

Marketing ideas for your new company

Website - nowadays customers expect you to have a website, otherwise your competitors will always be happy to oblige. You should get a website, as you could get a simple brochure site now for very little cost. You could hire a website design company or you could even do it yourself using well known companies such as Sitesell or Template Monster.

1. Write a press release, research the contacts, and send it out to all the relevant magazines in your field announcing your launch.
2. Test the water cost effectively using a service such as htmil.com – an opt in email list of UK people who will give you honest feedback on your site. This also helps spread the word.
3. Add a viral element to your site, something that users will enjoy using, like free games, etc, and have the ability to email them to their friends, hence they help you with the cause of marketing.
4. Forward your website to all your friends on Facebook & MySpace, and ask them to forward it to their friends. Only a small pass along rate can still result in sales.
5. Make sure your site has a point of difference over your competition and use this in your promotions. Unique Selling Points (USPs) are strong tools.
6. Tell the local press about your existence.
7. Donate to / sponsor a charity, they will often link back to your site, and this also goes down well with the press.
8. Hold a charity fund-raising event where your website address is exposed well to those in attendance, again inform the press.
9. If your offices are near a busy road, hire an advertising blimp for a few days to fly above your offices with your web address spread across it. Particularly effective if you are near a motorway – although there may be laws around advertising near motorways so it's worth checking.
(www.theartofair.com)
10. Get signage for your car showing your web address, it's amazing how many people you pass on a daily trip to your workplace that will be intrigued and go on your site later that day – even more effective if you commute on a motorway.
11. Get business cards printed up prominently displaying your website, leave them when and wherever the opportunity arises.
12. Get onto all the social bookmarking sites such as Stumble Upon, Digg, Delicious, simpy, etc and spread the word that you exist.
13. Print up postcard flyers and have a day in a city centre giving out as many to passing shoppers as you can, ideally run a competition to incentivise them to go onto your site.
14. Create an online only competition and submit it to all the free competition sites, this will bring you good levels of free traffic generally.
15. Become a member in good forums, like UKBF, and ensure to visit and post regularly, then if allowed, put your web address in the signature.
16. Get your domain printed onto umbrellas and give them away in a city centre one day when it's raining. www.sussexpromotions.co.uk offer such services.
17. On the same theme, print your domain onto t-shirts or jumpers and wear them out as often as you can
18. Aerial Advertising - It not as expensive as you think – get a plane to fly over a busy area trailing a huge banner behind it with your advertising message and site. Ideal at sporting events. www.airads.co.uk superb exposure at sporting events for example.

19. If you send your products by post, print or stick your web address onto every envelope, that way people see your site all the way through to the point of delivery.
20. Try to get local radio stations to give you and your staff a mention. And ensure you get the domain name in there too. Not that many radio stations will read out the full domain, especially the nationals, but the locals and inner London ones generally do without any fuss.
21. Do a PR Stunt- this can be anything that captures peoples imagination. Ideally it will be in a very public place, something outgoing, different, and original. If you feel it's strong enough – tip off the press. People may have seen the recent Thriller dance on the London Underground just prior to MJ's re-launch. Ensure you video it, leak the video on YouTube – if it's good it could go viral very quickly.
22. Create a links page and exchange links using a programme such as **www.linkmarket.net**
23. If you do exchange links with people, try to vet them a little first, check their page rank in alexa.com and try to keep it relevant to your business, there are rumours that poor links can affect your placement in search engines.
24. Try Direct Mail marketing, such as services supplied by **www.novadirectmail.co.uk** – This can often be a low-cost yet effective way to get your website name out there to those that are not already online.
25. Whilst on the topic of offline promotion – try leaflet drops in specific geographical locations. Obviously don't do it yourself but use a specialist company – **www.dbslimited.co.uk** offer a national service for example, but it's important to get a good company with a high reputation – vet them, those that are used by the local councils are normally a safe bet. They will normally say who they represent on their sites.
26. Create freebies – everyone loves a freebie! A classic example is to create an Ebook that you can give away for free that helps people but directly refers to your own business and involves plenty of links into your site with signals to buy. If it general but draws upon your own site to use as examples it will both increase your traffic and sales. For example, if we were to do an ebook around saving people money and how to find better deals on credit cards we could potentially include reference links to a variety of sites offering current best buy credit cards (something that actually adds value and helps the user save money).
27. Try SMS advertising, it's another cost effective route to promoting your business, companies such as **www.textmarketer.co.uk** offer this service.
28. Expensive but massively effective. Pay a seeding company to create their own viral around your site. Kontraband are seen as one of the best in the UK **http://www.kontraband.com/viral-advertising.asp#contact**
29. Brand everything you possibly can with your domain. This can be bags, clothes, flip-flops, beach towels, office stationery, etc. Try a company like **www.rocketbags.co.uk**
30. In-game Advertising is starting to take off, there's lots of companies such as **www.game-advertising-online.com** that let you pay to advertise your domain in popular web-based multi-player games. This is a cheaper route compared to the major games found on the shelves.
31. Look at other online advertising options, not just google, yahoo, etc. such as **www.federatedmedia.net** or **www.Adbrite.com**
32. Buy expired domains similar to your own that are already generating traffic, redirect them to your own site. Such as **www.expireddomains.com**

33. Going back to the freebies, try and create samples if your business allows you to – again ensure your domain is highly visible on the packaging.
34. Social bookmarking buttons are very useful. Try **www.addthis.com** which gives you buttons & a list of all the main BM sites, then it's just a matter of going through each of them and submitting your site details. Great button for your site as well with data options to see how many are bookmarking you.
35. Look at radio PR as a form of promotion, whenever you hear 'specialists' on the radio discussing topics there's a very good chance that they have been positioned for that interview using a specialist PR agency, companies like **www.radiorelations.co.uk** offer this type of service.
36. Advertising in new mediums is often a great way to get in front of new audiences. There is a form of advertising now available on London buses. A company offering this service is motional media - **www.momedia.tv**
37. Go LARGE with your advertising, try companies like **www.monstermediaoutdoor.com** to get some ideas, they do HGV adverts, train ads, giant posters, etc.
38. Peg your business on Google Maps, and put a description and link down so people know what you're all about.
39. Set up an eBay Shop and do a very detailed Me page – the search engines do pick these up. Link back to your site wherever you are allowed to.
40. Do similar for QXL – arguably the second largest UK auction site. Even if each of these only bring you 20-30 more people a day to your site, it's new traffic and new people that didn't know you existed a minute ago!
41. List your business in yell.com & **www.kellysearch.co.uk**
42. If applicable it's also worth looking at **www.applegate.co.uk** – an industry directory.
43. Whilst on this topic, list in other main directories such as Thomson local, **thebestof.com** and other similarly popular sites.
44. Create a forum or discussion board, etc on your site that will generate opinion and help ensure people come back again and again.
45. Set up Facebook groups and MySpace groups that users can join.
46. Try Facebook advertising, their latest offering is cheap and very targeted. Highly recommended.
47. Join ecademy.com for online business networking
48. Research new ideas for advertising your business & site, try **www.adcracker.com/creativeideas** to get those creative juices flowing!

Other ways of marketing

1. Try alternative advertising – such as advans or ad trailers (those little bikes with giant posters behind them). Companies such as **www.alternative-advertising.co.uk** offer such services at reasonable prices
2. A Unique but different idea would be to approach a local college/university and ask if they would be interested in having your company supply notepaper to their students for free. In return – the paper is lightly branded with your company details. A cheap but highly effective way of getting your name into the student populations, your future buyers.
3. Rather than advertise in a local paper, enquire to the cost of adding an insert. There's mixed emotions towards the effectiveness of this medium, but if your message is strong it may work well.
4. Thinking more outside the box for advertising often works well, again especially at events. In the summer for example you could look at giving away free bottles of water branded with your company details in a city

centre or on the seafront – try companies such as www.waterpromotions.co.uk for branded water.

5. Sponsor a local event or sports team – www.uksponsorship.com has a list of all the current opportunities on offer in the UK
6. Giftbag / celeb gifting companies are also a great way to great your business/product/website out there. This one is more so for those businesses that actually have a product as opposed to a service, but I thought it's worth mentioning this as a viable option for people to use.
7. Guerrilla Marketing is getting more popular. Non-damaging forms of advertising are picking up lots of press, such as those offered by SAS <http://www.streetadvertisingservices.com/>
8. Text Link ads are also a cheap way of getting people to your site. Companies such as www.text-link-ads.com give further information.
9. Offer an affiliate programme for your product or services, there are tons of programmes out there to chose from that will get your name and products out there.
10. Try for a joint-promotion with a better known company, offer their customers a discount or free sample of your product/service when they buy over £x with them, it needs to add value to the company you approach for them to go for it, but also ensures that you stand to benefit – even just from exposure initially.
11. Arrange for a launch party (or promotional re-launch if you've been in business for a while), ideally to bring to peoples attention the launch of a new product or service you now offer them. The local magazines always seem to cover these (media and free booze seem to mix well!) have lots of these featured in their pages.
12. Approach local businesses on the high street and ask if they would stock your flyers by their tills in return for advertising on your website. The worst they can say is no!
13. Join a business club, they typically meet early mornings once a week for breakfast and discuss each others business and pass referrals. A very effective way to secure new business, as each individual is helping promote each others business during their working days when the opportunity arises.
14. Never believe you can't achieve something. You've set up your business already, so why can't you eventually turn over tens of millions if that's your goal? Approach whoever you need to in your quest to reach your targets, never feel a company is too large to get into. Ultimately there is still a buyer or decision maker sitting at a desk inside that office no matter whether it's an office of 3 people or 3000 people. It's still just a person that makes their decision based on you and your company, all you need to do is get to that person, it may be slightly hardly to infiltrate larger companies, but it's still totally possible and the rewards are often so much greater.
15. To really capture an audience with your message try something such as www.itflys.co.uk – floating media products. The BMW 1 series floating around the shopping centre is captivating.
16. Offer a rewards scheme or a referrals scheme to your users to tell their friends and family about your services or products.
17. Try and break a world record and obviously tell the press about when you intend to do it so they can feature your attempt, go for it either by yourself or promote it as a joint venture to include your customers and encourage them to get people involved as well, people will talk!
18. Find closed down shops in prime locations and go onto the land registry to get the owners details. Approach the owners direct and ask if they will allow you some adspace in their windows whilst the store is vacant. They will often be pleased to get any revenue out the store whilst it's empty.

19. Sponsor a local roundabout! Again not massively expensive but a great way to be seen.
20. Call up the ad execs at relevant magazines and ask for their best price for a whole page ad, (obviously presume it's not rate card!), then ask for half a page rate, then quarter. Then say it's still too expensive and ask them to call back if they have any late space available nearer close. Make sure you give them a mobile number (and that you have pre-made sized adverts ready to email them in the meantime) as when you get a late space call you generally have a matter of hours. But you will not believe the price drops! It pays to be prepared and snap up the late deals. Make sure they email you the sizes.
21. A cheeky but clever promotional technique is to piggy-back a major event. If you can't afford to have a stand within a major exhibition there will still be an equally large amount of people leaving the expo later in the day. Have promotional models of leaflet distributors give out information outside the venue (off the premises of course).
22. The other slightly more expensive option – get a stand IN the exhibition! Do not under-estimate the power of promotional models – male or female. You don't need to be at an exhibition either – you can integrate it as part of a PR campaign, they are paid to draw attention to themselves and your business or product. They are a sound investment, just be sure to capitalise on this and employ a photographer to get lots of shots you can use on your website.
23. Approach marinas, many of them offer large banner space for advertising businesses on the rails all around the marina – often double sided so both those on the boats and those looking at the boats see your message. Lots of high net worth individuals 'floating about' (no pun intended) and very often a captive audience.

BTC is specialised in the marketing for small business. How much do you think would cost to hire a marketing consultant? Can't afford it? The question you should ask is, "Can you afford not to?" BTC Marketing Support service is affordable and has been designed for the small businesses. Just for £90 per month you get all the support you need to market your business.

Please go to our Marketing for Small Business section for further details.

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