

FREE Marketing Report **- for Small Business Owners and the Self-Employed**

How to Avoid Seven Expensive Marketing Mistakes

Mistake 1. Focusing your marketing on the services (or products) you offer, rather than the benefits

Often small business owners talk about their job title and the work they do rather than the results and benefits they give their clients. Potential customers are far more likely to be interested in the benefits they receive and the results they could achieve. They want to know what's in it for them and why they should listen to your message. This is best illustrated by some examples:

"I'm an accountant and I complete tax returns and audit companies" when focused on the benefits could become, "I help small businesses to reduce their tax bill and save time on financial paperwork" or "I'm a marketing coach and work with small businesses on their marketing" becomes, "I help small businesses to develop a tailored marketing solution which gets them as many clients as they want".

Mistake 2. Not having a marketing plan

Having a written plan, which contains both your marketing goals and how you intend to accomplish them, makes it much more likely that you will achieve your business goals. A marketing plan doesn't necessarily need to be long or complex, it can be short, to the point and works best when updated regularly. The process of writing the plan can in itself help by generating further ideas and clarifying your marketing approach. Also, having a written plan will help you focus more clearly on your goals and ensure you are less likely to get distracted from your true priorities.

Sometimes it can be difficult to choose which, out of the vast array of marketing tactics, to include in your plan, particularly as a small business. The best advice I can give is to choose marketing activities that feel natural and easy for you, as you are far more likely to be successful this way. If you absolutely hate cold-calling - don't do it! Find other more enjoyable ways of communicating with your target audience.

Mistake 3. Not telling your potential client what to do next

On all your marketing materials, it is important to guide your potential client on what to do next, rather than just leaving them there not knowing. Ask yourself "What action do I want them to take now?" For example at the bottom of each web page, you can guide them with a link to show them which page they should read next, or at the end of your leaflet, ask them contact you to arrange their free initial consultation. This may seem an obvious one, but I've noticed people can easily forget this part in the final stages of their copy-writing and publishing.

Mistake 4. Only using your own words in promotional materials

One of the best ways to impress your potential customers is to have testimonials or quotes written by satisfied clients about their experience of working with you (obviously with their permission to use them). Even better if these quotes include the positive results or outcome your client received through your services.

An example for a weight-loss coach could be, "I really enjoyed working with Mandy, I realized that losing weight can actually be easy for me through her system. I now feel so much better about myself, I've lost an amazing four stone and kept it off for over a year now."

Mistake 5. Asking your potential clients to take an expensive risk

One marketing approach which can have a big benefit to your business is to create opportunities for your potential clients to sample you and your service (or product) in a cost free way. Small businesses can make the mistake of trying to sell an expensive service from a leaflet or website without giving the customer a chance to try them out and sample their services, or even just meet with them face-to-face.

Examples of ways of doing this are; a solicitor could offer a free initial consultation to potential clients to discuss their needs, this allows the client to gain some free initial advice and meet up with the person who they may choose to trust with their legal matters. Another example is a massage therapist who could offer a free ten-minute neck and shoulder massage in a workplace or shopping centre.

Mistake 6. Being too much of a generalist

There can be a temptation for self-employed people and small businesses to try to reach too large an audience and/or offer too many services or products in the hope of getting more business. I don't know if you've seen those websites where there are so many things available that it is hard to tell what the company or person really does? The problem is that customers can interpret these companies as jack-of-all-trades-and-master-of-none.

If you specialize in a niche, the advantages are that firstly it can be more profitable as people will pay more for a specialist service. Secondly, it makes it easier and more effective to focus your marketing resources and messages to a smaller target audience.

Mistake 7. Thinking that marketing and business success is all to do with actions

It's not just our outer actions, but our inner thoughts and beliefs which are crucial to our business success. This is why when I work with small business owners, I guide them in creating a successful business mind-set as well as focusing on the practical marketing tools.

In my experience, we need to have both an inner and outer approach to being successful in our business. Confidence, belief and inner knowing (or intuition) are all highly valuable in achieving the results we want. These qualities, along with a positive attitude, have an effect on all our marketing and communications, they can ultimately have a powerful and tangible impact on our business success.

A Marketing Plan for your Business

If you're a small business owner who would like to develop a marketing system which achieves your income goals more easily, please contact me, Lisa Farr. I offer one-to-one marketing coaching to help you create a customised marketing solution to ensure a steady stream of clients for your business.

My Background

I am a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Marketing with eighteen years experience in marketing. Since qualifying as a professional coach in 2001, I have been helping small business owners to take their business to the next level.

Marketing Coaching - FREE 30-minute Taster Session

If you would like to find out how marketing coaching can help you, please contact me for details of your free 30-minute taster session. This will give you the opportunity to experience marketing coaching, without of course at this stage, any obligation on either side. Marketing coaching gives you personal one-to-one sessions over the phone, or sometimes face-to-face.

"My sessions with Lisa have helped me take my business through the roof!! I started working with Lisa when I was a practitioner, I soon became very successful with clients from all over the world. Now an author and trainer, I still go back to Lisa when I feel ready to take my business to the next level. She always helps me to define and realise my vision.

Lisa is a very rare person in marketing. The sessions are always such a joy and she helps me to see the humour in my marketing misperceptions, before turning them into constructive solutions! **I recommend Lisa to all the people that I train. Every session is worth its weight in gold."**

Sasha Allenby - Author and Trainer

Lisa Farr - Marketing Consultant and Coach

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