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10 Marketing Tips for Less Than \$500



By Carolyn West Price

It really is true that “it’s the little things that count.” For many businesses, large and small, there are many small-effort, small-budget marketing opportunities that are missed every day. So, whether you are a large

company running a huge ad campaign and spending thousands and thousands of dollars or are a start-up without much budget at all, here are some of the “little things” you can do to complement your selling or advertising. And, they won’t cost you \$500 combined.

1. Use your Signature block on your email to not only make it easy for people to call you or mail you something, but use it for some self-promotion. You can put your logo on each email, but also consider using that space to promote an event, a sale, or even a headline or slogan that may be memorable. You can also use the space (do a color font) to provide a useful tip that you rotate from time to time to make it worth reading. Cost: free
2. Use your fax cover sheets to promote your business. Again, consider making a portion of the sheet an “ad” for your business, a tip space or at least another time your logo passes in front of a customer or prospect. Too many people use computer-generated fax cover sheets which are generic and

do nothing for marketing. Cost: free or minor graphics fees to design a template

3. Get an email address/URL that reflects your company name or a benefit of your company...or at least something memorable and easy to spell. If you have an address with @aol, @verizon or @comcast, it appears that you are small potatoes. Even if you are, don’t convey it. Cost: free
4. Send press releases to the local papers and trade publications to “toot your own horn” and tell the world of your news. Expansions, awards, and management new hires are all worth reporting. Cost: \$0-\$200 per release
5. Sponsor a local recreation and parks team to earn the goodwill of the community, generate an excuse for a press release, and meet some potential prospects. Cost: \$200-300.
6. Give a scholarship to a local graduate. You’ll have the opportunity to announce the availability of the scholarship (toot your own horn!!) via a press release, and then announce the winner with a photo for a second hit. Cost: your choice on the scholarship
7. Volunteer to serve on a committee or board of directors. It is far easier to dazzle people with your brilliance and to build a relationship working for a common cause than to just go networking and hope they remember you as they sort through the collec-

tion of business cards in the jacket pocket the next day. Cost: free

8. Give seminars for organizations. If you are a good speaker and teacher, show off. Offer your services to various organizations to market you as ‘value-added’ to the organization’s membership. They do the marketing, and you are in the lime-light building credibility. Cost: free
9. Do what you say you’re going to do. If you tell someone you will call them or send something, do it. Your reputation for follow-through (and good manners) is at stake. Cost: free
10. Send a handwritten note and you will surely stand out in a pile of mail. You can send notes for anything—you saw the person in the newspaper, you enjoyed meeting him or her at an event, or you just want to say thanks and pass along a business card of a person you think could be of value to the individual. Old fashioned yes, effective yes... especially in this impersonal, fast-paced world of emails, voicemails and faxes. If we can’t take time for the personal touch with a five-minute note, how effective will we really be at this relationship-marketing thing anyway? Cost: a few stamps

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