

# “27 Top Business Building Tips”

by  
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## Your Marketing Business

- 1) Make sure all your staff know what you do, how the business works (only key staff need to know how to run the business though), how they fit into it, how the service/product benefits the client. This will enable all staff to begin to appreciate the customer perspective. Remember that somewhere along the way every staff member will become a company representative in some way shape or form.
- 2) Systemise and document your business processes and procedures so that everyone can learn what to do if someone isn't there.

Read THE 'E' MYTH by Michael Gerber

- 3) Never let your accounts receivable become unmanageable. Always chase late payers, don't let them off the hook. Lack of credit control is one of the top 3 small business killers. You are not a bank so don't give out loans to those who call themselves your customers.
- 4) Make it easy for your customers to do business with you. Accept as many different kinds of payment as possible (cash, cheque, credit/debit card etc). Offer flexible payment terms if appropriate.
- 5) Make sure doing business with you is pleasurable and always try to over-deliver. Even go so far as to mystery shop just to test the outward face of the firm.
- 6) Work out what marketing techniques have worked for you in the past and try and make a system out of them. How did you get the clients you already have? If you don't know the answer then find out.
- 7) Dedicate a minimum 10% of your time to marketing, including your staff. This could include things as simple as building up a sales database to run a mail-out target list. Surprisingly few businesses will miss 10% of productivity for each staff member (it doesn't mean all staff at the same time though).  
**Sales and Marketing need consistent and persistent effort over a sustained period.**

## Networking

- 8) Networking is about building relationships and gaining trust so you need to be persistent and patient.
- 9) If you go with the attitude of giving (i.e. who can 'I' refer business to?) then it will produce better results.
- 10) Get involved in the organisation and promotion of such groups; it helps to put you in the spotlight.
- 11) Remember; if people like you and trust you they will refer work to you so always keep the longer-term view in mind.

Networking can become a very successful method of marketing, offering opportunities for strategic alliances and cross referral of work. Many small businesses use networking as their principal marketing method.

## General Tips

- 12) **Keep your promises!** If you say you'll phone someone back in 15 minutes then do it in 10 - just make sure it's done. Professionals (lawyers, accountants, doctors, etc) tend to be the worst at this but almost all businesses are guilty at some time.
- 13) **Follow up every product query.** In most cases (over 75% in fact) when someone requests information about a product a purchase is imminent but not necessarily immediate. Surprisingly only around 20% of companies follow up when information is requested by a potential customer. Follow up and keep in touch, every 3-4 weeks if a large item or more frequently if smaller item. Always maintain the contacting initiative; never wait for them to get back to you.
- 14) Even if they've bought the product **keep in touch** with a regular newsletter or sales letter or promotion offer. Keep your product or company in the mind of the buyer. You can bet they know people who will be in the market eventually for what you have to offer.
- 15) Grow your sales in ALL the following 3 areas:  
1 - increase your number of customers - don't just focus here  
2 - increase the average sale amount - through promotion or up-selling  
3 - increase the frequency of purchase - through incentive or promotion  
If you grow your sales by 10% in all of these it would increase your turnover by 33.1%.
- 16) **Find out what your clients really want by asking them.** Surprisingly few businesses ask their customers what they want. Use the guise of improving customer service (if necessary) and then ask your clients how you can better serve them, most of them will respond especially if there's an incentive. Not only that but you'll be seen as proactive in service and esteem will be built in the mind of the customer (in a large number of cases).  
You then use the results of your research to improve what you do and then to exceed customer expectation.
- 17) *Always* **always** always (get the message) carry business cards with you; you never know when you may be required to give them away. You should aim to give your business cards away as soon as possible, they will do your business no good if they're sat in a cupboard gathering dust,
- 18) Make sure your business card says what you and your company do as a bare minimum.  
At best it should have a short description of how your product/service/business provides benefit to customers.  
If your business provides a service and you are the provider of that service then include your photo on your card with a caption underneath the picture. A word of warning though, only do this if you seriously want to increase the retention of who you are and what you do in the mind of the potential client.
- 19) If you sell to consumers try and work out a way to be open until the middle of the evening.  
Financial services companies arguably miss out on potential sales because their offices tend to close around 5pm.
- 20) Try and **give a bonus** with as many sales as possible (could even be as simple as a packet of sweets re firebox.com). This works a treat if used as an incentive and can lead to repeat business if used as a surprise gift with each order (not only that but people will talk about it).
- 21) Never leave customers (or potential customers) holding on the phone. If you don't have information to hand then get as many details as possible and phone them back (and make sure you do it in a timely manner).

22) Never let your phone ring for long or go unanswered, every single call could be new business. And make sure that it's answered courteously every time.  
A great thing to do here is to write a short script so that every time someone calls you they get the same message.

23) Don't be afraid of 'selling'. The word 'sell' is derived from the Old English verb "*sellan*" and means **to give**.  
Thus when you sell to clients and customers you are in fact giving them something and as a result selling should always be the first activity in a business process.

### **The Internet (or: If you don't have a website & email – get it sorted NOW!)**

24) Email can be used to keep in touch with lots of potential clients quickly and cheaply. Use an email address list to market your business on a regular basis.

25) Monthly E-newsletters are an excellent way to keep in touch with customers and prospects.  
Provide them with information they can use and they will be grateful to receive what you send.  
You need to get their permission to send them first though.

26) Always make sure you can **collect details** of visitors to your website, give them a reason to give you their contact details by offering a free something or other (could be a report or monthly e-newsletter). You can then use this info for marketing.

27) Register your website with search engines and monitor it on a regular basis.  
Your website will need to be optimised for search engines to try and boost rankings (i.e. how high up the list your website comes when someone searches).

28) Make sure the website loads quickly, nobody waits these days for slow websites to open.  
Keep the information on your website current and update it regularly (a blog is a great tool for this).

**Turnover is vanity, profit is sanity,  
*but cash is reality!***

Midlands Advice and Training Services Ltd provides business skills advice and training. They work mostly with smaller businesses to show how they can seriously improve profits and productivity too. Some of the most effective marketing tools cost nothing or nearly nothing to put into action.

So, whatever the size of your marketing budget there are always ways to bring in more business.

p.s. Number 28's a gift

p.p.s. If you need a website then visit [www.buswebs.co.uk](http://www.buswebs.co.uk) and take advantage of their website offers.

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