

Just Tell Me More

Second Edition 2016

Marketing Tips In 10 Minute Chunks

by

Eric Gilboord

www.EricGilboord.com

www.WarrenBDC.com

Thank you for selecting my book and welcome.

*“Marketing should not
be a mysterious black
hole an entrepreneur
is afraid to enter.” EG*

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Dedication

This book is dedicated to my special entrepreneurs Adam & Alyse who are successfully making their way in the new world. And the many family, friends, clients, suppliers, associates, readers and fellow business owners who have taught me so much about business and life.

A special thank you to Linda Lou, the one person who has contributed more to the enrichment and enjoyment of my life than I could have ever imagined was possible. It's been an amazing ride filled with love and laughter. I can't wait to see you in the morning and look forward to living the rest of my life with you.

*"It's all possible if you don't stand
in the way of your own success." EG*

PREFACE

Catching Up

It's been quite a while since publishing the original best-selling book 'Just Tell Me What To Do – Easy Marketing Tips For Small Business'. In fact a little over 16 years have come and gone.

My second book 'Just Tell Me More' was published in 2011. Since then I have continued to work directly with owners of small and medium-sized businesses all over Canada and the United States.

My work has expanded from just marketing, into all areas of business that help an owner increase the value of their company and get it ready for sale.

Much has changed in the small business community. For starters, it's grown dramatically with 95% of all businesses in Canada and the United States being classified as small or medium-sized.

The distinction between micro and larger more established small and medium-sized businesses is widely accepted by most companies targeting the 'small business market' today. This means suppliers of all kinds of products and services recognize the significant differences in their respective needs and have created distinct offerings to suit the unique requirements of these separate and distinct groups.

The internet now allows a business owner of any size, the ability to compete globally or more efficiently and effectively locally. What might have cost a company a million dollars to develop software for their business is likely available online for \$30 a month.

Three key topics currently top of mind with many people today are:

1. Starting a business.
2. Growing an existing established business.
3. Selling a business.

It's not just young people entering the world of entrepreneurship. In fact the latest surveys show that Boomers (those born between 1946-1964) are the largest group to be starting, growing or selling a business.

There is a huge wave of very passionate entrepreneurs sweeping the landscape and Boomers are right there - up front standing beside other entrepreneurs of all ages. Starting a business, is the top trend among Boomers today. This is followed closely by mentoring or coaching other owners and buying businesses for themselves.

It's not always about money. In some cases the drive behind working in a small business comes from a desire to create a new challenge, developing a passion project, or helping a spouse, child or friend with their business.

Many new entrepreneurs today, both young and older, are far more experienced in business having come from a corporate life prior to starting a new business or having sold a business and choosing to start something new. They are seasoned and in many cases better equipped to start or grow a business than the start-ups of the past two decades.

Look for my other new book 'Moving Forward' written for BABOs - Boomer Aged Business Owners.

The New Retirement Is Not About Slowing Down

We now have a whole generation of entrepreneurs, who if you told them a few years ago they would be starting a new business in their 50's and 60's you would have been met with ridicule and been subjected to their visions of a glorious stress free retirement.

The corporate Boomers had planned their retirement based on funds socked away over a lifetime. As for the Boomers with businesses, thinking about selling at some point in time when they were ready to retire was too far off in the future.

Well, for many members of the Boomer generation the past few years has been a rude awakening. For some reason, things didn't work out the way they thought it would. The cost of living keeps rising, retirement funds have been decimated and businesses are not easy to sell for what the owner thinks it's worth. The reality is, the determination of worth for their company can be very different than the opinion of the buyer.

Start-Down: The Opposite Of Start-Up

Ten years ago business owners kicked tires and spoke to a few friends and maybe some professionals with experience in selling businesses, and then put it all on hold. They never really thought seriously about selling their business or considered they might not know what to do when the time came.

Having worked directly with hundreds of owners of small and medium-sized businesses over the years and spoken with many more, I am disturbed by the number of entrepreneurs who do not have an exit strategy in place to sell their business.

Add to that the incredible amount of business owners who are willing to let their businesses go for well under what they could be worth. Or they are riding it out for a few more years, taking as much as they can out of the business and then planning on just closing the doors.

With no thought to the impact on employees, vendors and customers. Not to mention our economy which is not even close to being ready to absorb the impact of tens of thousands of owners just shutting down.

The other option is to 'die with your boots on'. These are the owners prepared to work until they drop. Either they love what they do, working is an economic necessity or they simply don't know what else to do with their time.

Owners are taking business selling advice from their lawyers and accountants. Which is fine if the trusted advisers have experience buying and selling companies. Not so fine if they don't.

They are letting their baby go for 1, 2 or 3 x EBITDA* based on a volume of sales well below what it could be. Increased sales, improved marketing, better operations and financial controls could increase EBITDA* and therefore garner a 6+ x sale price. Especially when annual

sales break the \$10,000,000 level. You could sell for far more than you have ever imagined was possible.

*Commonly abbreviated as **EBITDA**, an accounting measure to calculate a company's net **Earnings, Before Interest expenses, Taxes, Depreciation and Amortization** are subtracted. Used as a proxy for a company's current operating profitability.

Anything done today to increase the value of the business will help to make the company more desirable to a buyer and valuable to the owner.

As one example, when you improve the marketing and generate more sales you increase the overall value of the company. The enhanced business could then command a higher selling price.

For years you considered marketing an unnecessary expense or it was so confusing you just didn't bother. Well now you may want to reconsider. It's not that much of a mystery, as you will learn from my book. It is actually a profit centre and not just an expense.

For those entrepreneurs fortunate enough to already be running established businesses you may have picked up this book because you know your business is worth more or could be of more value to a prospective buyer. You might have a date in mind for selling or you may just wish to start moving in the direction of an exit strategy.

Successful sales of businesses are based on annual sales and profitability. You will require at least 3 years of steady growth regardless of the age of the business or how well it performed in the past.

Buyers are interested in today and tomorrow. A successful sales and marketing program can be a big part of enhancing the selling price.

It's a new world today and significant change is required to survive or thrive. The last thing you want to do is sell the business you have

nurtured for one, two or three decades and get a fraction of its real worth. Good luck in proving its value, without sufficient sales.

You may be thinking about the direction your business has been going lately and considering a change to generate growth. Part of that change could be getting back to your passion. The reason you got into the business in the first place.

If you have an established business, consider returning to why you got into the business in the first place. Get in touch with what you were passionate about and determine how to get back to doing the things that you can't wait to do each day.

There is no shortage of experienced folks to perform the functions you are not comfortable with or even qualified to do.

"Work on the business not in the business." EG

Where Do You Go From Here

Email, Websites, Content, Videos, Social Media, Social Networking, Online Advertising lead by Google, Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter Ads, SEO etc. and all the new methods coming out daily have or instantly become a key part of the marketing mix. But I caution you to remember it is part of a mix that should include traditional marketing.

So many naive entrepreneurs are quick to run to the next new thing, they lose sight of the tried and true dependable methods at their disposal. Just today I received my 'paper' copy of a well-known national small business magazine and inside was an advertising insert from Google. TV ads for Amazon and other online players are routine. Traditional methods blended with new media and here comes the future. If it works why would you abandon something without looking at how you could enhance it first.

This book is for start-ups, start-downs (in the process of selling your business) and anyone who wants to take their established business to the next level.

We will cover many areas beyond marketing. Together we'll reach into sales, management, idea generation, business growth and more for the answers you need to succeed.

Just Tell Me More is not designed to be an in depth explanation of any one specific component of the long list of traditional and new media options available to you. Today there is no shortage of information available on the internet that will provide very detailed descriptions for every conceivable and sometimes inconceivable marketing tool.

I wrote this book as an overview of many of the most common traditional marketing tools you will likely utilize to grow your business. I've tried to provide enough direction and insight to help you look at your marketing with some level of comfort. There is nothing to fear when you focus on your objectives, communicate them clearly, consider

your options, source several potential suppliers for each component of your marketing mix and hire good people. Oh yes and continue to test and update any marketing tools you choose to use.

This is not a feel good motivational or get rich quick book. There are no shortcuts or quick answers to marketing your business. It takes an investment of time, consistent effort and money. The good news is the rewards can go well beyond what you might imagine your business could ever do.

So power through the challenges, have fun, get excited every day, be amazed by your success and know that you are being true to yourself when you are doing what you're passionate about.

"It's up to you now. I know you can do it." EG

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UNDERSTANDING AND MANAGING YOUR MARKETING

The Importance Of Marketing

Marketing is a major driving force for fuelling the growth of your business. Many great ideas have not achieved the success they deserve because too few people know about them. You may have a great product or service but if prospective customers don't know about you, they won't go looking for you and may never have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits you offer. Equip your business with a solid marketing program, make sure you have covered all the bases, and reap the many rewards available to you.

Remember, marketing is not just a way to quickly start your business or a temporary fix for it. Marketing is an integral part of the continuing success of a business. Competitors enter the market, tastes change, and customers can become restless or lose their loyalty as quickly as they originally developed it. Marketing is the first aspect of your business that requires outside attention and it never ceases to require ongoing attention. Use marketing to keep your business active and never allow yourself to be in a position where you need marketing to revive it. Marketing should be used daily as a proactive tool to continue building your business and to overcome obstacles.

The following examples illustrate the important role marketing plays in the success of a business.

Story 1: Smart Thinking Turns A Problem Into An Opportunity

A sign in the window of a convenience store boldly stated “No Change.” The store had been inundated with people seeking change for the subway or for parking, and the owners felt that it was better to keep them out of their store.

By posting the sign, the owners were effectively driving away new business. If they had taken a more positive approach, they would have seen a great marketing opportunity, not a problem.

If the people seeking change were viewed not as a nuisance but as potential customers, a completely different strategy could have been employed to bring in new business.

What the owners could have done was equip themselves with a supply of change and posted a large sign reading “Change Available.” It is likely that many of the people who initially came into the store looking for change could have become regular customers over time.

Story 2: Marketing Separates The Old Ways From The New

Tom and Joe are brothers who grew up working in the family business. Tom is conservative and, in his own words, not very creative. He chose to stay with the older, established company and continue in his parents’ footsteps, running the business as his father did for the past forty years.

He had no desire to change anything and felt that if he continued to run the company the way his parents did, he would have a nice lifestyle and hopefully be able to pass the business on to his children. Tom was not a marketing-oriented businessman.

Every year, he followed the same marketing program, conducted seasonal sales, developed the same brochure (substituting a few new products), and worked with the same sales reps his father had employed for many years. Tom felt that if you built a good product, the customers would find you.

Joe, on the other hand, knew that there was more they could do with the business. He wasn't sure what needed to be done, but he realized that marketing would play a large part in the future success of their business. Joe spent a lot of time out on the road, talking to customers, finding out what competitors were up to, and looking for new opportunities.

Joe often returned from sales trips and trade shows brimming with ideas. He told Tom that they needed to expand their marketing efforts to include new media and a social media program. But Tom insisted that they were doing enough marketing and had no reason to change. Sometimes when a business has been successful, the thought of new activities seems to be an unnecessary expense.

Unfortunately a business owner can wait too long, until the market requirements and competitors catch up to them and it's then too late.

As time passed, the conflict with Tom became unbearable for Joe. He recognized the opportunities for the family business but knew that his brother would not change. Joe decided to start his own business. He knew that marketing was more than a brochure and the occasional sale. Over the years, he had learned that there are two key components to marketing:

1. Creating and using the various tools available.
2. Managing the marketing program from original strategy and design to the finished marketing materials.

Joe planned to stay in the same kind of business as his family. His first major commitment was to ensure that his business would be marketing-oriented.

He researched opportunities, became familiar with new marketing techniques, and established a long-term relationship with a marketing professional, who helped guide him and establish a team of suppliers to cover traditional, new media and social media marketing. Joes' strategy included using the best of the established methods and continually testing new marketing methods.

Eventually, Tom's business stagnated, sales barely kept up with expenses, and profits became a thing of the past. While Tom was suffering, Joe became more successful than even he had dreamed he could be.

Joe hired a marketing consultant. Together, they developed a solid sales and marketing strategy, embraced new technology by establishing a strong database, and conducted ongoing focused communication with staff, suppliers, customers, and prospects. They developed and updated sales tools on an ongoing basis to keep their sales force and customer service staff equipped with the latest in marketing weapons.

In time, Joe absorbed the family business into his own. Tom stayed on but acquired a new appreciation for marketing. Joe continued to manage the marketing efforts and his company grew large enough to create their own internal marketing team. Joe creates the company vision and the entire company carries out that vision.

These cases demonstrate how marketing plays a key role in the success of any small business. Ignoring the advantages that a structured, well-thought-out marketing program offers could put your business in jeopardy. Make use of experts, try to benefit from their years of experience and keep up with the newest techniques.

“Success or failure doesn't randomly happen to you. You have a large say in when and how much.” EG

23 Marketing Tips For Avoiding Small Business Failure

Lists like this one are usually made up of financial reasons for the failure of a small business. Unfortunately there are also many sales and marketing reasons. Fortunately, there is a positive step that can be taken for each one that will greatly increase your chances for success.

1. **Face Your Weaknesses.** Failure to face up to your weaknesses and a lack of effort to take advantage of your strengths can keep your business in a no-growth mode.

Take two pieces of paper and list your company's strengths on one page and its weaknesses on the other. Note the ways you can make your staff, customers, prospects, and other business associates aware of each of your strengths. On the page of weaknesses, identify steps to correct each problem. Discuss the points with your staff and develop a schedule to address them. No, it's not really as bad as you think.

2. **Take Action.** Talking about the great marketing program you have been developing and following through with it are two very different actions. Implementing the program is the key to marketing success. Plan all you want, but be prepared to act on all the steps you have identified. Don't be surprised to discover that there are some steps you hadn't initially considered.
3. **Accountability And Responsibility.** Understand the difference between accountability and responsibility. Make sure your staff and suppliers recognize that by accepting responsibility, they are accountable to you and to the rest of the company. It is now their job to get the assignment completed.

4. **Don't Play At Business.** Don't play at being in business. It is not a hobby or a pastime. Think about the message you are sending to your staff, suppliers, and customers. A genuine commitment to the customer and to the success of the business will get you through difficult times. It will also pave the way for much more success in the future.
5. **Avoid Ad Hoc Marketing.** Struggling from one idea to another without thinking your complete marketing story through will typically end in one failure after another. Prepare a program for the year or at least for a complete season. Build on previous efforts to ensure continuity.
6. **Seek Employee Buy In.** When your staff does not support your marketing program, you are usually destined for failure. Get them involved early in the planning process and incorporate their ideas.

“These actionable tips are the responsibility of everyone who works with you. Make sure they know and understand them.” EG

7. **Appreciate Every Customer.** A complete disregard for customers is a sure sign that a business is failing. There is nothing more irritating than walking into a business or past a booth at a trade or consumer show and discovering that the person behind the counter is having a personal telephone conversation or reading the paper. Immediately, you are made to feel like you are interrupting. Customers should be welcomed into your business and greeted with your full attention.

8. **Spot Trends.** Recognize trends, changes, marketing mistakes, etc. A new trend that is different from your product or service is a terrific opportunity to present something new to your customers. New ideas also refresh your staff.
9. **No Egos.** If you suffer from the “not invented here” syndrome, fix it right away. Great ideas can come from anywhere and from anyone. Limiting yourself to ideas created only at your company is viewing life through a very narrow lens. Seeking outside assistance and not listening to it is equally dangerous.
10. **You Don’t Know It All.** The assumption that all of your ideas are right just because they were “invented here” is also dangerous. You may know your business better than anyone else but you don’t know everything. Seek outside help.
11. **Control Sales Staff.** Lack of control over sales staff will result in missed opportunities and wasted hours. If your sales reps have little direction or support, they could be selling to whomever they choose. Often, they spend much of their time with existing customers and miss large new opportunities. Develop specific sales plans with your reps and review them regularly.
12. **Create Tools.** If you don’t create proper sales and marketing tools for your staff, you will make their jobs much more difficult. Arm them with well-thought-out selling tools and train them to use the tools effectively.
13. **Keep Tools Impressive.** If the sales tools you have are unimpressive, out of date, poorly conceived, or lack strategy or focus, they are damaging to sales opportunities. Work with your staff to prepare useful selling tools.

14. **Prepare A Realistic Budget.** Don't force your marketing group to live with a low or non-existent budget. Be realistic about your expectations and provide appropriate funding to increase your chances for success.
15. **Don't Try To Spend Your Way To Success.** On the other hand, if you spend too much money on marketing, you may not get value for your investment. Carelessly spending dollars on marketing does not always guarantee sales. You may need to rethink the media and promotional offers that currently make up your marketing program. Introduce a social media program that starts with a real strategy and has the manpower to execute it over a sustained timeframe. At least 2 years and if possible forever.
16. **Promote Your Website, Content and Social Media Pages In Traditional Media And Within Each Other.** An important lesson recently learned by many participants in the internet is the need to go outside of it to traditional media. Aside from producing a well thought-out website, content and social media presence, the key to success on the net is to let your target group know where your site, articles and social media pages are located. Add your web address and social media pages to all of your communication materials: business cards, letterhead, invoices, flyers, packaging, and cross promoting between all your social media etc.
17. **Answer The Telephone Properly.** The habit of not answering the telephone properly or having an uninformed person answering it for you can be damaging. Customers and prospects become frustrated when they can't get answers to their questions. Train your staff well and equip them with the most up-to-date information. If they shouldn't be answering the telephone, don't let them.

18. **Don't Lose Orders.** They are so hard to get these days how can you even think about losing them. The problems of lost orders or orders not completed on time can be easy to resolve. Create a step-by-step fulfilment process with checking systems to make sure that an order is controlled from beginning to end.
19. **Promote Yourself.** Some business owners believe that the product or service they offer should be as irresistible to others as it is to them and that customers should just come to them without promotion. Not promoting yourself will only serve to keep your business a secret.
20. **Encourage Others To Promote You.** It is just as important to encourage others to promote you. If someone else has a clear understanding of what your company does and who your target group is, they can help to promote you. Develop a brief statement that identifies who you are, what you do, who you do it for, and why you are different from competitors. Make sure that anyone who may be representing your company to prospects understands this message.
21. **Face Negative Word of Mouth Head-On.** Negative word of mouth statements can have a devastating impact on your sales, far beyond one or two unhappy customers. Solve the problem quickly and win customers back. Those customers will be your best salespeople. The internet can make this a huge problem.
22. **Use Resources Around You.** The failure to use readily available resources can lead to wasted opportunities. Seek out mentors government self-help offices, associations, consultants, internet sites, and libraries. Talk to customers and suppliers and study your competitors.
23. **Be Better Than Competitors.** Don't just try to be as good as the competition, be better than them, offer something different, provide better service, etc.

What Is Marketing?

In its broadest sense, marketing encompasses many elements. Marketing includes how you answer the telephone, correcting the spelling in your correspondence, and the use of words and graphics in the brochures and flyers you hand out. How you answer LinkedIn questions and what you put out on your website, or post on Twitter and Facebook etc.

Marketing takes on many forms including, but not restricted to: research, decision making, customer service, supplier relations, sales calls, planning, rethinking, constant re-evaluation, late night deliveries, early morning presentations, brochures, business cards, advertising, trade and consumer shows, marketing plans and programs, lead generation materials, sales presentation materials, social media, direct marketing programs, database development and management, telemarketing, print production, public relations and publicity, strategic alliances, sales training, marketing training, the internet, newsletters, corporate identity/logo design, sales meetings, and much more.

The essence of marketing is very simple: it is saying the right thing to the right person at the right time. However, knowing what to say, when to say it, and who to say it to is much tougher. Saying those things while building a relationship with a prospect over a long or short period of time is the key.

The Purpose Of Marketing

The purpose of marketing is to focus your business and to promote it to others. As the owner/operator of a small business, you have two responsibilities. You need to develop a marketing program and to manage the execution of its elements. If you don't market your company, you may miss out on the success you were looking for.

Marketing can be your greatest asset or the one thing you neglected to do while you were telling yourself that you were too busy running the business.

Marketing affects everything you do and can be addressed in any activity you perform for your business on a daily basis. Start by becoming aware of marketing and the many roles it can play in the process of building a business. Use this knowledge in every area of your business to carve a road to success.

The Differences Between Sales And Marketing

In a small business, you often wear both the sales and the marketing hats. What is the difference between sales and marketing? Marketing researches the opportunity, prepares the strategy, produces the tools to inform the prospect, and places the potential sale on the table. The salesperson works with marketing to confirm the opportunity, contribute to the strategy, use the tools to inform the prospect, and move the opportunity off the table and into the cash register.

It is important to maintain objectivity when marketing. Include others in as many stages of the process as possible. They may see something you don't see or add ideas you haven't considered. That way, mistakes can be minimized and opportunities can be maximized. Every day, new and exciting elements and challenges are being tossed into the marketing mix. There is no reason to be overwhelmed by all of these choices. Seek professional advice from marketing suppliers or go to seminars and workshops. There are many qualified marketing resources to guide you through this exciting jungle.

When Does Marketing Start?

Marketing starts long before you create a brochure or an ad. The minute you have the first inkling of an idea, you must start researching the target group, the competition, and the need for the product or service.

Integrate this information within the product or service, packaging, price, distribution, communications tools, and every discussion you have about the product or service from that moment on.

Marketing is not restricted to tangible items such as brochures and signs; it is something you do on a daily basis with every action you take. If you are talking to customers or rearranging your furniture to make the customers' experience more enjoyable, you are affecting the success of the business and performing a marketing action.

Story 3:

They Were Marketing And Didn't Realize It

Fanone International is a successful hairdressing salon owned by two brothers. For the past few years, they have talked about marketing. The brothers haven't developed any specific marketing tools yet, but they meet regularly and plan to do some "real marketing" soon.

The fact that they have not yet created the standard marketing tools, such as brochures and ads, does not mean that they have not been developing and executing a marketing program. The Fanone brothers have been thinking about their business from a marketing perspective and have recognized that marketing is necessary to the success of their business. Their marketing is under way.

A few years ago, they moved the location of their salon and took full advantage of the opportunity to create a new and exciting environment for their customers. The new salon was so interesting they were featured in an industry magazine. They also participate regularly in hairdressing shows, as featured presenters, to increase recognition of their company name. They have reached a level in their profession that many competitors would do anything for. They have accepted offers from manufacturers to represent certain lines of products. And have their own line of products, sold worldwide.

The Fanone brothers were very specific about the type of employees they hired, seeking people with a good attitude toward the business and customers. The brothers want to make sure that they are building the best possible team in order to take full advantage of future, more traditional and new media marketing efforts.

A continuing discussion revolves around the demographical and psychological profile of the customers they want to attract. The atmosphere they have created in their salon is of utmost importance.

The Fanone brothers regularly review the history of the salon and its past sales. Where did they make money and where did they give it back? What aspects of the business provide the most satisfaction? Are there cycles to the business with up and down times? Can they create promotional opportunities to smooth out the business over the year?

Are they taking advantage of the latest technologies? (Setting appointments on-line through the Internet is an interesting possibility.) Where do they want to take their salon in the future? What lessons can they learn from other salons (anywhere in the world) that are a few steps ahead of them? Can they identify and model themselves after a successful salon (or chain of salons) that is in a position in the marketplace that they want to be in?

The brothers continually review competitors' literature to assess their position in the marketplace, promotional offers, target group identification, and product endorsements. These small business entrepreneurs want to know all they can about their immediate competition in their neighbourhood and around the world.

They participate in various hairdressing shows, making sure that they are featured onstage demonstrating the latest in hairdressing techniques in order to consistently reinforce their position as a leading-edge hairdressing salon. Despite all of these activities, when they are asked whether they are conducting a marketing program, they answer that they are still preparing one.

These two hardworking, thinking entrepreneurs have recognized the importance of marketing and are determined to take full advantage of it. In fact, they are already marketing their business. Every day and through interactions with customers, suppliers, and staff, they are marketing their business because they are aware that every day and every interaction is another opportunity to fine tune their marketing efforts. When they decide to start a more traditional marketing program, they will be well prepared for it. Although these days who is to say what is traditional and what is new?

GETTING STARTED

Enough Talk, Let's Get Started Already

You may have an established business that you wish to move to the next level or, like many people today, you may be considering the possibility of leaving the relative security of a steady job and venturing out into the world of self-employment. Perhaps your spouse or a close friend is in this position. Regardless of the situation, it is typical for someone who has made the commitment to build a business to ask him or herself (and anyone who will listen) a key question: How will I find new clients/customers?

People are faced with the sobering thought of having to market their companies in order to obtain business. This stumbling block can keep an aspiring entrepreneur from realizing his or her full potential. Marketing shouldn't be holding you back. If approached properly, it will be a key tool in achieving great success.

11 Ways To Get Your Marketing Started

1. **Talk To Other Entrepreneurs.** Talk to them about how they started a marketing program. You are not the first person to do this. Others have gone before you and are usually willing to share their experiences. Lessons can be learned and costly mistakes avoided.
2. **Don't Get Overwhelmed.** Acquire a basic understanding of marketing to avoid being overwhelmed and to help reduce the fear and anxiety that occur when you enter an unfamiliar area. Read books on marketing and take marketing courses. Become familiar with marketing terminology and activities.
3. **Start Thinking Early.** Begin the thinking process early, before you make any purchases or hire any marketing help. Waiting until you need to do marketing can be too late. Do as much advance work as possible. Research your target group, your competition, the potential of your ideas, and the services you'll offer. Start the marketing process by determining who you are and what you are selling.
4. **Set Realistic Expectations.** Ask yourself if your expectations are realistic. Discuss this issue with your family or business associates to arrive at a set of expectations that they can endorse. In establishing a reasonable initial financial goal, consider a 10% increase in sales as a starting point, and remember to factor in additional costs for new marketing materials. Be prepared in case this goal takes longer to reach than you expected it to.

5. **Be More Aggressive.** Visit existing customers and prospects. Present new ideas and be objective, honest, and realistic about what you can do and who you are. Don't promise too much. As mistakes are inevitable, it is useful to make them early and with smaller potential customers. Don't take it personally if you are rejected. People may be reacting to the way you have presented your company, or they may not have a genuine need for your services. Either way, there is a valuable lesson to be learned.
6. **Qualify Leads Carefully.** Listen to what prospects are saying and not what you want them to say and be very realistic about their intentions. Many promising businesses have failed in their infancy because an entrepreneur thought a positive response to his or her idea meant money in the bank.
7. **Develop Alliances.** Join up with other small businesses that complement your products or services. They could provide much-needed leads and act as part of your support system.
8. **Get Ongoing Advice.** Look for a mentor or group of advisers to provide guidance. Seek out those who are familiar with the business you are in. Their experiences can help you avoid some of the pitfalls of running your own business.
9. **Be Computer Literate.** Review your computer equipment and software and learn to use them. You don't want to be scrambling to learn new software at the last minute when you're trying to produce a letter or proposal or send out a mailing.
10. **Prepare Marketing Tools In Small Quantities.** Prepare marketing tools understanding that you will likely need to revise them as you go. Have business cards and letterhead produced in small quantities. Do not produce homemade cards, as they can be perceived to indicate a lack of commitment to the idea on which you are attempting to base a business.

11. **Work Hard, Play Hard.** Have fun and don't let the new aggressive approach consume your life. Make time for family and friends. You will be amazed at how much more energy and clarity of thought you will have if you maintain a balance.

“Tools for success are easily attainable. First you have to recognize the need and then do something about it.” EG

**DON'T STOP NOW,
MARKETING
IS ONGOING**

Marketing Is NOT A One-Shot Effort

It is an ongoing responsibility. If you want your business to succeed, you will have to continue to try new things, learning from mistakes and successes. Marketing can work to make the public aware of your business and to generate initial sales, but don't make the mistake of resting on your laurels. The buying public can forget about you as quickly as they learned of your products or services.

Story 4:

We Don't Need To Advertise, Everyone Knows Us

Sheila opened a theme restaurant a few months ago. She was fortunate to receive coverage from local newspapers and even managed to be interviewed on television. She planned to get as much free coverage as she could and did not budget for a longer marketing program. Customers came and complimented her on her unusual theme, restaurant decorations, and the coverage she received from her initial marketing efforts.

After a few months, the novelty began to wear thin and the traffic dropped off. Sheila had told customers and the media that she would be continually adding new exhibits and expanding the dining facilities to accommodate larger crowds so that when they came back, there would be plenty of surprises. She couldn't understand where all of the customers went. They seemed to have had a good time on their first visit and had promised to come back.

Sheila didn't count on the short memory of most customers. New restaurants open daily and all of them have their own unique appeal.

Sheila had planned to extend her success by nurturing repeat business. Unfortunately, she was placing the responsibility for her success with her customers and didn't recognize that the real ownership for marketing was in her hands.

She should have prepared an ongoing marketing program to announce new exhibits to existing customers and to entice new prospects. When traffic dropped off rapidly and Sheila couldn't afford to add new exhibits, she put expansion plans on hold.

A few patrons returned as they had promised and found nothing new in the restaurant. Sheila soon closed the doors and what might have become a promising business ended in disaster. Unfortunately, she underestimated the value of marketing.

11 Tips For Continued Marketing Success

1. **Know Your Target Audience.** Understand members of your target group thoroughly, including their attitudes toward the services you offer (e.g., is the purchase of your product or service important, fun, or a necessary evil?). What motivates them, excites them, and makes them want to come back? Be honest and clear about your target group. It is not all adults or all females or all females with blue eyes. Get as close as possible to the core of your target audience and know who is really buying your product or service. Create a mental picture of your customers. See them clearly and make sure that anyone involved with your business has the same picture.
2. **Be Up-To-Date On Your Competition.** Be completely up-to-date on your competition. How are your competitors marketing? Are they spending more on marketing than you are? Are they spending less? What kind of results are they getting? Know what your competition is going to do before they do it and prepare yourself. Learn from their mistakes and their successes.
3. **Set Clear Objectives.** Determine where you want your marketing efforts to take you. Is it your objective to maintain the business you have with minimal growth, just enough to make up for any customers who leave? Or do you want to grow your business? Do you want to develop a highly successful system that could be franchised? Or do you have a short-term plan to develop your business rapidly in order to sell it quickly and profitably? It's much like painting your house before putting it on the market for sale.

4. **20% Of The Effort Equals 80% Of The Results.** Review past sales figures and understand the 80/20 rule. Typically, 20% of your customers will represent 80% of your sales; likewise, 20% of your effort will deliver 80% of the results. Check your accounting records now!
5. **Create A Marketing Plan.** Have a written marketing plan. The old expression “If you don’t know where you’re going, any road will take you there.”, has never been more true. Every day you are faced with new challenges and opportunities. If you don’t have a road map it is very easy to drift for a long time never quite succeeding.
6. **Develop A Sales Plan.** Develop a realistic sales plan. Know what you want to achieve and where the sales will come from. Adhere to a defined sales process and follow up at each stage of the process. There are many books and courses that outline well-defined sales and marketing processes. Find a process you believe in and follow it loyally. Consider what you need to do in sales versus what you want to do.
7. **Be Up-To-Date On Your Industry.** Be as up-to-date as you can on your industry and on your customers’ industry. Vertical industry publications will help keep you informed of trends and opportunities. They usually do an annual year-end wrap-up and make predictions for the future. If you want to know where your industry is going, this is a great place to start. (This is a really valuable tip as these publications do the research for you.) Talk to suppliers, customers, and even your competitors.
8. **Identify New Technologies.** Identify new technologies that will enhance your marketing efforts. All kinds of software, online apps, email, cost-effective low-run four-colour printing, and the internet make competing with larger companies much easier.

9. **Put The Customer First.** Put your client/customer needs before your own. If you put your customers first, they will notice and remember it at decision making time. It helps if you love what you do. Customers want to be with winners, and loving what you do will get you through the tough times.
10. **Have A Point Of Difference.** Be clear and concise about what product or service you offer and how yours is different from your competitors'. Make sure your marketing efforts consistently reinforce these differentials.
11. **Re-Evaluate Your Business.** Constantly re-evaluate your business. Every meeting, presentation, and discussion you have about your business is an opportunity to re-think what you are doing. Challenge every aspect of your business and make it better every day.

“You’re not in this alone. Make sure to have others handling day to day marketing tasks.” EG

USE MARKETING TO REVIVE YOUR BUSINESS

Marketing, When You Want More

Your business could be generating solid sales, as in Story 5, or weak sales, as in Story 6. To some owners, these scenarios are acceptable, while to others, they represent missed opportunities. In both cases, these businesses require a marketing push to achieve more sales.

Story 5: A Going Concern

A business had been a going concern with a concept so strong that it had franchised stores nationally throughout Canada and was moving swiftly into the U.S. So far, success had been achieved with very few marketing materials. Given the company's success without marketing, its management believed that the possibilities with marketing were very encouraging. After fifteen years in business, the company prepared and executed its first professional marketing program. After a six-month development process and much internal discussion, the company prepared the initial marketing tools.

Some franchisees took a "wait and see" approach. Other stores began to use the new tools and sales took off immediately. The head office quickly moved ahead with the development of additional marketing tools and most franchisees quickly adopted them.

*"Some business owners recognize opportunity,
by way of change, and are not afraid to embrace it.
Others see no reason or are frightened of the unknown.
Which one are you?" EG*

Story 6: Plodding Along

A business has been plodding along for the past twenty years. In the early stages, it had moderate success. Lately, the owner has spent a small portion of his time on building sales. The company has reached a plateau at a level that is much lower than it should be.

The owner is at a pivotal point in the company's development and has two options: He can try to sell the company as it is, take the money, and devote his energies to other interests, or he can attempt a marketing turnaround, giving the business a much-needed shot in the arm and a fair chance at success. With increased sales and positive growth projections the owner can sell his larger business for more money.

"This is one of the biggest questions on the minds of business owners today. Do I stay small or do I grow? It's up to you." EG

The Marketing Turnaround

Start with a realistic assessment, develop a solid strategy, invest the money and prepare a marketing program. Then execute that program to deliver the sales results you deserve. YES it's worth the investment.

This process is not a quick fix. If you do it quickly and have the wrong motives, unrealistic expectations, and no help, you may find yourself in deeper trouble than you were before. If you take your time and do it right, you'll get the results you are looking for.

Companies can reach a comfort zone where success is defined as steady sales or not losing business. Aim for reaching out of the comfort zone.

11 Marketing Tips For Reviving Your Business

1. **Seek Outside Help.** Seek objective, outside professional help. If you do the marketing yourself, you will likely take your eye off the day-to-day running of the business, cause unnecessary anxiety, and either keep your business where it is or hurt it further.
2. **Rethink Your Business.** Think again about current customers, competition, industry changes, and technology. Even rethink the type of business you are in. Many successful businesses have managed to stay successful by moving with the times. They saw that the needs of their customers were changing and acted accordingly.
3. **Assess Your Company's Current Status.** Put everything on the table, both the good and the bad. Include areas of the business you are proud of and problems you wish would just go away. Address issues relating to staff, products and services, location, profitability, and new business development.
4. **Keep Some, Change Some.** Determine what your customers like about you and what they would like to see changed. Be honest with yourself.
5. **Maintain Objectivity.** Emotion has no place in this process. To achieve a successful marketing turnaround, you must do what is best for your company. This may mean letting long-term employees go or finding new suppliers.
6. **Review The Past.** Look carefully at your past marketing efforts, successes, and failures. If you are running a marketing program but cannot justify its expense with increased sales, consider cancelling it or placing it on hold. Successful marketing turnarounds stop the bleeding quickly.

7. **Review Competitive Activity.** Often, a new entry in a market will use new marketing techniques and follow new thinking to achieve sales that you didn't know were possible.
8. **Look At The Staff.** Take time to review existing staff in light of the plans you are preparing and the growth you are seeking. Many companies that have set out on a path for success have been thwarted by staff members who didn't agree with the new ways or were actually afraid that the company would succeed. The last person you expect to come forward will be the first to say goodbye. People can be resistant to change. They like things to stay the way they are. If you need new people, clearly identify the skills required and begin the hiring process immediately.
9. **Be Flexible.** Be flexible and prepared to adjust your marketing plan as new opportunities and challenges arise.
10. **Persevere.** Perseverance is an absolute must. If you give up too early, you may fall short of the great success your business was destined for.
11. **Be Quick.** Speed is essential in turning a company around. While you were planning and executing the marketing efforts, your competitors may have been taking advantage of the opportunity to move in on your customers.