



# 5 Simple Ways to Market Your Small Business | Extraordinary Business

Many small business owners believe that they have no time for marketing. This is because they spend a great deal of time running operations and servicing clients. The problem is, without a strong marketing plan, your business growth will be

stagnant. However, there are several marketing techniques that can be easily deployed and won't drain all of your time. Here are five methods to efficiently market your business.

### 1. Referral Generation

Are you too busy to market your business? If that's the case, you can have your customers market for you. Work hard to over-deliver and keep your clients happy, and ask them for referrals. Satisfied customers will be happy to send you new business. You might want to offer them discounts or bonuses for sending new referrals. Ask your customers to write glowing reviews for you on websites such as Yelp.com. This is an effective technique because prospective clients will be much more comfortable with patronizing a business when they see that others are highly satisfied with your services.

### 2. Pay-Per-Click Advertising

Pay-per-click advertising is an easy way to promote your business and generate brand recognition. In less than an hour, you can open an account with Google or Bing, choose relevant keywords for your business, and start appearing in the search engines.

The great thing about pay-per-click advertising is that you can set a daily budget and forget about it. If you want more exposure, you can optimize your campaign by adjusting your bid prices and adding new keywords.

### 3. Vinyl Banners



a simple way to promote your business. In the past, you would have to go to a printing company and wait several days for them to deliver the banners to you. Nowadays, you can visit websites such as [signs.com](https://www.signs.com) and design your banner. When you receive your vinyl banners, you can showcase them on your storefront or distribute them at trade shows.

#### 4. Vehicle Decals

Displaying decals on your car and your company vehicles is an easy way to market your business. You can also distribute and display your decals in various public places, such as utility

poles and bus shelters.

## 5. Directory Placement

Another way to promote your business is by having it listed in internet directories such as Yelp.com and Urbanspoon.com. Many individuals in your geographic area use directories to find companies just like yours. In a matter of minutes, you can have a description of your business and contact information set up and visible to the public.

Marketing your business doesn't have to be too difficult or time-consuming. With some diligent work and effective marketing methods, you can elevate your company to a highly profitable level.

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# How to do What...When...Where | Extraordinary Business

## Six essential components of an effective marketing plan

Soooo... you want to reach your market. You know what to say, what to do and where to say it; the challenge is *when*. Perhaps, more specifically, with a number of marketing tactics under your wing, what is the *best* way to execute them in order to get the best results.



The challenge companies face is trying to get great results by taking a scatter shot approach: trying to do a lot of good things, but not doing it in a way that positions or sets them up to achieve specific goals or take advantage of the synergies of an integrated marketing program.

Think about your marketing program like waves at a beach. Your audience is a sandcastle. Typically, the waves have to exert some energy in order to reach the castle, crashing on the beach repeatedly, making their way up the shoreline; once the waves reach the castle the little waves don't really make much of an impact. It is wave's repetition and ideally their increasing size that enables the waves to eventually wipe the sandcastle out, i.e., make an impact.

The interesting thing about waves is that while the repetition of the waves is generally predictable, it is the intensity of the waves that changes and makes the most impactful changes.

While the smaller waves don't really make much of an impact, they do make an impact and remind you that they are there. There are big waves, though, that tend to remind you of the potential power the waves represent.

Taking that thinking to your marketing activities, is your company one that does a few disjointed campaigns per year, is inconsistent and unpredictable with it? Might it be more predictable to have a marketing program/plan/calendar that would support both the small, slow, steady (drip marketing) activities along with the larger, more impactful campaigns wherein you seek specific results?

For example, a digital marketing program in and of itself might be like your slow, steady waves. Your events, giveaway, direct marketing campaigns, etc. would be your bigger waves. Your slow, steady waves builds visibility and eventually trust with your audience whereas the bigger campaigns are those that will be those that we want to make the impact in your plan.

So to look at a marketing plan, from a "what do we need to include?" perspective you might consider inclusion of the following:

- 1) specific goals you want to accomplish
- 2) measurable outcomes
- 3) Awareness of opportunities to promote such as holiday or product launches
- 4) Repetitive maintenance activities you can do regularly to maintain market visibility
- 5) Transferable campaigns – those that can be used with your integrated campaign that speaks across your entire markets program
- 6) Synergy – maximizing your marketing investment by piggy-backing campaigns off of one another.

Think about the major insurance companies. Taking for granted that they probably have specific goals with their marketing activities with measurable outcomes, you can see their visibility at every major holiday and event, probably most notably, the Super Bowl. You would probably see other repetitive maintenance marketing that pops up everywhere,

almost predictably. Their campaigns aren't isolated; their message is usually the same, but the messaging comes across differently, perhaps through different characters and mediums. Finally, they get synergy by using themes, characters that have been developed to deliver the marketing message across mediums.

Your marketing need not be complicated in order to be effective. It just needs to be done. Like waves – steady, predictable making activities combined with larger, periodic campaigns will help you reach your audience and enable them to reach your company when they have need.

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## **With Which you Have Naught | Extraordinary Business**

### **Defining and employing the right tactics to reach your audience**

Have you ever noticed that the way you speak to your parent probably isn't the way you would speak to your kids or friends? No brainer, right? Mom might be more of a Facebook or text messaging person, where you might use SnapChat or something to that effect with your friends.

So what about your markets? What will offend them? What will get their attention? What will cause them to act?

Just like with your personal relationships, there is no single way to communicate with everyone in every circle. Truth is, there is no communication pattern that you can use even with a seemingly single group of people. As you know, there are many things that will impact the way that information is received – stressors and situations can be game changers.

So wherein is your responsibility?

What we have done in the past is we have bought into the “acceptable patterns of speech,” and business gurus have given us the impression that something that works 12% of the time is “good enough.” Surely, we understand that you cannot please all of the people all of the time, but somehow it seems as though “aiming low” is okay.

The reality is that if you sell coffee, some people collect coffees, some people drink coffee only once a day, some people don’t drink coffee at all...etc.; which means that there is only a certain percent of potential buyers that are in the market for coffee cups at any given time. The challenge that we face is getting the right message to them at the right time.

Someone who drinks coffee one time a day might be less inclined to purchase a cup of coffee in the afternoon, (although a play could be made for the infamous 3:00 slump), whereas someone who drinks coffee throughout the day would be an ideal customer. However, this person is already getting their coffee from *somewhere*.

*So both scenarios of people who might buy coffee from us seem fruitless. How do we penetrate the market?*

This is where it is important to understand that

1. Your market isn’t everyone out there, although it seems that “everyone” drinks coffee
2. Those who drink coffee are always ready to drink coffee
3. Those who are always ready to drink coffee may not wish to drink coffee from you

4. There are still those who are always ready to drink coffee that have no loyalty from where they purchase coffee, or may be dissatisfied with how/where they get their coffee now. This is your market!

Therefore it is conceivable that given that you have one dollar to spend for marketing, you want your messaging and method to reach that last group of people. For example, if you were to give them a coffee card (buy x number of cups of coffee, get the x+1 cup for free). Someone that purchases a lot of coffee might be interested in speaking with you more. The more information you can find out about their habit and them to support it, the more likely you will be to meet their need.

So you may find that even if you can only offer a bland cup of coffee, if the customer service exceeds their expectations, you may have a customer for life.

What? You want a bigger market? Find a different method and message. Look at a cheesy kids toy commercial. They place them where the kid can see it, with messaging that makes it look fun. Once the child is engaged, probably after about 30 seconds, the message turns to parents, about how safe it is, how it will keep children engaged and interested or whatever while continuing to show how the child is having fun in the background. They plant two messages for two audiences in the common medium that they share: the television.

How can you reach *your* customer base? What need can you fill for them? How do they consume information and what is their expectation from you?

If you want to build something [extraordinary](#), you'll want to take an approach that is very specific, direct, meets your market where they are.

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If you are ready to discuss how Aepiphanni can help you with business strategy, overcoming challenges to growth or any number of business solutions for your business, whether a small, growing or established company, contact us directly or submit a request for a complimentary [Coffee & a Consult](#) to learn how we can help you CREATE | DESIGN | BUILD an Extraordinary company.

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## **If You Aren't Catching Anything – Perhaps You are Fishing in the Wrong Pond**

### **Business Development – ensuring that you are approaching the right target**

I remember going to the department store as a younger man. While walking through the appliance area, it was almost inevitable that a sales person would approach me and say, “May I help you pick out a refrigerator?” I would think to myself, “Why would a need a refrigerator? Especially the \$2,000 refrigerators they would want me to purchase?” I was not their

customer. Perhaps someone that looked just like me at the time, but not me.

As you know, that isn't an uncommon scenario; many times, people in your target markets aren't going to be ready to purchase what you are selling when you are ready to sell to them. So if we know who our customer is and how to communicate with them, the next thing we need to work on is narrowing that list down to those who will have need for our services. As opposed to those who have immediate need for our services.

Think about some of the travel companies. They know that most of the time, most people aren't going to be ready to take a vacation *right now*. Yet, they offer flash sales and discounts almost all of the time. What they are actually doing, if you think about it, is solidifying in your mind that they are the company to go to when you are ready and that you will more than likely be able to find some discounts on where you are going.

Your presence with your target market needs to take on the same "life," so to speak. While you may not wish to position your company as the low-cost leader, it is your job to find out what it is that causes your clients to buy...what is that entry point that will catch your attention.

Think about it: when you get an advertisement from one of the travel companies, it will most likely be a discount on whatever you purchased last: hotel, airfare or car rental. When you get to their site, however, they have a number of products that might also appeal you – hotel, airfare and car rental, and packages combining two or three items...plus fabulous-looking vacation packages.

By going to the site in response to an advertisement, you have said, "now – you have my attention" They are saying, "while I have your attention – here are some other things that might interest you."

Kind of like, “would you like fries with that?”

In these examples, we are the right market. We have qualified ourselves by taking action.

Your market will do the same thing. They will qualify themselves by acting on your offering – *when they are ready*. They will qualify themselves.

How can you make this work for you?

Look at your offering or offerings:

- What need are they filling? Are they helping your client to achieve some goal, or addressing some deficit that they have?
- What is your pricing strategy with the items? Are you low, median or high priced against replacement offerings – those things people or businesses would purchase instead of yours.
- Looking at alternate solutions, what perception does your product offer? Is it a high value/high cost, low value/high cost, high value/low cost or low value/low cost?
- Are you offering what you offer in such a way that it is difficult to duplicate? Can you use this differentiator in your communications in a way that will attract your audience?

Now look at your audience: what would make people purchase what you are offering as it presently exists? If you are in the restaurant industry, for instance, it will probably be more than “when they are hungry.” It might look like, “when someone wants a really excellent hamburger in a casual-dining environment to enjoy with friends while watching football.” By being specific with this, you can make sure that you are approaching the right audience. (Even if it includes the posers who are there doing their own fishing; they know where to go to find your audience.) This is the need that your

target audience needs filling.

Now make your audience believe that your company is the absolute best one to fill their need. It is the perception you give people that will make them purchase or not purchase. If you position your company as one that has offerings that are [extraordinary](#) and make your audience believe it, half of your job is done.

With an understanding of your product or service and how it meets your audiences' needs, you may find that you have been fishing in the wrong pond the whole time.

Adjust and execute.

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# If Nobody's Buying | Extraordinary Business

## How some firms get the right product to the right target



Have you ever spoken with the eternal optimist who sounds like this?

*Who is your customer?*

*Any and everybody. Everyone needs what I am selling and everyone will buy it.*

*Who is your competition?*

*No one. No one is doing what our company does the way that we do it. We are unique. We are innovators.*

*Why aren't you successful?*

*We need some more capital in order to get the message out to the marketplace. Once we do that, everyone will tell their friends and family and we will be in great shape. The world will beat a path to our door!*

Hmmm...if business were only that simple. Build a better mousetrap and the world will beat a path to your door, they say.

Perhaps.

It seems as though some companies have created "needs" where desire never existed. I promise you; when I was 15 and riding my bike around town from sun up to sun down, I never needed a mobile phone. Or a tablet. Or a video game. Or a computer.

Now, when any of the above begins running too slowly, I "need" to upgrade in order to continue to do my work efficiently.

How do these companies do it?

Let's start out by saying that not every product that hits the marketplace is a home run, and those that are home runs don't necessarily hit it out of the park the first time at bat. Sometimes it is trial and error and relentless pursuit that enables firms to be successful with their product or service.

The companies that do it successfully, however, don't start with the product; they start with the consumer – the person or firm that they want to sell to and what their potential needs/wants are going to be. Looking at it from a marketing perspective, one would want to observe other firms in the marketplace and see where the gaps are in delivery. For example, in the lip balm industry, one of our clients wanted to deliver an all-natural product that was branded as being "fun" while addressing lip therapy needs. Their market is the natural products industry, but not necessarily those individuals that are very uptight about it, such as young people. Creating product lines with multiple flavors, the company could successfully sell multiple products to an

individual, whereas other lip balm companies would sell one at a time.

They discovered this by listening to their customer and making the necessary adjustments. They didn't try to sell the same product to the entire marketplace and they didn't take for granted that they knew better than their market. They took a humble approach and are now selling their product internationally.

Service firms are no different; where there is an intangible product being sold, it is all-the-more important to get the offering right because the firm is no better than the last customer's experience. Look at the rating boards and see what you look for: Great – the product has 5-star reviews, but what didn't people like about it (the 1 and 2-star reviews).

To build an [extraordinary](#) company, you must take a customer-centric approach to developing your products and pushing them out to the marketplace. You may have what you think is the great product in the world, but if nobody is buying, it ain't worth selling.

Rick Meekins is the Managing Consultant at [Aepiphanni](#), the trusted advisor for business leaders who are seeking forward-thinking solutions to help them plan for and navigate through the challenges of business growth. Our entrepreneurial multidisciplinary team works with clients to develop differentiating solutions and provide direction focused on lasting, strategic results. We exist to help our clients CREATE | DESIGN | BUILD extraordinary businesses.

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