

Marketing Schmarketing! Effective Marketing with a Minimal Budget

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Marketing's not rocket science! Much of it is common sense, but you pay for the expertise in how to plan it, apply it, monitor it and improve it.

Some things you can take into account yourself are:

1. Know your customer

You know who you **want** to buy your product or service, but do you know who **actually** will? If you're talking to the wrong people, the right ones won't know about you.

2. Know your product/ service

You think it's a fantastic idea, but you're not buying it! Why should someone buy it? What are the benefits? And, what are the alternatives? What's the competition doing?

3. Different ways of communicating

You need to talk to the right people, in the right way, at the right time, for them to decide to buy. This is marketing and this is where it gets trickier!

How does your customer live? Work; live; travel; play...? Build a mental image of them and find the best ways to speak to them. It may be in a variety of ways simultaneously, or following on from each other.

4. Marketing isn't just Advertising!

An unfortunate reputation which precedes marketing practitioners! There are so many different ways of reaching your customers; some more targeted than others. Advertising can be successful in the right publication/ radio station for your customers, but it isn't a "one size fits all" option. Direct marketing (DM) is successful when the recipient is properly identified and the message is correct for them; the point of DM is that one size doesn't fit all! PR is often misconstrued as a freebie, but should be carefully thought through, newsworthy, well written and targeted.

5. Use your Customers!

In a tough economy, the main shift in focus is away from finding new customers and more towards keeping and **using** your current customers. They already know you; don't need convincing and you don't need to spend more money on them. Just make sure you do enough to keep them coming back and recommending you to others. There is "nowt" better than recommendation; people believe each other and if you achieve and even exceed expectations in your customer service and product, word will spread.

So the key message in a downturn is: focus on what you've got; not what you haven't! Really know what you're selling, who you're selling it to and why they

should buy it. Use your current customers; they already know you and don't need as much persuading as someone new!

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