



Top 10 Marketing Tips for Business Startups

By Robert Ciccone, Success Unlimited Sales & Marketing Group Inc.

1. Adopt a marketing mindset

The marketing mindset is a philosophy where you understand that you are not in the business of doing whatever it is you do, i.e., consultant, painter, computer technician, clothing retailer or widget maker. You are first and foremost in the business of marketing and selling what you do. So realize that you are not a widget maker you are a *marketer of widgets*. Until you embrace sales and marketing your business will struggle.

2. Narrow your focus

Profile your ideal client and focus all efforts on them. Who is your ideal client? Where are they? How do they think? What do they read? What do they watch? What interests them? What do they buy and why? One niche, one feature and one market is almost always a better idea than trying to satisfy everyone.

3. Differentiate yourself

What sets your company apart from any other in your industry? In order to succeed it is critical that you create and sustain some sort of competitive advantage. You must be able to answer the question: why should someone do business with you versus all other choices available?

4. Determine the lifetime value of your customers

The “lifetime” value of the customer refers to the measure of worth (value) over the lifetime of your business relationship with that customer. Understanding exactly how much combined profit a customer represents for the life of your relationship gives you the necessary insights of how much time, effort and expense you can afford to invest in your customer acquisition and marketing activities.

5. Build on multiple marketing pillars

Do not rely on just one or two marketing sources. Build your business on multiple marketing pillars. It is not good enough to just have a website. Utilize the many marketing vehicles available – direct mail, joint ventures, networking, media advertising, outside sales reps and public relations to name a few. Diversifying your approach will assure your company remains solid during those times when one method or another is not producing as well as it should.

6. Test everything

Testing is simply acknowledging the reality that you can't assume what will motivate the marketplace: You must discover what will motivate it. Test different things against what you are currently doing. One headline against another, offer against offer, copy against copy, bonus against bonus, guarantee against guarantee, and script against script. Change one element at a time and determine what's working and do it some more.

7. Take your message to the media

Do what you can to add some celebrity to your company name. Local newspapers and television are always looking for stories and topics of interest. Learn to write a press release or call your local media outlet about a special aspect of your business. The payoff is great – this type of exposure is free and adds a tremendous amount of credibility to you and your company.

8. Sustain contact with customer groups

Develop a system that will keep you in constant contact with your target audience. Continuous contact and communication with clients and prospects is proven to have significant positive impact on order size, frequency of purchase, loyalty and referrals generated. Ensure your target audience knows who you are, where you are and how to purchase from you when they are ready to buy.

9. Partner for success

Many times more customers can be secured from effective joint ventures or alliances with other companies. Alliances are a way to proactively generate a source of ongoing referrals for your business. Find complementary companies with complementary customer bases and join forces - create cross-promotions, share endorsements, work each other's databases.

10. Study marketing success

Studies show that leaders in every industry are focused on educating themselves. Read, study, find role models – there are thousands of people who have done it, books in print and online, clues and proven tactics just waiting for you to discover. If you want to excel, invest in your education, make marketing a study and have the courage to test your findings in the real world lab called your marketplace.

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