



## Ten Low-Cost Ways to Promote Your Business

### **1) Use every outgoing piece of paper, and every electronic document as business promotion.**

You have business cards, but you also put out a lot of other documents in the course of doing business. Check these to make sure you're using their promotional possibilities to full advantage.

For instance, business stationery is an ideal business promotion tool. Is your business name, logo, contact information (including URL if you have one), and slogan on your envelopes as well as on your letterhead? Or are your envelopes only printed with your business name and return address? What a waste! Your phone and fax numbers, your URL, and even a memorable slogan should be there, too. It's not just an envelope; it's a business promotion tool! You're sending it out anyway, so why not make it work for you?

The same goes for outgoing faxes, bill payments, receipts; whatever paper you send out should carry your full company message. And don't forget to make sure that your email has a complete signature that provides all your business information and a promotional tagline.

Electronic documents, such as email, are also easy to update with your latest business promotion information, whether it be a special price on your product or service, or letting people know that your company has won an award.

Articles and press releases are also excellent business promotion tools that you can use to promote your business inexpensively.

## **2) Writing articles on topics related to your business expertise is an excellent business promotion technique.**

Well-written articles can provide free advertising and build positive word-of-mouth. If you're a realtor, for instance, you could write a piece on preparing your home to be shown. If you're a Web site designer, you might write a piece about assessing Web site usability. The more specific your topic, the better. Write a short biographical note, or "blurb" about you and your business to go with the article. Then send it out!

Where? As the goal is to promote your business, ideally you'd like it to appear in a publication that your target audience will be reading. Realistically, you may have to send it to a publication that accepts unsolicited work from unknown authors. Magazines generally have a long lead time, so I would focus my first efforts on the 'Net.

Newspapers are also excellent places to place your business promotion article, as they too have a much shorter lead-time than magazines, and are always looking for material. Try contacting the Business editor of your local paper and pitching your article. If this approach fails, you might be able to get your piece into the paper by sending it in as a letter to the Editorial section.

## **3) Sending out press releases is another great way to get some free business promotion.**

The caveat to using press releases as a business promotion tool is that your press release has to actually contain information that is newsworthy, and be engaging enough to get people's interest. Has your business recently expanded? Do you have a new product? Have you been involved in some promotional activity such as sponsoring a charity event? Have you or your company recently won an award? All of these are examples of "news" that you can capitalize on to get some free promotion for your business.

### **If you're an Internet user, spend some of your online time on business promotion.**

Posting messages in forums is a great way to make your business known to people you would otherwise be unable to contact. You can't blatantly advertise your business on most forums, but you can show others that you're a knowledgeable, personable individual and promote your business through your signature file. Getting people interested in your business and perhaps attracting new customers works best if you choose forums that are business-related

For Example: You may advertise your Company on this web site Page i.e. ISO Certified Companies giving your Company Name, Scope, Products etc.

### **5) Use buddy marketing to promote your business.**

For example, if you send out brochures, you could include a leaflet and/or business card of another business, which had agreed to do the same for you. This gives you the chance to reach a whole new pool of potential customers.

You might also plan and carry out business promotions with complementary businesses. A pet store and a pet grooming business, for example, might use shared advertising, or run a contest together. This can considerably cut down the cost of business promotion, and allow each business to use promotion techniques that would be too expensive to implement alone.

### **6) Give out freebies as business promotion.**

We're all familiar with hearing or reading advertisements that promise that the first 50 people to visit a particular store will receive a free (\_\_\_\_). You fill in the blank. It could be anything from a red rose through an ice-cream cone! We're all familiar with this kind of spot promotion because it works. People love to receive things that are free.

Besides using freebies as business promotions, you can also use them regularly as customer "rewards".

### **Promote your business on a talk show.**

Your local radio station or cable TV station may have programs that are looking for guests - a great low-cost way to promote your business! Business-related programs are ideal. Find out who the host is, and approach him or her as willing to share your expertise on a particular topic.

Calls in programs are popular; you may be able to appear as a guest expert.

### **8) Promote your business by giving a seminar or presentation.**

You have expertise that other people are interested in! (You couldn't be in business if you didn't.) Why not share that expertise and promote your business at the same time?

That's eight low-cost ways you can promote your business so far. But there are two more business promotion opportunities that you may not have considered yet; using your car and your non-business related activities.

### **9) Use your vehicle to promote your business.**

Mobile business promotion isn't just for white delivery vans. Where I live, one in every four vehicles has the name and phone number of a business decorating one of the windows or doors. Think of all the people who see your vehicle when you're driving around - especially if you live in a place where people often get stuck in traffic!

### **10) Promote your business through your leisure activities.**

One savvy businessman I know relaxes by being part of a rock band. Guess what? Every time his band's gigs are mentioned in the newspaper, the piece also mentions the name of his business!

You may not be part of a band yourself, but everyone does something for "fun". Whether your chosen leisure activity is working on rock-climbing, or shopping, there are all kinds of ways to promote your business while you do what you love to do.

Where's the harm in shopping or rock-climbing wearing a T-shirt that has the name of your business prominently displayed? Or in taking your business cards everywhere you go and clipping your card to the slip when you pay for a purchase by card or cheque? Get in the habit of doing business promotion wherever you go and you'll be surprised how word-of-mouth builds.

These ten business promotion ideas are just some of the ways you can promote your small business without spending a small fortune. With a little experimentation and time, you'll find out which of these ideas work best for you - and best get the word out about your small business