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THE BUSINESS OWNER'S GUIDE: HOW TO GENERATE NEW BUSINESS THROUGH MARKETING

How to generate new business in 7 easy steps.



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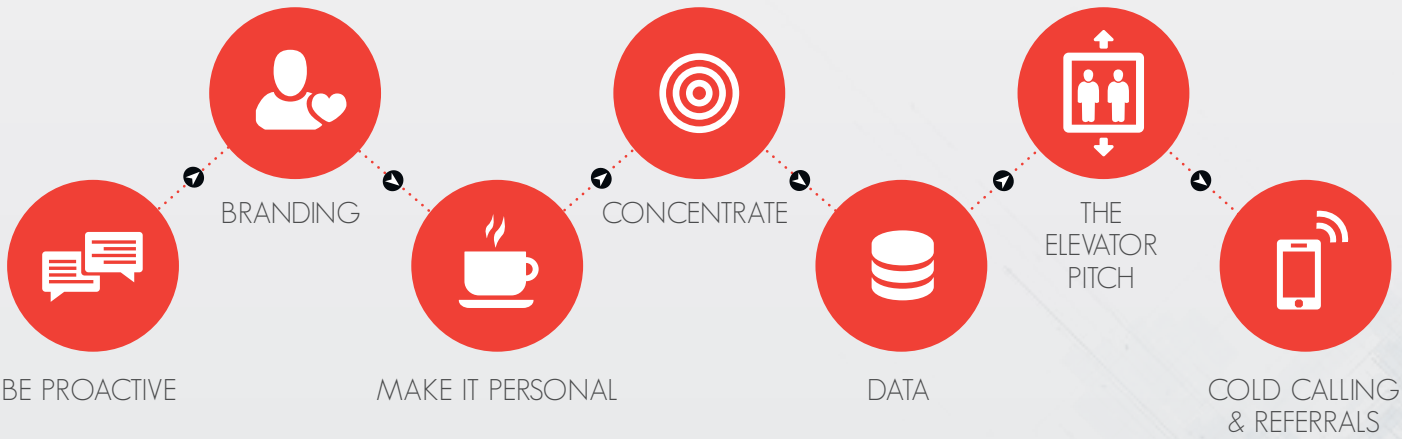
If your philosophy is, "If I build it, the customers will come", you shouldn't be in business.

Gaining new leads is the single most difficult challenge for any business, particularly if it is a new one or trying to establish itself in the market. But while marketing might sound incredibly daunting, it is something that every business owner has to face in order to survive and thrive. New leads mean new business – it's that simple.

The last few years have been tough all round for many businesses in all sectors, but the good news is that 2013 is looking positive. According to the Federation of Small Businesses, SMEs were "cautiously optimistic" for this year.

That means, if you haven't thought of it before – now is the time to begin growing your business through marketing. The first thing to do is not panic. It's easy to become overwhelmed with the concept of marketing, but breaking down each component into bite-size chunks can make all the difference.

Here are just some of the things you should be doing now:





BE PROACTIVE

Businesses aren't waiting to contact you about your service or product – they don't have a crystal ball, either, so get yourself out there. Whether this means networking at breakfast meetings, attending relevant conferences or joining in local business groups, you have to get yourself known in your relevant sector or the area you are targeting.

You may find it useful to join a professional membership body or group as those can help with industry insight, legal advice and so on. However, start-up experts Enterprise Nation found recently in a survey among its members that they aren't so popular with micro businesses and SMEs.

If you learn that a business needs a solution to a problem now that you can resolve, don't sit on the information for a week or a month - contact them now.

Being proactive also means using any leads that you get – be persistent in following them up and do it in a timely manner.

Every day that a lead goes by without you following it up, you are losing business and credibility.



BRANDING

Regardless of whether or not you have a corporate logo, you and any employees you have form part of your corporate brand.

If you are representing your company on business, you are the brand – that means being professional, courteous and polite. **If the chemistry is right, trust will follow (see the next tip about making it personal). Of course, the corporate brand is central to who you are.**

Read what Richard Branson, surely one of the UK's best-known entrepreneurs, thinks of branding here.



MAKE IT PERSONAL

Companies don't make decisions about contracts – people do, so it is crucial that your lead-chasing is done professionally.

Don't go into email marketing like a bull in a china shop – that will only serve to annoy them (and it is important to be remembered for the right reason).

Give yourself time to build up a relationship with the key people in your target companies, and ask for feedback on your product and service. Show that you value your clients' or prospective customers' opinions. **If something is wrong, show the customer how you plan to fix it; if the feedback is good, use this to increase your reputation.**



CONCENTRATE

You're special.

As a growing, small business it's impossible to compete with the multi-nationals or the giant corporates that are in the same field. The fact is, you have to differentiate yourself in the market by focusing on your uniqueness and your product.

Concentrate on your core service or product and offer the very best service at all times.



DATA

It's not a dirty word.

How do you know if you are targeting the right companies if your marketing data is old and not up to the job?

Investing in a good quality marketing database can save you time and money. By doing so you aren't wasting time chasing impossible prospects or sending pitches to people who are irrelevant to your service/product, or who have left, retired or even died. If your competitors aren't investing in this area, this puts you one step ahead; if they are, you need to keep up with them. It is essential that any database you buy is the best you can afford and is legally compliant.



THE ELEVATOR PITCH

Every company needs an elevator pitch as part of their marketing strategy. It means keeping it simple when pitching your product or service – brevity is key.

Make sure you can say what you do in 30 seconds or less.

Plan it, and when you deliver it, make it clear, precise and ensure you emphasise the benefits. **As Entrepreneur says, if you can do that without the other person's eyes glazing over, you have done it right.**



COLD CALLING AND REFERRALS

Cold calling is probably the marketing technique that many business owners dread, but it can be a useful and effective way to get to know unknown prospects.

Read Tips for Successful Cold Calling for some great ideas on how to warm up for a cold call and clinch a new deal.

Referrals are equally valuable and should be part of every business marketing strategy. Asking a satisfied customer to refer you for business is a sure-fire way to get your business known – an established brand recommending your work or service is worth its weight in gold.



To help you generate new business through email marketing, download our eGuide:

WHAT YOU CAN LEARN FROM SPAM CON ARTISTS.

DOWNLOAD FREE EGUIDE NOW!