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10 Marketing Tips for Small Business

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1. **Deliver benefits messages.** Tell prospective customers how what you sell will *benefit* them—not how great your services and products are. Most everyone has heard this before, and most people continue to ignore it. Reposition your messages.
2. **Use PR.** Getting articles published about your organization is more cost-effective and persuasive than any other form of marketing. It's like word-of-mouth on steroids when respected journalists with hundreds of thousands of readers give you publicity. Creative PR is a small company's best marketing tool.
3. **Market vertically.** Target your most profitable vertical markets with segment-specific marketing messages that show that you understand their particular industry.
4. **Advertise to your customers.** Some ad reps exaggerate, so get to know the publications that want to sell you ads. Do they have independently audited circulations, or are they just making up their circulation numbers? Review their media kits to see who their readers are—and if they're your prospective customers.
5. **Be a friend...and leverage relationships.** Small businesses need to co-market with others to magnify their results. So coalesce several firms that market to your types of customers and share programs, costs and leads.
6. **Make your website stickier.** A "sticky" website is one people keep returning to because it contains useful material. It gives you a better chance to do business with them. Rethink your website's value. Are you just trying to sell or are you providing valuable information? Be a good corporate citizen in your industry with better content than your competitors provide.
7. **Network with purpose.** Purposeful networking is much likelier to earn you customers than the usually aimless, sloppy business development practices you most often see at industry events. Learn how to network. Make sure your salespeople get proper training, then measure their success.
8. **Research.** Don't fall in love with your products and services without carefully researching what your customers think about them or what your competitors are offering. Have you ever surveyed your customers to determine what they think of your company and your competitors? Their needs?
9. **Trade-show party.** Giving a unique after-hours, offsite party during a trade show can be less costly than hosting a booth on the show floor—and much more effective.
10. **Go direct.** Printed direct mail is still the only legal way to reach most prospects. You can rent lists of most of your prospects. But email lists are unreliable, and spamming people who have not granted you permission to email them is illegal and annoying.