



## TOP TIPS...

### To boost your sales and increase your profits on a budget

Let's assume your company has a limited marketing budget but you still want to grow your business. What can be done to ensure your business develops, with your client base growing and the turnover increasing on a month-by-month basis?

People tend to do business with people they either like, trust or have a loyal relationship with. It also costs considerably more to get a new client than it does to keep an existing one.

So what should you do to promote your business on a budget that won't break the bank yet can still be effective and fruitful? The following 10 tips may just make the difference you are looking for.

#### 1. Know where to sell

Define your market. It's no use trying to appeal to a market sector that doesn't want to buy from you. Who is a typical client and what service does he/she want? Get the demographic right.

Companies such as MarketingFile will be able to offer a profiling service where they can determine the common characteristics of your customers, and offer you marketing data that matches that criterion.

Always keep a close eye on your competitors. Always know your strengths and play to them. And always stay up to date with trends in your industry in general.

#### 2. Know what to sell.

Are you sure the product or service you are offering is the product your clients want to buy? Or can you make adjustments that would expand your market reach? Is your product the right price for the market you are targeting?

#### 3. Write a simple marketing strategy

This may even be a 'back of a postcard' scribble that says "make 5 cold calls every day". Once you have done this, stick to it and keep sticking to it. Write down all the things you can do to market your business and form a monthly strategy. Look at the strategy regularly and if you can improve on it do so, and increase your marketing budget in proportion to your profits.

#### 4. Every one can be a salesman.

Your budget is tight, set incentives for your clients and staff, rewarding them if they bring business to your company. Use word of mouth to your advantage - everyone knows somebody who may want to do business with you. If you have a delivery driver, when he goes to deliver to a customer, ask him to go into the two businesses either side of the customer. Introduce the company and leave some promotional literature on what it is you do. Get him to ask for a business card and put that info on a database. This can be used at a later date. Ask clients to recommend and reward them with a discount off the next purchase. Now you have a large sales force working for you.

#### 5. Know your audience and keep in touch.

Build a database from your current client base. Add to it the contacts your delivery guys bring back each day, as well as the names your current customers recommend to you for their incentive - and you have yourself a growing prospect and client list. Now you have to make sure you communicate with them on a regular basis.

#### 6. Use a multi-channel approach

Don't forget to use the full range of marketing channels you have at your disposal - email marketing, direct marketing (print and digital), promotions and public relations (PR). An integrated approach using a mix of them all gives your message the best chance of getting through. Keep at it. Target the same audience repeatedly through multiple channels to maximise exposure and drive the message home.

#### 7. Test, test and test again

Experiment with different messages & methods so you know which works best for each part of your business, and which ones particular customers respond to. Measurement is vital - gather as much response data as possible to inform your campaign. Email marketing is brilliant for measurement. The ability to track click throughs, email open rates and to test everything from responses to subject lines gives you great ammunition for next time.

#### 8. Join a business-networking organisation

Build a network of business referrers that can recommend you and potentially bring new business to your door. There are many such organisations around, such as: Chamber of Commerce, Federation of Small Businesses, the Institute of Directors, Business Link and so on. Such business networks are relatively cheap to join and can quickly return high levels of good quality work.

#### 9. The '80-20 rule'

80 percent of your business will come from 20 percent of your clients. This is true. Don't be afraid to lose or ditch a bad client that doesn't pay well or won't deliver. It means you now have room to bring on board new and more profitable business to take the place of the culled clients. It is possible to work too hard for too little return.

#### 10. Don't leave home without them.

Never, ever, ever leave home without your business cards. Be prepared to give them out, even at social functions (but do tread the fine line between being a business bore and an innovative networker). Those cards that you are given, write on the back where you met that person, and a memorable point about them. Put them onto your new customer database, and remember to follow them up.

