



# "the best things in life are free"

Wherever you are in your business journey, there is no denying that marketing and publicity will help take your business to the next level and quickly reach a wider audience. But not everyone has the big marketing budget to outsource, and that's totally fine!

Sure, allocating resources to your marketing and PR budget will help you grow even faster, BUT there are lots of things you can do to get the word out about your business - without spending a cent! All you'll need is access to a computer and a phone.

Each of these 12 steps will spread the word about your offering and help drive more potential customers to your business. We recommend trying each one relevant to your business type - but please don't get overwhelmed and do them all at once! Pick one to try first, and work your way through the list.

Now get yourself a cup (or glass) of something lovely to drink, and lets map out some free ways to promote your business.



# 1. DIY PUBLICITY

Take the power of PR into your own hands. You may not have the reach and resources of a huge agency, but if you follow these steps, there's absolutely no reason you can't secure yourself some excellent media placements.

It's not as scary as you think, and once you get into it - you'll get addicted to the thrill of a positive response.

You will need to:

- **a)** Learn how to **write a story or pitch** (including crafting a headline that gets you noticed). Our blogs will get you started:
  - HEADLINE HACKS
  - THINK LIKE A PUBLICIST
- **b)** Hunt down some **key media contacts** in your industry and track them in a spreadsheet. You can look for contact emails on the website itself, but LinkedIn is also a great place to start.

You can search 'journalist' or 'writer' + a keyword that relates to your industry (e.g., 'writer beauty'), and you'll start to get some details. Just make sure that you filter for 'PEOPLE.'

c) Utilize free PR resources online like HARO (Help a Reporter Out), and the #journorequest hashtag on twitter to find out what stories are being worked on by whom, and if you may be a suitable contributor.





# 2. E-NEWSLETTER

An e-newsletter is your way to regularly and personally communicate what's going on in your business to your customers. It allows you to provide direct links and calls to action that enables them to purchase or engage with your offering immediately.

New products, special offers, sales, competitions, giveaways, new appointments, and new service offerings are all topics to put in your e-newsletter.

Keep it simple; your e-newsletter does not need to be a graphic design masterpiece. In fact, the most effective newsletters often aren't. Statistics show that simple, text-focused newsletters are more widely read and clicked on than art-heavy ones because some people's email settings cause glitches when images and artwork are included. Some won't even allow them to download images at all.

If you do decide to add an image, always name the image file with the relevant text copy. By doing this, you'll ensure no information gets missed.

MailChimp.com has some great, simple, and free templates. Make sure you always include your social handles and website too!







# 3. CONSISTENT SOCIAL ACCOUNTS

There's no shortcut when it comes to building your socials organically (without paid advertising or influencer engagement). To get some organic momentum going on your social media accounts, you will need to:

- Post consistently, at peak times of the day. We recommend posting once a day if you have enough content - but no less than three times per week.
- Use relevant hashtags when posting to increase your search-ability on Instagram and tag relevant accounts in your content to encourage reposts (only when it makes sense, don't be spammy).
- Repost content from relevant and like-minded accounts on stories, tagging them, and crediting them when you do. This encourages a repost of your repost, exposing your page to their audience - which ideally will be your target audience.
- Send a link to your latest post to your close friends/family and ask them to like it and/or leave a comment - the more engagement you have, the higher a priority you will be on the algorithm.
- **Respond** as quickly as you can to comments and DMs to move your way up the algorithm.
- Make sure your look, feel, and tone is **consistent** and in line with your branding.
- Ensure that your website and email details are in your social bios, and you have easy call-to-action buttons so people can reach you.







# 4. BLOG

A blog on your website is like an informational hub for your company. You can elaborate a little further on industry topics and company news than you can on shorter form channels like Twitter, Instagram, or your e-newsletter.

A blog helps position you as an authority in your field. It also helps your SEO, making you easier to find when people are searching for the things they need, that your business provides.

Say you are a personal closet organizer for example. If your blog regularly mentions keywords like 'closet organizer,' 'wardrobe makeover,' 'space-saving hacks,' or 'wrinkle-free storage' - customers googling those very keywords are more likely to stumble upon your blog.

You can also provide links to your blog posts within your enewsletter, and create preview tiles and teasers on social media driving people from social to your website.







## 5. GUEST WRITING

Guest writing establishes you as an authority in your field, drives backlinks to your website, improves your SEO, and gives you some great content for social media. Otherwise known as guest blogging, this is the practice of submitting pieces of your own writing to reputable sites that are relevant to your industry.

You'd be surprised how many of your favorite websites accept guest blogger submissions, and equally surprised how much content from those sites comes from business owners just like you, rather than journalists.

If you google 'submit guest post' you will be able to see plenty of opportunities. Choose high traffic, reputable sites that accept guest writing, like:

- huffpost.com
- medium.com
- mashable.com
- lifehack.com
- elitedaily.com
- entrepreneur.com

Read the submission guidelines carefully and get writing! And don't forger to include links back to your website and socials in the piece. Plug, plug, plug!







## 5. FACEBOOK GROUPS

Join relevant Facebook Groups, and consistently add value.

How?

Share interesting and related articles, funny memes, resources, and engage with user posts.

When people ask for advice or recommendations in your field, pop up with the answer, and position yourself as a trusted voice in that community. When it's relevant and not gratuitous, tie it back to your business.

Always observe the 'house rules,' though.

Many Facebook groups have rules about spamming the community with blatant ads for your business - that's not what it's about, and it might get you kicked out.

They usually have one day per week devoted to community members promoting their businesses, so take note in your diary and make the most of this opportunity.







## **6 UTILIZE YOUR EXISTING NETWORK**

Before you spend a fortune trying to access people who have never before heard of you and your business, first make sure you are utilizing your existing network to the fullest.

Between family, friends, business partners, ex-colleagues and acquaintances - you probably have more contacts than you realize.

Send your (quality) relationships a text or drop them a line about your business, encouraging them to spread the word online.

This could include them sending to a friend, posting on social media, joining your email list, or leaving a positive online review (if it's a past customer).

There is absolutely no shame in self-promoting.

In fact, most of the savvy entrepreneurs in the spotlight today did the exact same thing for their brands.







# 7. REWARD CUSTOMER LOYALTY REFERRALS

You can further incentivize your network to spread the word about your business by offering a reward for any new customers that they send your way.

This could be 20% off their next purchase, or a \$20 gift voucher for example. Maybe you already have a loyalty program in place, full of exciting perks. If so, you could allocate a certain number of loyalty points with each new customer someone refers.

You could even use customer referrals as an entry mechanism to a competition where you're giving away a prize of significant value. The more referrals, the more entries they have in the draw.

# 8. GATHER TESTIMONIALS

Turn your early customers into brand ambassadors and ask for a testimonial. You can then use these on social media as quote tiles, on your website, and in various marketing collateral.

You may not even need to ask for a testimonial from scratch. Perhaps someone has already left you a glowing review online or sent you a lovely email, complimenting you on your customer service or product quality. Reach out and ask if you can use the review and their first name as a testimonial on social media.

Spreading this kind of positive customer feedback builds social proof, trust, and credibility for your brand.







# 9. GET FAMILIAR WITH SEO

SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is the practice of increasing the quantity and quality of traffic to your website through organic search engine results.

SEO is so essential for businesses (especially online and e-commerce) that countless companies around the world are dedicated solely to driving up your SEO - and they are not cheap.

However, there are at least four things you can do yourself to get your SEO ball rolling. Some of them are already covered in this guide in more detail, because not only do they drive up your SEO, they help promote your business in general.

- If you are a local or service-based business, **create a strong Google+ profile**. You'll need to set up a Google places listing and a Google + local listing. These pages will interact with things like maps and review sites and get indexed by search engines, which will drive your search-ability ranking higher.
- **Get into link building.** Look for opportunities to create links back to your business on other sites, including social platforms, business listings, and online publications. Search engines use these links to help determine how well a page should rank in their results.
- **Set up social channels,** and don't forget business networking channels and review sites like Yelp and LinkedIn.
- **Blog on your website** using SEO keyword terms that are relevant to your business and guest post for others, creating link backs to your website.





# 10. GO LIVE ON IG

If you have a growing following on social media, Instagram Live does wonders for your social media presence and engagement AND cuts through the pesky Instagram algorithm.

IG Lives have priority in the story feed, being shown at the beginning no matter what. Plus Instagram sends a notification letting people know that you've gone live.

It also puts a face to your brand and lets people see behind the scenes (which they love). Instagram Live combines the best parts of a radio show, podcast, and tv show, in that it enables a real-time interaction element where people can ask questions like live callers, and feel like they have more access.

You can even use Instagram Live as a free focus group and ask for feedback on new products and offerings before you invest in bringing them to market.

If you invite somebody with a large following on to your live, you can easily access their audience, which can convert to new followers and more engagement for your platform.







# 11. GIVEAWAYS & COMPETITIONS

Giveaways and competitions are a great way to get more eyes on your business and reward the customers you already have.

For a successful competition, try to:

- **Design your entry mechanics** to your advantage. Make following and commenting a condition of entry to promote growth and engagement. Or have them fill out a questionnaire and leave their email address if you're looking to grow your email list.
- **Partner up** with a likeminded brand who co-promotes the competition so you can access their audience.
- **Promote** your contest on all your platforms. If it's an Instagram competition, promote it on Facebook and Twitter, send out an e-newsletter about it with direct links to enter, and pop it on your website or blog, If you have a brand partner, ensure they do the same.
- If you have a brick & mortar business, put up signage about the competition and **tell your customers** about it.
- Follow the rules! Facebook and Instagram competitions have rules and stipulations, as well as various information that needs to be disclosed somewhere easy to find. These rules are updated often, so research the latest when you're setting up your comp.







# **12. YELP**

93% of customers say that online reviews impact their purchasing decisions, which is why Yelp is such a crucial tool for promoting your business.

It also helps to boost your SEO - win, win!

Reviews alone, however, do not make a stellar Yelp profile. You should also:

- Claim your Yelp business page you can do this on the Yelp for Business Owners platform, which has handy prompts and walks you through the process. Ensure that all your details are accurate and filled out, from contact details and website to business hours.
- **Utilize the information section** to elaborate on your services, team, story, and specialties.
- A picture speaks a thousand words, which is why Yelpers often want to see pics. **Upload images** highlighting your products, services, and offerings to the "Photos and Videos" section of your Yelp dashboard.

According to Yelp guidelines, you cannot ask people directly to leave reviews. But you can promote your Yelp profile by adding the badge to your website and sharing positive reviews on your socials.

Finally, make sure to always respond to your reviews, whether they are negative or positive. It is such a great way to enhance your customer experience.











