

## **100+ Marketing Ideas**

Marketing is all about satisfying customer needs. The following represents a comprehensive list of marketing ideas; use it to help better understand customer needs and ways to satisfy those needs.

### **General Ideas**

- Never let a day pass without engaging in at least one marketing activity.
- Determine a percentage of gross income to spend annually on marketing.
- Set specific marketing goals every year; review and adjust quarterly.
- Maintain a tickler file of ideas for later use.
- Carry business cards with you (all day, every day).
- Create a personal nametag or pin with your company name and logo on it and wear it at high visibility meetings.

### **Target Market**

- Stay alert to trends that might impact your target market, product, or promotion strategy.
- Read market research studies about your profession, industry, product, target market groups, etc.
- Collect competitors' ads and literature; study them for information about strategy, product features, benefits, etc.
- Ask clients why they hired you and solicit suggestions for improvement.
- Ask former clients why they left you.
- Identify a new market.
- Join a list-serve (e-mail list) related to your profession.
- Subscribe to an Internet usenet newsgroup or a list-serve that serves your target market.

### **Product Development**

- Create a new service, technique, or product.
- Offer a simpler/cheaper/smaller version of your (or existing) product or service.
- Offer a fancier/more expensive/faster/bigger version of your (or existing) product or service.
- Update your services.

### **Education, Resources, and Information**

- Establish a marketing and public relations advisory and referral team composed of your colleagues and/or neighboring business owners; share ideas and referrals and discuss community issues. Meet quarterly for breakfast.
- Create a suggestion box for employees.
- Attend a marketing seminar.
- Read a marketing book.
- Subscribe to a marketing newsletter or other publication.
- Subscribe to a marketing list-serve on the Internet.
- Subscribe to a marketing usenet newsgroup on the Internet.
- Train your staff, clients, and colleagues to promote referrals.
- Hold a monthly marketing meeting with employees or associates to discuss strategy and status and solicit marketing ideas.
- Join an association or organization related to your profession.
- Get a marketing intern to take you on as a client; it will give the intern experience and you some free marketing help.
- Maintain a consultant card file for finding designers, writers, and other marketing professionals. Hire a marketing consultant to brainstorm with.
- Take a creative journey to another progressive city or county to observe and learn from marketing techniques used there.

### **Pricing and Payment**

- Analyze your fee structure; look for areas requiring modifications or adjustments. Establish a credit card payment option for clients.
- Give regular clients a discount.

- Learn to barter; offer discounts to members of certain clubs/professional groups/organizations in exchange for promotions in their publications.
- Give quick pay or cash discounts.
- Offer financing or installment plans.
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### **Marketing Communications**

- Publish a newsletter for customers and prospects (it doesn't have to be fancy or expensive). Develop a brochure of services.
- Include a postage-paid survey card with your brochures and other company literature. Include check-off boxes or other items that will involve the reader and provide valuable feedback to you.
- Remember, business cards aren't working for you if they're in the box. Pass them out! Give prospects two business cards and brochures - one to keep and one to pass along.
- Produce separate business cards/sales literature for each of your target market segments (e.g. government and commercial and/or business and consumer).
- Create a poster or calendar to give away to customers and prospects.
- Print a slogan and/or one-sentence description of your business on letterhead, fax cover sheets, and invoices. Develop a site on the World Wide Web.
- Create a signature file to be used for all your e-mail messages. It should contain contact details, including your Web site address and key information about your company that will make the reader want to contact you.
- Include testimonials from customers in your literature.
- Test a new mailing list. If it produces results, add it to your current direct mail lists or consider replacing a list that's not performing up to expectations.
- Rather than sending direct mail in plain white envelopes, use colored or oversized envelopes to pique recipients' curiosity.
- Announce free or special offers in your direct response pieces. (Direct responses may be direct mail, broadcast faxes, or e-mail messages.) Include the offer in the beginning of the message as well as on the outside of the envelope for direct mail.

### **Media Relations**

- Update your media list often so that press releases are sent to the right media outlet and person.
- Write a column for the local newspaper, local business journal, or trade publication.
- Publish an article and circulate reprints.
- Send timely and newsworthy press releases as often as needed.
- Publicize your 500th client of the year (or other notable milestone).
- Create an annual award and publicize it.
- Get public relations and media training or read up on it.
- Appear on a radio or TV talk show.
- Create your own TV program on your industry or your specialty. Market the show to your local cable station or public broadcasting station as a regular program, or see if you can air your show on an open access cable channel.
- Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or trade magazine.
- Take an editor to lunch.
- Get a publicity photo taken and enclose with press releases.
- Consistently review newspapers and magazines for possible PR opportunities.
- Submit tip articles to newsletters and newspapers.
- Conduct industry research and develop a press release or article to announce an important discovery in your field.
- Create a press kit and keep its contents current.

### **Customer Service and Customer Relations**

- Ask your clients to come back again.
- Return phone calls promptly.
- Set up a fax-on-demand or email system to easily respond to customer inquiries.
- Use an answering machine or voice mail system to catch after-hours phone calls. Include basic information in your outgoing messages such as business hours, location, etc.

- Record a memorable message or tip of the day on your outgoing answering machine or voice mail message.
- Ask clients what you can do to help them.
- Take clients out to a ball game, show, or another special event - just send them two tickets with a note. Hold a seminar at your office for clients and prospects.
- Send handwritten thank you notes.
- Send birthday cards and appropriate seasonal greetings.
- Photocopy interesting articles and send them to clients and prospects with a hand-written FYI note and your business card.
- Send a book of interest or other appropriate business gift to a client with a handwritten note.
- Create an area on your Web site specifically for your customers.
- Redecorate your office or location where you meet with your clients.

#### **Networking and Word of Mouth**

- Join a Chamber of Commerce or other organization.
- Join or organize a breakfast club with other professionals (not in your field) to discuss business and network referrals.
- Mail a brochure to members of organizations to which you belong.
- Serve on a city board or commission.
- Host a holiday party.
- Hold an open house.
- Send letters to attendees after you attend a conference.
- Join a community list-serve (e-mail list) on the Internet.

#### **Advertising**

- Advertise during peak seasons for your business.
- Get a memorable phone number, such as 1-800-WIDGETS.
- Obtain a memorable URL and email address and include them on all marketing materials.
- Provide Rolodex® cards or phone stickers preprinted with your business contact information.
- Promote your business jointly with other professionals via cooperative direct mail.
- Advertise in a specialty directory or in the Yellow Pages.
- Write an ad in another language to reach the non-English-speaking market. Place the ad in a publication that market reads, such as a Hispanic newspaper.
- Distribute advertising specialty products such as pens, mouse pads, or mugs.
- Mail bumps - photos, samples, and other innovative items to your prospect list. (A bump is simply anything that makes the mailing envelope bulge and makes the recipient curious about what's in the envelope!)
- Create a direct mail list of hot prospects.
- Consider non-traditional tactics such as bus backs, billboards, and popular Web sites.
- Project a message on the sidewalk in front of your place of business using a light directed through words etched in a glass window.
- Consider placing ads in your newspaper's classified section.
- Consider a vanity automobile tag with your company name.
- Create a friendly bumper sticker for your car.
- Code your ads and keep records of results.
- Improve your building signage and directional signs inside and out.
- Invest in a neon sign to make your office or storefront window visible at night.
- Create a new or improved company logo or recolor the traditional logo.
- Sponsor and promote a contest or sweepstakes.

#### **Special Events and Outreach**

- Get a booth at a fair/trade show attended by your target market.
- Sponsor or host a special event or open house at your business location in cooperation with a local non-profit organization, such as a women's business center. Describe how the organization helped you.
- Give a speech or volunteer for a career day at a high school.

- Teach a class or seminar at a local college or adult education center.
- Sponsor an Adopt-a-Road area in your community to keep roads litter-free. People that pass by the area will see your name on the sign announcing your sponsorship.
- Volunteer your time to a charity or non-profit organization.
- Donate your product or service to a charity auction.
- Appear on a panel at a professional seminar.
- Write a How To pamphlet or article for publishing.
- Produce and distribute an educational CD-ROM or audio/video tape.
- Publish a book.

#### **Sales Ideas**

- Start every day with two cold calls.
- Read newspapers, business journals, and trade publications for new business openings, personnel appointments, and promotion announcements made by companies. Send your business literature to appropriate individuals and firms.
- Give your sales literature to your lawyer, accountant, printer, banker, temp agency, office supply salesperson, advertising agency, etc. (Expand your sales force for free!)
- Put your fax number on order forms for easy submission.
- Set up a fax-on-demand or e-mail system to easily distribute responses to company or product inquiries.
- Follow up on your direct mailings, email messages, and broadcast faxes with a friendly telephone call.
- Try using the broadcast fax or email delivery methods instead of direct mail. (Broadcast fax and email allows you to send the same message to many locations at once.)
- Use broadcast faxes or email messages to notify your customers of product service updates.
- Extend your hours of operation.
- Reduce response/turnaround time. Make reordering easy - use reminders. Provide preaddressed envelopes.
- Display product and service samples at your office.
- Remind clients of the products and services you provide that they aren't currently buying.
- Call and/or send mail to former clients to try and reactivate them.
- Take sales orders over the Internet.

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