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Ten Marketing Tools to Grow Your Business Fast

By Tara Alexandra Kachaturoff

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Whether you're a new start-up or an established small business, effective marketing plays a key role in your success. In order to extend your reach and access to as many potential customers as possible, it's important to implement as many marketing tools as you can. While you might be doing quite well through writing articles or through public speaking, you can actually do much better by adding a few more techniques to your toolkit. Not only will it be a great learning experience, it will also create more visibility and credibility - the two things you must have to build a successful business. As a marketing expert, I advise my clients to implement low or no cost options first. You would be surprised at how many things you can do to build your business - and all without spending a dime! All of my suggestions will help you to do just that.

1. Write and publish articles. Writing an article is one of the quickest ways to establish yourself as an expert. The power of the written word is awesome. If you're a fairly decent writer, who can craft a well-organized article filled with meaningful content, you're on your way to establishing a relationship with potential customers. You can publish your articles online through free services like www.topten.org or www.goarticles.com, or submit them to local newspapers or magazines. You can even give them out to people you meet.
2. Use assessments and surveys. Assessments and surveys are the perfect way to build awareness about you and your business. If you use a free survey tool like www.surveymonkey.com, you can send out a survey to your mailing list. You can ask for opinions on your current products and services while at the same time inquiring about what new things people would like to see. Keep surveys short and to the point. They're a great way to get back in front of folks who you might not have contacted for a while or a great conversation opener with people you've never met before.
3. Write an e-course. Writing an e-course is a wonderful way to promote your business, while providing value to your current or prospective customers. In the simplest terms, an e-course is a series of e-mails that are delivered at pre-defined intervals which contain valuable content around a specific topic. E-courses consist of "lessons" which are loaded into autoresponders which automatically e-mail the lessons to your opt-in list. Not only will you be able to provide valuable content to readers over a

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specific period of time, but you'll continually remind them of who you are and what you do.

4. Upgrade your e-mail signature. Your email signature is more important than you might think. At first consideration, you might see your email signature in its traditional role - just your name - identifying you as the sender of an email. At its best, an email signature can play a strategic role in your marketing effort as yet another way to reach out and make connections with current and potential clients. An email signature should be considered as a part of your branding initiative. Each component part, from your name to your address, from your website to the color and type of font you use, should be thought about and arranged appropriately to communicate who you are to the world. And, what a great way to continually advertise your business - every time you send or respond to an email!

5. Offer a free or fee teleclass. What do you do in your business? What problems do you solve for your

customers or clients? Think about the value that you offer and distill it into five to seven key speaking points. Offer information that can help someone with a problem or issue they're experiencing. Provide useful references to books, websites or other resources. Teleclasses are a great way for people to experience who you are. They can hear your voice, ask questions, and interact with you. Not only can you establish yourself as an expert while providing valuable and useful information to participants, but at the same time you'll be establishing relationships with people who may contact you in the future.

6. Create an R & D team. Starting your own research and development team is a great way to develop new relationships which can turn into future clients and customers. Essentially it is a group of people who you invite to give you feedback around your business, products, services, processes, or anything else you wish to run by them. To compensate them for taking the time to provide valuable feedback you can use to develop and grow your business, you might consider giving them discounts on your services, free reports or articles, or other special thank-you gifts. By involving a group of people so closely with what you are doing with your business, you increase the chances of converting them to customers in the future.

7. Form a mastermind group. A mastermind group is a formal or informal group of people who meet on a regular basis to share ideas and to support each other in achieving personal and professional goals. Consider forming a group consisting of 7 to 10 small business owners who meet either in person or via teleconference one hour per week. Not only will you get to know about several other businesses, you'll be educating everyone about yours. Taking the time to build relationships with groups like this can lead to direct business or referrals later on.

8. Create a newsletter. An electronic newsletter or ezine is a great way to create visibility on a regular basis. The key to a successful ezine is in providing valuable content and resources, while keeping it short and to the point. It should be easily read in 2 to 3 minutes max. People are busy and you want to make your contact with them count. Sending an ezine once per month is adequate; any more often and you will risk losing subscribers. Don't forget to send your ezine only to people who specifically register or opt-in to receive it.

9. Speak up. Speaking for free or for a fee is a wonderful way to increase your visibility and credibility. On par with the written word, public speaking is a great way for potential customers to experience you

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first hand. Offer to speak wherever and whenever you can. Call up the rotary club, optimist club, chamber of commerce, and any other organizations in your local area. They are always looking for dynamic speakers to fill up their meeting schedules. It is a great way to meet people and possibly develop relationships that will lead to new business.

10. Offer a complimentary consultation. Give a little bit of your time to prospects that show interest in the possibility of working with you in the future. By showing them who you are, sharing a little of your expertise, and giving them a taste of your customer service orientation, you may be making their decision to buy from you a lot easier. Even if they don't end up working with you, their positive experience may be something they share with others - possibly leading to some future referral business.

True Web Searching Tools For Business "Turf"!

By Claude Jollet

Searching for specific business related information on the Web, using specialized high precision searching tools, can "Turn Up Real Finds (TURF)"! But, where do you find the business specific tools you need? How can you tell if you are getting the most that can be expected from the Web? Here is how I solved the problem.

An Expanding Universe Of Information

There are more than 56 million Web sites out there, and the number is growing every day. This means billions of Web pages and trillions of words. The WWW is fast becoming a universe.

Now, every Web surfer will search the Web for something, often many times per day. Some will spend hours searching and often end up not quite finding what they were looking for.

In spite of the increasing power of the search engines, the keyword expressions we use (one to three words, on average) only manage to scratch the surface of what is available out there on the Web.

The amount of information we get back is often overwhelming, and only vaguely relevant. When we try to refine our search ... we often find that we have drifted away from our goal.

This situation is annoying, when not downright frustrating.

Information Is Vital To Business

You cannot run a business, any size of business, with search tools and methods that give such uncertain results.

>From brainstorming ideas, to identifying the competition and investigating legal issues, you need fast, reliable access to verifiable information you can count on.

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Obviously, you need more than whatever you can extract from general purpose search engines.

Tools To Mine The Web

You and your business need a web searching tool set designed specifically to find the business information you need in a timely, effective, and efficient manner.

The good news is that these specialized search tools already exist. Yes, they are all available on the Web. New ones even pop up almost every week! Most of them are freely accessible too!

The bad news is that there are hundreds of them ... and they are not all equally reliable or easy to use! Sure, you can find them yourself ... given time and determination. You can test, and learn how to use each one, personally. During this time, you will be learning a lot about Web searching ... and about the depth of your resolve!

Meanwhile, this self-imposed apprenticeship will not let you attend to business as you should.

I let the experts spend their time and energy on finding and testing Web searching tools. They have their own reasons for doing that kind of work. I am not in the business of finding and testing tools. Besides, I do not have the expertise, nor the time.

By supplying me with fully tested and approved Web searching tools for my business, they win my respect and patronage. I win precious time, which I spend taking full advantage of the information gems I discover using their best Web searching tools. My business is well fed with the highly focused, and reliable information it requires to grow safely.

That's what I call taking care of business. I can truly mind my own business, because the Web searching tool set I use can definitely "TURF"!

Claude Jollet is a former planning advisor to major industrial and commercial clients. He specialized in weather related operational planning issues. He holds a B.Sc.A. specializing in business process analysis and automation. He now devotes himself to the promotion of entrepreneurship on



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