

## Top Ten Priorities for Marketing Your Small Business

1. **HAVE A PLAN AND DEDICATE RESOURCES.** Create a marketing plan/timeline and dedicate resources to marketing (if feasible, hire a marketing communications or public relations contract consultant; also consider hiring an intern if you have an office set-up that would support this arrangement). Make sure your marketing plan directly supports your business goals.
2. **PROJECT A PROFESSIONAL IMAGE/BRAND THAT REPRESENTS YOUR VALUES AND WHAT YOU STAND FOR.** Establish a professional image that represents your “brand”— your personality and what makes you unique. Be consistent and carry this through in your logo/tagline, color choices, all printed and electronic marketing materials, your professional bio, etc. Set up an email address—and web site if you have one-- that ends in your company name (ex: renee@careerstrategists.net).
3. **BE ABLE TO ARTICULATE “WHO YOU ARE AND WHAT YOU DO” WITH EASE AND CONFIDENCE.** Have a “pitch” or introduction that clearly and concisely conveys this (you can tweak this depending on the individual or audience you’re addressing). Don’t try to be everything to everyone. If you focus on serving a specific niche, say so.
4. **PRACTICE CONTINUITY.** Key to branding: be consistent in your messaging and everything you do: your elevator speech, your materials, online communication to customers, presentations you deliver, articles you write. These vehicles should consistently deliver the “essence” of who you are and what you do. Be prepared to do your homework if you’re still not sure what this is.
5. **ADOPT A TARGETED, INTEGRATED MARKETING APPROACH.** It takes at least eight impressions before the customer is moved to make a purchase (impressions include seeing an article you wrote, receiving an e-mail from you, hearing/seeing your name in the news, receiving a newsletter from you, etc.). Don’t rely on just one tool. Note about advertising and web sites.
6. **TAKE ADVANTAGE OF PR OPPORTUNITIES.** Public relations is your best friend. Utilize no cost/low cost public relations tools: public speaking -- strategically choose your audience--sending out press releases to generate news articles/stories, online newsletter to your clients (if appropriate), sponsorships, teaching through UT Informal Classes, writing articles for local publications, etc. (Note about energy investment.)

7. **MAINTAIN A CUSTOMER DATABASE.** Capture information on your clients (current and potential). Start a simple database (Outlook is easy or use a more complex program to manage thousands of names). Really important when you want to send direct mail pieces, online newsletters, b-day/holiday cards, notices about gift certificates or special promotions, etc.
8. **KEEP IT SIMPLE.** It's better to do two things really well, than spreading your energy too thin and not seeing results. Try two new marketing strategies each quarter or every six months.
9. **TRACK/EVALUATE YOUR MARKETING PROGRAMS.** Figure out what's working and what is not working (analyze at least 2-4 times a year). Survey clients to find out how they heard about you (ad, news article, referral, web site, etc.) Track where your referrals are coming from and thank those in your network. Note: Don't be "married" to your ideas.
10. **REALIZE THE IMPORTANCE OF MARKETING AND BE WILLING TO ASK FOR HELP.** Even the most talented entrepreneurs can't be good at everything. One of the top reasons businesses fail is their lack of a marketing know-how or their willingness/commitment to dedicate resources to marketing.