superhighway and start a Web site for your business. If you're on a budget, there are many books on the market that will help you design a Web site on your own.

While you're working on it, you can forego the paid Web hosting (this is when you rent space for your Website) and go with one of the free Web hosting services, such as <http://www.xoom.com>

Once you have a Web site, you can use endless free methods to get people to visit your site!

5. SEND PRESS RELEASES

Do you have something to offer that would be newsworthy? Perhaps, you're offering a free service to the public, or maybe you offered a service to an organization without charging a fee. Newspapers are always looking for interesting tidbits of information for their readers.

When you have something newsworthy, simply type up a press release and send it out to as many newspapers as possible. Be sure to always include contact information when you do so.

6. NETWORK

Every person knows at least 250 other people. And each of those 250 people, know another 250 people, and so on. This should give you an idea of how important it is to network. Tell everyone you know about your business, and always have business cards on hand to pass along.

7. TRY E-MAIL MARKETING

Rather than trying to reach people through the US Mail, you may consider reaching them by e-mail--which is practically free--just the cost of your monthly Internet Service Provider.

Just make sure you build an opt-in list. This means that the people on your list have agreed to allow you to send e-mail to them.

This form of marketing can be very cost effective. You can either send to 1,000 people at \$0.34 each using the US Mail, or for practically nothing when you use e-mail!

Visit Joe and Maria Gracia's Give to Get Marketing Web site for more marketing tips and real-world marketing examples.

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