

134+ Free Marketing Tips

General Ideas

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

Target Market

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

Production Development

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

Education, Resources, and Information

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

Pricing and Payment

33. Analyze your fee structure; look for areas requiring modifications or adjustments.
34. Establish a credit card payment option for clients.
35. Give regular clients a discount.
36. Learn to barter; offer discounts to members of certain clubs/organizations.
37. Give "quick pay" or cash discounts.
38. Offer financing or installment plans.

Marketing Communications

39. Publish a newsletter for customers and prospects.
40. Develop a brochure of services.
41. Include a postage-paid survey card with you brochures and other company literature. Include check-off boxes or other items that will involve the reader and provide valuable feedback to you.
42. Remember business cards aren't working for you if they're in a box. Pass them out! Give prospect two- one to keep and one to pass out!
43. Produce separate business cards/sales literature for each of your target market segments.
44. Create a poster or calendar to give away to customers and prospects.
45. Print a slogan and/or one-sentence description of your business on letterhead, fax cover sheets, and invoices.
46. Develop a site on the World Wide Web.
47. Create a signature file to be used for all of your e-mail messages. Include the key information to make them want to contact you.
48. Include "testimonials" from customers in your literature.
49. 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 its expectations.
50. Use colored or oversized envelopes for your direct mailings.
51. Announce free or special offers in your direct response pieces.

Media Relations

52. Update your media list often so that press releases are sent to the right media outlet and person.
53. Write a column for the local newspaper, local business journal, or trade publication.
54. Publish an article and circulate reprints.
55. Send timely and newsworthy press releases as often as possible.
56. Publicize your 500th client of the year.
57. Create an annual award and publicize it.
58. Get public relations and media training or read up on it.
59. Appear on a radio or TV talk show.
60. 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.
61. Write a letter to the editor of your local newspaper or trade show magazine letter.
62. Take an editor to lunch.
63. Get a publicity photo taken and enclose with press release.
64. Consistently review newspapers and magazines for possible PR opportunities.
65. Submit "tip" articles to newsletters and newspapers.
66. Conduct industry research and develop a press release or article to announce an important discovery in your field.
67. Create a press kit and keep its contents current.

Customer Service and Customer Relations

68. Ask your clients to come back again.
69. Return your phone calls promptly.
70. Set up a fax-on-demand or e-mail system to easily respond to customer inquiries.
71. Use an answering machine or voice mail system to catch after-hours phone calls.
72. Record a memorable message or "tip of the day" on the outgoing answering machine or voice mail message.
73. Ask clients what you can do to help.
74. Take clients out to a ball game, show or another special event.
75. Hold a seminar at your office for clients and prospects.
76. Send hand-written thank you notes.
77. Send Birthday cards and appropriate seasonal greetings.

78. Photocopy interesting articles and send them to clients and prospects with a hand-written "FYI" note.
79. Send a book of interest or other appropriate business gifts to a client.
80. Create an area on your Web site specifically for your customers.
81. Redecorate your office or location where you meet with your clients.

Networking and Word of Mouth

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

Advertising

90. Advertise during peak seasons for your business.
91. Get a memorable phone number, such as "1-800-WIDGETS"
92. Obtain a memorable URL and e-mail address and include them all on marketing materials.
93. Provide Rolodex cards or phone stickers pre-printed with your business contact information.
94. Promote your business jointly with other professionals via cooperative direct mail.
95. Advertise in a specialty directory or in the Yellow Pages.
96. Write an ad in another language to reach non-English-speaking market.
97. Distribute advertising specialty products such as pens, mouse pads, or mugs.
98. Mail "bumps," photos, samples, and other innovative items to your prospect list.
99. Create a list of "hot prospects."
100. Consider non-traditional tactics such as billboards, bus backs and web sites.
101. Project a message on the sidewalk in front of your place of business using light directed through words etched in a glass window.
102. Consider placing ads in your newspapers classified section.
103. Consider vanity automobile tag with your company name.
104. Create a friendly bumper sticker for your car.
105. Code your ads and keep records of your results.
106. Improve your building signage and directional signs inside and out.
107. Invest in a neon sign to make your office or storefront window visible at night.
108. Create a new or improved company logo or "recolor" the traditional logo.
109. Sponsor and promote a contest or sweepstakes.

Special Events

110. Get a booth at a fair/trade show attended by your target market.
111. Sponsor or host a special event at your local business in conjunction with a non-profit organization.
112. Give a speech or volunteer for a career day at a high school.
113. Teach a class or seminar at a local college or adult education center.
114. Sponsor "Adopt-a-Road"
115. Volunteer your time to a charity or non-profit organization.
116. Donate your product or service to a charity auction.
117. Appear on a panel at a professional seminar.
118. Write a "How to" pamphlet or article for publishing.
119. Produce and distribute an educational CD-ROM, audio or video tape.
120. Publish a book.

Sales Ideas

121. Start every day with two cold calls.
122. Read newspapers, business journals, and trade publications for new business openings and for personal appointment and promotion announcements made by companies.
123. Give your sales literature to your lawyer, accountant, printer, banker, temp agency, office supplies sales person, advertising agency, etc.
124. Put your fax # on order forms for easy submission.
125. Set-up a fax-on-demand or e-mail system to easily distribute responses to company or product inquiries.
126. Follow-up on your direct mailings, e-mail messages, and broadcast faxes with a friendly telephone call.
127. Try using broadcast fax or e-mail directory methods instead of direct mail .
128. Using broadcast fax or e-mail messages let your customers of product/service updates.
129. Extend your hours of operation.
130. Reduce response/turnaround time.
131. Display product or service samples at your office.
132. Remind clients of the products and services that you provide that they are not currently buying.
133. Call and/or send mail to former clients to try to reactivate them.
134. Take sales orders over the Internet.