

# 15 marketing tips to help you win more clients

In any small business in any industry, marketing is vitally important as a mechanism to retain existing clients as well as attracting new ones. In this, the first of an occasional series of business related articles, we offer you 15 tips to help you win new clients and grow your profits.

Many small business owners believe marketing is something that is done by other, larger organisations. Often people believe marketing to be complicated, rather like an exact science. In reality it is not and much of it is common sense. In essence, marketing is:

- Knowing and understanding your target audience
- Discovering the needs of your target audience
- Creating and implementing a marketing plan to deliver a relevant offering
- Retaining loyal customers and winning new ones

## Tip 1



### Understand the buying cycle

Your potential clients will go through the following process:

- They recognise they have a need or a want
- They search for solutions to their problem
- They create a shortlist of solutions before settling on one
- They find a business that can provide the solution
- They hire that business

## Tip 2



### Recognise that you cannot sell your services to everyone

Your service will only appeal to a certain subsection of any market sector. Focus on that sector and dismiss the rest.

## Tip 3



### Understand how your prospective client will choose to buy

Some of the most popular ways people learn about professional service providers are:

- Referrals from people in their network
- Word of mouth
- Online research
- Google
- Business articles
- Trade shows and conferences

## Tip 4



### Make your marketing proposition specific

Potential clients want to believe and be comfortable that your business can precisely meet their needs. If you have served or provided a similar solution for someone like them before and have testimonials, they are more likely to choose you.

## Tip 5



### Get yourself known in the market place

Take any and every opportunity to speak, write or share your knowledge and passion for marine surveying. Let people know that you are an expert in your field with a breadth of experience and knowledge.

## Tip 6



### Know and understand your competition

Often overlooked, this is a key part of your marketing strategy and proposition. Indeed some people are not even sure who their real competitors are, or what they have to offer the market and the advantages of their service over and above yours. It is also the case that some business owners think they know their competition, but do not keep an eye on them. This means they are not best placed to fill the gaps when they are left by their competitors.

“Don’t wait for testimonials – ask for them”

## Tip 7



### Become a prospective buyer for your competition

Get someone in your network to make contact with your competitors so you can understand how good or bad they are at handling the initial enquiry and how they price their services. Learn from the good and the bad and understand what your competitors are not delivering and then position your proposition accordingly!

## Tip 8



### Define your unique selling proposition (USP)

Your USP is not a catchy slogan. It is the unique position your business holds in the minds of your potential and existing clientele.

## Tip 9



### Understand that price is not always the key factor when people purchase

There is a misconception that people will always choose the cheapest offer. This is not the case. Studies show that price is quite often not the major consideration. Indeed being the cheapest can sometimes be detrimental because people regard your service as in some way inferior.

## Tip 10



### Don’t wait for testimonials – ask for them

A testimonial is someone else doing your sales and marketing for you. If their experience of your service was so positive, ask them to write you a testimonial. This can then be used on your web site and in your marketing blurb.

## Tip 11



### Generate free publicity

This is not always the easiest thing to do, but use public relations as a means to generate free publicity about you and your services. Offer to go and speak on a local radio station about an aspect of marine surveying for example; or write to the media and offer to contribute some editorial that may be of interest to their readers. Target which media you approach with care.

## Tip 12



### Maintain regular contact with existing clients

Keep your existing clients in touch with any news, or new services you have to offer. Do not assume they will necessarily remember you when they next need to buy. Send them a letter, an email, or a telephone call periodically. Make a point of over delivering on your clients’ expectations. Never ignore your existing customers. It may have cost you money to get them onboard in the first instance. They should be easier to sell to than new prospects as you are a known quantity to them.

## Tip 13



### Always write accurate marketing blurb

Do ensure that what you write about your business and services is correct and accurate. If you offer a service, make sure that you have the means and expertise to deliver it in its entirety. ‘It does what it says on the tin’ is a good adage.

## Tip 14



### Check for mistakes

If you read a web site or brochure that is full of spelling mistakes, or poor grammar, would that make you more likely or less likely to want to use that supplier’s services? Less likely for sure. Make sure you thoroughly proof read your marketing material and correct it for errors. If this is not your skill then ask someone in your network to do so for you.

## Tip 15



### Understand the demographics of those who are most likely to buy from you

- \* Age of your potential clients
- \* Their likely income range
- \* Even their education level

If you know the demographics of those who are likely to use your service, then you can target your marketing programme accordingly.

“Get yourself known in the market place”