

## Marketing Factsheet: Promotional Activities



You need to do a lot of research on costs and logistics before deciding to do any of the promotional activities described here.

### Direct mail

Send letters, postcards etc to any leads generated by, for example, having a presence at events, trade shows and fairs. It can be expensive, but you can reach people nationwide, and the target audience can be as refined as you like.

A word of warning though: if you choose this route, you need to do it well!

### Leaflet drops

This is one of the most cost-effective ways to get your message about your local service, product or business out to (your local) world.

You can use:

- Door drops -where you or a door drop agency post leaflets through letter boxes in specific areas or roads
- Newspaper and magazine inserts -where you ask the local distribution agency for your free-sheet newspapers to insert your leaflets into the papers. (There are very strict guidelines on size and weight of the inserts.) You could also use, say, your local parish magazine, or your alumni or health club magazine, or a trade magazine or journal.

### Website

The internet is another important way for any business to market itself -but only if the sorts of customers you want to engage with regularly use the internet. Make sure your website is found easily on search engines by optimising it for key words and phrases that people will type into the Google or other search box. Otherwise, it will be a big waste of money!

You can make your website more effective through:

- **Website analysis and statistics** - Find out the number of hits (how many times people have visited your website), what key words they have typed, how they found your website, and so on. Investigate what pages and information they accessed and how long they stayed on the site and where they came from. Improve your website on the basis of this analysis. Build relationships and link with other sites that will send people to your site.
- **Email newsletters** - Think about having a hints and tips section on your website -you can build up your list of subscribers from people who opt-in for hints and tips email. If you plan this carefully, it can be a very cost-effective way of talking to both your existing and potential customers.
- **Pay per click (online marketing)** - Pay per click ensures that an advert with a link to your website appears on the side of one of the first screens that come up when someone does a search using particular key words.



You can buy key words to ensure you get top ranking. You only pay when someone actually clicks the link to go to your website.

You can also set the total amount per day you want to spend, and you can choose which key words or phrases you want to use.

## Public relations (PR)

Telling local or national newspapers, trade magazines, business press or a local radio station about something newsworthy is a highly visible way of making potential customers aware of your existence. The good thing about public relations (PR) is that it doesn't often cost anything. It can be more effective than an advert.

There are only two types of PR:

- **Positive PR** -sending out press releases (there's an art to writing them) about your new product, new staff, or any other information that may be of interest, and getting them into the press
- **Negative PR** (not good -you don't want this!) -anything that may look bad about you or your organisation, such as being sued for compensation for a poor product or service. Damage limitation is key

## Advertising

The questions about advertising are when, where and whether to do it at all. It's VERY expensive, and you may be competing against some major companies that have large budgets and the expertise of advertising agencies.

You should consider advertising as one of the last choices in your promotional budget. If you are going to use it, you need to be sure that you will get a return on your investment and be very focused on your target market. An ad in the local paper or on local radio, rather than at the national level, may, for example, be worthwhile.

If you are going to place any advertising, you need to make sure you know:

- How, when and how often the media reaches your target market
- How much you are paying for the space and for the ad itself
- What the response is
- How many of those who respond to the ad convert into sales
- What those sales are worth to you.

If you don't do this, you will never know if advertising works for you.

## Vehicle lettering/store signs and banners

This is low cost but effective. Place a sign on your vehicle or shop front. Shop signage needs to be of good quality. First impressions are very important.

If you know of an ideal location, where lots of your type of customers are passing regularly, then vinyl banners can be a low-cost way of displaying your address, phone

number, website or a short message.



## **Branding**

Building your brand takes time. Read the Marketing Factsheet: Creating a Brand for more on this.

## **Networking**

Never underestimate this. Who do you know and what can they do for you? You never know who might recommend your business, or do business directly with you. You can network more effectively if you know what you need to get out of it and so what questions you need to ask. Networking is all about information gathering. Remember to follow up your leads.

## **Word of mouth**

This is SO important. Whatever you do, good or bad, people will talk about your business. Remember this at all times!