

10 Tips on Marketing for Small Businesses

By Shonda Miles

Marketing is not easy, but there are a few things you can do to make it work for you. Here are ten tips to help you get started:

1. Depending on what you're selling, you may want to put an ad in the local yellow pages. But make sure the money you spend for this type of ad is well worth it. Create an ad that is appealing to attract customers. Sometimes the yellow pages are a great way to advertise as not everyone is on the Internet. You can target this market by advertising in more traditional venues.
2. Make sure you clearly state what your company does. Put your company name and your profession in any ad you create. Make sure you include contact information such as phone number, e-mail, and website address. Also, if you run a really small business, you may want to include your cell phone number.
3. Clearly state what your benefits are to the customer. People don't really want to know what it is you're selling, but rather, they want to know what this product or service will do for them. For example, if you are providing some type of contract service, don't just list the services you sell, but be sure to mention what makes you stick out from others.
4. What gives you the advantage over the competition? One thing you can do is list the many benefits of your service and product, but what if others also offer the same things? Just make sure you list benefits that your competition has failed to mention. But what if you don't have different benefits? That simply means you should get some. Create a competitive advantage that will set you apart.
5. Make sure none of your ads have grammar and spelling mistakes. When people see spelling mistakes, they either assume you don't know how to spell, or that you just don't care.
6. Make sure each ad has a call to action. This is very important for small business marketing. Don't worry about saying some things such as, "Call now!"
7. Make sure your ads don't look cheesy by putting too many exclamation marks or other excessive things. You don't want the ad to come off as cheap.
8. Don't create an ad that looks cute. This looks very unprofessional and will only deter customers.
9. You can include something such as a cartoon as long as it represents your company and brand well. As long as it works well with your company and message, it should be OK. Just make sure it doesn't become too distracting.

10. Create a company logo that you can use in ads. If you don't even have a logo, you should get one now. You can put your logo on every piece of material that relates to your business. It's a great way to create brand recognition and have people know the services you offer by associating them with a logo.

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