



Day Three - Marketing Your Business

Some of the marketing ideas in this guide you may have thought of already, others you won't have. In this guide are several ideas that range from very simple, quick and easy to do, to some that will require a bit more thought and effort. The ideas also range in cost from free (or virtually free) to still very cheap to implement!

IMPORTANT: When you see an idea you like, not just here but anywhere, it is vital you take it and run with it until it is completely finished and implemented. ***Nothing*** will change in your business unless you take an idea to the very end, until it is actually working in your business.

None of the ideas below will cost you a fortune to implement, so get going!

We have got, a billion more ideas (at least!) how you can attract more quality customers into your business on the website, in our shop, and on the Business Super Heroes Academy Program but the information here is an amazing place to start!



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Always offer a strong guarantee

A decent guarantee will help free your potential customers' mind from the question "What happens if you turn up, do a terrible job, and then you demand your money?" That niggling doubt may well be all that is stopping them from hiring you, in favour of someone who does offer a strong guarantee.

When you think about it, the law covers the customer for mal-practice or poor quality goods anyway, so this extra reassurance is essential to calm your customers nerves.

The stronger the guarantee, the more customers will be persuaded to choose you over the competition, so why not go mad and try something like:

"Our 125% guarantee means that not only will you be thrilled with our services, if you are not, for any reason, we will refund 125% of the purchase price."

How strong and confident is that? Can't you just hear the prospects thinking ... "Your products or services must be great or you wouldn't be offering that kinda guarantee" right?

Now, I know what you're thinking ... and yes, there is no 2 ways about it ... you will get the very occasional scumbag taking the micky. But this will easily be outweighed by the extra business the guarantee will bring you.

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Run an exclusive referral competition

Try having a competition amongst your customers about who can refer the most amount of customers to you, with the person who refers you the most winning a prize of value to them. To make running a competition worthwhile, you need to know who your ideal customer is and what will appeal to them as a prize gift.

My target market for my carpet business was middle income families, in at least the larger semi detached houses, though usually 3 or 4 bedroom detached homes, 2 working adults, 2 kids or so.

Because I knew who my customers were I could figure out what would appeal to them as people, so for the period of one year I ran a Win an iPad or £250 competition, and this increased my word of mouth business by 700% in just the first 3 months!

This worked so well because the prizes were aimed at my target market, and identified as something they would value. The ad I used is at the back of this guide.

Become a member of a trade association

Becoming a member of an appropriate trade association is one of the best ways to demonstrate to your customers that you actually care about being the best you can be in your line of business, and about looking after them.



What's more, when you become a member of a trade association your prospects will no longer expect an "expert" like you to be cheap ... if they want cheap they could go and look for an un-qualified cowboy can't they?

Insurance in case anything goes wrong is another major worry for prospects so, since you usually have to be insured and provide proof of that insurance every year to be a member of these groups, it will also give your potential customers reassurance that, should anything go wrong, they will be covered.

Most associations may also require an exam to be passed so you can also say with confidence to your customers that you have been trained to a high standard and have even passed exams to prove it!

Of course, once you have passed the exams, you may well be able to use the association's logo on your advertising to help promote yourself as a professional. So do it. A lot! Plaster your qualifications everywhere! You've earned them so why wouldn't you?

Social media

This is a slow burn but it's free and can be very effective if it's done properly.

If you have a few quid in your pocket, you could consider Facebook advertising, as this can be an effective method to reach your prospects because you can be very specific about who you



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target. Say, for example, you wanted to target only women, aged between certain ages, who like cycling. You really can be that precise to whom your ad get shown to.

If you decide to have a regular free account with Facebook, it is important to remember that everything is about people, so don't go on a facebook as a seller. Offer help and advice.

Post a non work post at least every other day, then every now and then drop into the conversation about what a great day you've had at work ... and upload pictures of the amazing results you have achieved for your customers!

Have a business page on facebook too – its costs nothing and is purely a business tool, so fill it with great engaging content and pictures. Run competitions to get likes, for example a monthly free meal to a "picked at random" follower who has liked your page.

Social media is an inexpensive way to promote your website and to keep new and existing customers chatting about your business but beware. There are now so many social networking sites out there for you to try, it is really important that you do your research and find the one or two that works well your business and just do those one or two sites *properly*. You DON'T want a rubbish presence on 15 sites ... instead have an amazing presence on just one or two.

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Newsletters

A company newsletter can be one the most cost effective and efficient way to market your business to existing customers. For the price of a stamp it shows your customers that you care enough about them to bother to try and communicate to them.

And no, not always email newsletters either. Proper newsletters. On paper. Not very eco I know but they work.

For the cost of a stamp it will keep you in touch with your customers, keep them loving you, bring them up to speed on new developments in your company and show them that you care about them.

With every newsletter you send out, make the most of the fact that you can usually put a few other items in the envelope for the same cost as a normal stamp. So, always include business cards, a promo flyer, a new service card, a referral card, a maintenance sheet etc

As with every promotional piece you send out, make sure it is not dull and boring but highly engaging for your customer. Include jokes (clean and neutral) fascinating facts, relevant hints and tips and anything else that may be interesting to the customer.

If you have over about 200 customers to mail to, try sending it out via a mailing house. These businesses will often get much cheaper postage rates so not only will you save time and effort on posting the letters yourself, you will also save money on the postage too, meaning that it

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may only cost an extra few quid to get the job out sourced and done for you.

Strategic Alliances

Strategic Alliance are possibly the very best way to get more business quickly because they are an alliance of similar traders who can feed work to you and vice-versa. It will be worth its weight in gold to sit down (maybe brainstorm with a friend or loved one) and give some serious thought to who you can join up with. Think about which businesses are targeting the same customers as you are, or which businesses have a natural affinity to your business.

Once you have formed a relationship, then you can start to refer work to each other.

A strong alliance of traders who work together could be worth £1000's every year. Doing this alone will double your business in a year!

Say you run a carpet cleaning company:

You could you join up with:

- Independent carpet shops
- Other cleaning companies who don't offer carpet cleaning

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- Other carpet cleaning companies who don't do domestic / commercial that you do (or just prefer doing)
- Local independent flooring shops
- Oven cleaners
- Local carpet suppliers
- Builders
- Home improvement specialists
- Ceilings and partitions
- Letting agents / estate agents
- Plumbers
- Gardeners

To try and get a deal going, it may be worth initially offering a sweetener to the other party. Initially I offered my alliances 10% of the cost of any work I got from them, then after a while it became that I would help them for free for a morning every now and then if they needed a hand, then gradually it became much less formalised and much more of "mates helping each other out" type of arrangement.

As with everything, it is how you sell the idea to the other business that will make a difference to whether they will recommend you or not to their valuable customers.

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As a carpet cleaner, you could say to builders for example how good it looks *on them* if they state they will have the carpets cleaned before they do the hand over back to the customer! Obviously the cost of the clean is absorbed in the overall price to their customer anyway, but it makes the building company look amazing and incredibly customer focused.

And don't forget, of course, if you do want to talk to someone, don't forget the donuts!

Include Testimonials - Everywhere

Testimonials from previously satisfied customers are ***essential*** to ensuring that others feel good about choosing your company.

Testimonials still carry a huge amount of weight when it comes to deciding who your next potential customer will choose.

IMPORTANT – you don't want lots of people simply saying "You're brilliant!" You want a mixture of "you're brilliant" and "did a great job at a fair price" and a massive variety of great testimonials.

It is perfectly acceptable to actively encourage (or blatantly ask!) a customer to write about a certain aspect you want a testimonial about discuss, for example, your time keeping or courtesy.

Below are a number of things you could do to ensure your testimonials work towards your overall message:

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- Video testimonials of a thrilled customer. Put it on your website and on your YouTube page too
- Use a picture of the customer – this makes it much more real
- Weave them into the very fabric of your website
- Make them captivating and interesting
- Make sure that the context is understood
- Don't edit the testimonials – either use it in its entirety (spelling mistakes an' all) or don't use it at all
- Never fake them
- Don't use testimonials that link to customer sites
- Don't use too many on one page
- Why not scan the actual form the customer filled in? This will give added credibility to the testimonial.

Of course, always ensure you get your customers permission to use the testimonials in any PR work you do.

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Try “lumpy mail”

One of the hardest things when you send out a promo letter is to get a prospect to open your sales letter in the first place.

How many letters have you sent out and been fairly sure that 90% of them will go, un-opened, in the bin because they are already deemed to be salesy? Or, if you want to get into a business, has the “gate keeper” kept the gates to the decision maker firmly locked?

Try this ... it’s a really neat idea!

Make the envelope stand out as something different. That’s it! Arouse the prospects curiosity so they just have to open the letter! Then when they have opened the letter you then have to use a POWERFUL headline to draw the reader into the text of the letter.

Try these ideas:

- hand write the envelope
- make the envelope a different colour
- enclose a lumpy gift
- put a coffee cup stain on it

DO ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING DIFFERENT TO GET NOTICED!

This will arouse curiosity and get someone to open the envelope, just to see what’s inside!

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It's all so bloody DULL

When I get sent an ad to critique from my BSH members one of the major reasons their adverts fail is because the ad is so vanilla, so dull, so grey because what the customer is seeing is just more Blah blah blah swimming in a sea of "so what" near a ship called "Who Cares?"

If I was selling carpet cleaning for example ...

- Oh ... there's a cute dirty dog on a white carpet. **Seen it.**
- There is a young boy taking off his muddy football boots on to a light carpet. **Seen it.**
- Oh, there is a knocked over coffee mug with a coffee spillage. **Seen it.**

Ensure your ads are different to stand out from the crowd and be noticed.

Not answering WIIFM

You must carefully craft a great offer for the prospect to take any sort of action or they just won't bother. The offer must be so strong that you would have to be totally bonkers not to act on it.

Forget 5% off or 10% off - when was the last time you responded to an offer that weak? For an ad to work, the offer must be totally brilliant!

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The ad must address the main question that a prospect asks themselves... the "What's In It For Me?" question. Why should I take you up on this offer? Why would I be totally barmy not to act on this offer right now?

There MUST be a clear and powerful reason for the prospect to act to get them to do anything!

Forget brand awareness

You may get some hot shot advertising guy calling you up, telling you that placing your advert in his paper is all about "exposure." They will say words like "its just about getting your name out there" or "It's all about Brand Awareness."

No, it really isn't. It is about money in the bank. Finito. End of story. Everything else is just tosh.

If you can't afford to put food on your table, your spouse is not going to say to you ... "it's alright dear, lots of people know about you."

There must always be a desired, measureable response or outcome, which may or may not be financial. For example, you may be running a Facebook campaign, so the desired response (and therefore a successful ad campaign) may be to get more likes on your Facebook page to go into your draw for an iPad (or something like that.)

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If nothing else, your ad **MUST** create some sort of outcome ... you **MUST** get the prospect to actually do something for your ad to be a success.

Leave brand advertising to the big brands in business. The only job of your advertising is to get your prospects to do something that will put more money in your bank account!

Always keep the customer as your main focus

FACT: People don't care about you and your business! They care about themselves. So forget saying things like "we're great" or "established in 2004" because people generally don't care!

Instead, make your ad all about the customer and how you can help them with their pain points. It is simply a waste of precious paper space and money to tell your prospects how great you are, when you could be using that space to say how you can help the customer achieve his / her goals.

Ensure you put solving the customers' problems first in everything you do or write.

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The Win an iPad or £250 Referral Competition That Increased Referrals by 700%! This Is Referrals Marketing on Steroids!

WIN AN iPad or £250 CASH

To be in with a chance of winning either the iPad or £250 in cash, simply tell your friends and family about us! Yes, that's it!

We don't do a lot of advertising because we just love it when our thrilled customers pass our name on to their friends and family. It makes all the hard work so very worthwhile!

How do I win one of those great prizes?

That's really easy! Simply tell your friends and family about us, and if they use us and spend more than £100, you will automatically go into the draw to win one of those terrific prizes! This is as well as [details of your referral scheme]

That's just our way of saying thank you for passing our name on

[company] [contact] [email]

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