



20 MINUTE



SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING GUIDE

FREE GUIDANCE, RESOURCES, AND WORKSHEET
EXERCISES TO HELP YOU GROW YOUR BUSINESS





20 MINUTE

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING GUIDE

We are here to help your business find solutions to your printing, communications and marketing challenges. If you want to discuss any of the items in this guide, I would be delighted to assist you.



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This guide is designed to inspire, challenge and be informative about ways to market your company with helpful tips, thought provoking exercises, and useful resources. Grab a pencil, go somewhere quiet, and let's get busy growing your business!

Section 1 **BRANDING**

Section 2 **CURRENT CUSTOMERS**

Section 3 **NEW CUSTOMERS**

**LOOK
FOR
THESE
ICONS**



**THOUGHT
PROVOKING
IDEA**



**GUIDANCE
OR
RESOURCE**



**NOTES
OR
CHECKLIST**

Section 1

BRANDING

WHAT IS BRANDING?

Simply put, branding is creating an image that identifies and differentiates a company from its competition. An effective brand strategy includes:

- Company name
- Corporate ID package (logo, colors, fonts and styles)
- Effective slogan

POSITIONING

Before deciding on your company's branding, you should put some thought into positioning.

Positioning is determining your place in the market - in other words, why would someone buy our product or service rather than someone else's? It's not good enough to just exist. Think about why you're better than your competition. What makes you stand out from other companies? Maybe you are faster, fresher, easier to use, or better designed. Or it could be that your service is hassle-free, or that your product is made from better materials/ingredients. Whatever it is, all of your branding should go to re-enforce that position.



**WHAT MAKES MY
COMPANY DIFFERENT?**



SURVEY THE COMPETITION

It's always a good idea to scan the competition. What is their position? Is there already someone who has positioned themselves where you wanted to be? Or, better yet, examine their weaknesses and position yourselves there.

YOUR LOGO

Once you decide your position in the marketplace, you're ready to work on a logo. The elements of your logo, which include the colors, fonts and styles used, should emphasize that position. Use the section below to brainstorm about your logo.



MY COMPANY LOGO

Position

Colors

Fonts



FIND EFFECTIVE LOGOS

Look for some logos that you really like. It doesn't matter what type of company or industry, just find some logos that you think are effective. Now examine what you like about them. How do they help establish that brand and positioning of that company? What do the colors, fonts and style say about the company? What impression do those logos create?



NEED A LOGO?

If you are ready to have a logo designed, or want to update your current logo, we would be happy to help you. One of our four experienced, professional graphic designers will work with you to create an effective brand image. Once we have a design finalized, we provide the logo to you in all file formats you need.

NAME & SLOGAN

Just like your logo, a slogan can be used to reinforce your brand identity. Once you decide on a slogan, incorporate it into your logo as a tag line. *(Keep it under 7-8 words. The longer the slogan, the less likely it will be remembered.)*

USING YOUR BRANDING

Now that you have your branding finalized, take advantage of every opportunity to use it to re-enforce your position. Below is a checklist of items you may not have thought about that could be displaying your brand image to the public.



BRANDING CHECKLIST

- Invoices
- Envelopes & letterhead
- Uniforms/shirts
- Notepads
- Shipping labels
- Social media accounts
- Packaging
- Product tags & labels
- Business cards
- Signs and banners
- Nametags
- Sales materials
- Invoice stuffers
- Postcards
- Statements
- Shipping documents
- Delivery vehicle
- Order forms & contracts
- Thank you cards
- Gift certificates & coupons
- Website
- Price lists & sales sheets
- Print ads
- Email signatures



PACKAGING

Packaging is an area of branding that often gets overlooked. Imagine the benefits of adding your logo to all your packaging, products, shipping boxes and tags. It would be a huge missed opportunity to have your customer fall in love with your new product or service, only to forget where it was purchased. We can help you with labels, tags and packaging.



PROMOTE YOUR BRAND FOR \$99 OR LESS

We have a list of over a dozen helpful promotional items that you could use to promote your brand for under \$99. Go to Phase3Graphics.com/99-promotions to find inspiration on how to get started promoting on a budget.

CURRENT CUSTOMERS

MARKETING TO EXISTING CUSTOMERS

Communicating with your existing customers is easier, faster, more cost effective and efficient than trying to gain new customers. Most people think of marketing as trying to attract new customers, leaving the most lucrative opportunity on the table.

IDENTIFYING YOUR CUSTOMERS

Let's start by determining who your clients are. This section will help you think about ways to identify who your existing customers are, which will be helpful in section 3. Use this chart, or a separate sheet of paper, to identify some of the characteristics and demographics of your customers.



GATHER INFO

Don't assume you know everything about your customers. I was surprised when I broke down our customer demographics. The process will help you gain helpful insight that you will use in section 3.



CONSUMERS

OUR CUSTOMERS

COMPANIES

Gender

N/A

Age/Years in business

Location

of household members/Employees

Industry(s)

Occupation(s)

Income level/Annual sales

Hobbies

N/A

Other _____

Other _____

Other _____

NEVER MISS AN OPPORTUNITY

Never miss an opportunity to market to your existing customers. Don't assume that your customers are familiar with all the products and services you offer. We have all been surprised by a customer who bought a product from the competition because they didn't know you offered it. We are going to show you how each interaction with a customer is a chance to market your goods and services.

LOBBY

Let's start with your lobby/entrance. If you routinely have customers come in to your business, then you have many opportunities to increase your marketing. Take a look at this photo of our lobby area for ideas.



REGULAR COMMUNICATIONS

Staying in touch on a regular basis is an excellent way to increase your sales. Keep your name in front of your customers with newsletters, postcards, mailers, and monthly emails. Consistently coming up with something to promote may seem overwhelming, so here are ideas of topics to include in your regular communication:

- New products or services
- Stories of how you recently helped a customer
- Highlighting a product or service that customers may not know you offer
- Anything that enforces your brand positioning (for instance, if your brand is that your company is experienced, then stories about how experience matters, or how another companies inexperience turned into a disaster)
- Customer comments and reviews



FUN & USEFUL

We all get constant media messages, and you want your message to stand out in the crowd. Making your message both fun and useful to your readers will increase the likelihood that it gets noticed.



FOLLOW UP NOTES

Sending hand-written follow up notes or thank you cards will help you establish a closer relationship with your customers. Don't forget to ask them to leave you a review/rating on social media. We can print 200 customized thank you notes for only \$84.

SOCIAL MEDIA

A regularly updated social media presence can help keep your name in front of your audience, and can be done with very little investment in time or equipment. Just a few minutes a week and a cell phone can give your company a boost. Short videos are great, particularly for products or services that need to be demonstrated. The social media landscape changes quickly, and buying social media ads are one of the most expensive ways to market, but the free versions can be very effective if promoted properly and updated regularly. Don't get frustrated if you don't see results right away - building an audience can take time, but stick with it.



CONVERTING YOUR LOGO

If you need your logo converted to a PNG with transparent background for use on social media, contact us. We help customers with this all the time, and do not charge for it.

SHIPPING & PACKAGING

If you had the chance to send a marketing packet to your customer, at no charge, would you take advantage of that opportunity? Of course you would. That is exactly the opportunity you have with every order or shipment you send to your customer. Each package is a “marketing missile”, headed directly to your customer. Stuff a flyer, coupon, or special offer into each shipment.

REVIEW YOUR PACKAGING

Branded packaging can add perceived value to your product while re-enforcing your brands positioning. Add your logo and slogan to your shipping box, even if it is a label. Why not use some of that extra space on your packing list to promote your monthly special or coupon code? Once you start to see your shipping and packaging as an unlimited “marketing missile”, you will find many creative ways to boost your sales to your customers.



SHORT RUN PACKAGING

Phase 3 Graphics is one of the very few print shops in West Michigan with their own die cutting press (in fact, we have two!) That means we can help you with packaging at very affordable, competitive prices, even in small quantities.

SHIPPING & PACKAGING

Just like shipments, the invoices and monthly statements you send out are another “marketing missile” opportunity. Add an invoice stuffer to each envelope before you mail it. Most invoices are reviewed by the boss before they are paid, so what a great way to reach the decision maker at the top.



INVOICE STUFFERS

Invoice stuffers are the easiest way to reach your customers with special offers or monthly specials.

We can print 500 invoice stuffers for you for only \$56

Most invoicing software include an option to customize your invoices. Why not turn your invoices and statements into another marketing opportunity? Add your branding, as well as a marketing message to the bottom of each invoice. Better yet, update the message from time to time to keep it fresh and interesting.

Use this checklist to determine the effectiveness of your packaging, invoicing and shipping documents.



PACKAGING, INVOICING AND SHIPPING

**Properly Branded
(logo, slogan, colors, etc)**

**Includes a
Marketing Message**

Invoice
Monthly statement
Packing list/Delivery slip
Product tags & packaging
Outer shipping box
Warranty/instruction sheet
Other: _____

Section 3

NEW CUSTOMERS

IDENTIFY TARGETS

Wouldn't it be great to find a few new customers? Often, we are so excited to gain a few new clients that we rush into the process without a focused plan. A focused plan starts with identifying your target markets. Back in section 2, you examined your existing customers. This information may help you identify some new targets. These target markets can be organized by location, industry, size, or any other factor. Remember, you can't hit your targets if you don't know what you are aiming at.

Likely, you will have different target markets that you would like to grow into. Each market may require a different strategy. For instance, a florist may want to expand her wedding business with one campaign, then focus on selling daily deliveries of flowers to hotels to freshen up their lobbies. Each of these campaigns would require a different, focused campaign strategy.

You may end up with some campaigns reaching thousands, while other campaigns might be focused on just a dozen specific contacts. A small, focused micro-campaign can yield very good results.

VARIABLE DATA

Using variable data can help your marketing look less like mass marketing and more like an ad focused specifically on the recipient. Mass mailings, email blasts and sales materials can all benefit from variable data.

What is variable data? It is a database set up with specific info about each recipient. That specific info can be almost anything, such as occupation, favorite football team, or type of car they drive. Imagine sending out postcards saying "Hi (recipients name), here is an exclusive special offer for Ferris State alumni" to one list, and another offer to people who are MSU alumni. Ask us how we can help you with variable data.



FINDING THE RIGHT CONTACTS

It is best to direct your campaign at the decision maker in the company you are targeting. Linked-In is a great resource to find the names of the specific people you want to reach.

ATTACK FROM MULTIPLE FRONTS

A multi-faced plan of attack will increase your results. Imagine your prospects getting your advertisement in the mail. A week later, they get an email from you reminding them of your offer. Soon, they notice that you've just started following them on Instagram. Shortly after that, your ad shows up in the industry trade magazine. For a month, you are everywhere, constantly re-enforcing your campaign. A robust plan of attack makes it nearly impossible for your prospects to ignore you.

Once you have determined a target market, you can determine the best way to reach them. This chart may help you plan your attack. Use one chart for each target market (you can print extra copies of this page)



MAKING MAILINGS EASIER

Mailings can be intimidating, with all the regulations, confusing jargon, and requirements. If you're thinking of using mail as part of your campaign, we have a **FREE** mailing guide to help you. You can download the guide from our website

Phase3Graphics.com/mailings.pdf



TARGET MARKET PLAN OF ATTACK

Target:

- Gender
- Age/Years in business
- Location
- Household size/Employees
- Industry(s)
- Occupation(s)
- Income level/Annual sales
- Hobbies
- Other _____
- Other _____



CAMPAIGN


	COST
Billboards	\$\$\$
TV Ads	\$\$\$\$
Radio Ads	\$\$\$
Newspaper Ads	\$\$\$
Public Relations & Press Releases	\$\$\$
Website	\$\$
<input type="checkbox"/> Product Displays	\$\$
YouTube	\$
Sales Materials	\$\$
Coupons & Samples	\$\$
Social Media	\$
Industry Magazine Ads	\$\$\$
Trade Groups & Events	\$\$
Every Door Direct Mail	\$
Google Ads	\$\$
Email	\$
Bulk Mailings	\$\$





NOTES
& IDEAS:

YOUR CAMPAIGN STRATEGY

Here are a few quick notes to help you decide on which advertising medium(s) would be best for your target market.

 **Billboards** A billboard sure makes a big splash for your company. It will reach a very large audience, with a quick, uncomplicated message. Pricing depends on the location of duration of your ad.


 **Bulk Mailings & Every Door Direct Mail** Bulk mailings can be more effective than you think, if they are done right. It all starts with a good mailing list, and a great offer. If you need help buying a mailing list, we can help. You only need a minimum 200 pieces to qualify for the discounted postage rates of a bulk mailing. Every Door Direct Mail is perfect for reaching specific neighborhoods with your message. Postage rates for EDDM are lower than bulk mail, and no mailing list is needed. Check out our **FREE** mailing guide for more info on these 2 options, or call us and ask for Chris Landis, our mailing guru.

 **Coupons & Samples** Give away free samples or coupons to introduce your product or service to new customers. How you can do that depends on your industry, but a creative idea can have people knocking down your door for more.

Email Email blasts reach a large audience for very little in cost. Keep a regular schedule of mailings, and providing relevant content are the key to getting good results.

Google Ads Google has a few different options for online marketing, the most common is search marketing. Target people searching for certain key words, and narrow down your audience by location and other demographics. A strong Google ads presence along with a well designed website will boost your sales.


 **Industry Magazine Ads** Every group has magazines, newsletters, and websites where industry news and info is exchanged, and it may be the perfect place for you to find new customers.

 **Newspaper Ads** While newspapers are not as popular, don't count them out. Many small, local newspapers are effective, while larger papers will print special supplements just to attract advertisers (a local dining guide, for instance, so they call sell ads to all the local restaurants)

Public Relations & Press Releases A PR firm can help your company get direct media coverage, as well as indirect coverage. Imagine selling alarm systems. A PR firm can help you get stories published about crime trends or home protection ideas, which can benefit your company.

Product Displays Putting your product on display in your lobby, at the point of purchase, or at trade shows is a great introductory method for new prospects.

Radio and TV Ads Broad based advertising to reach people by the thousands. As new technology emerges, TV & radio ads are getting replaced by newer media, like podcasts & Spotify.

 **Sales Materials** Sales materials include brochures, price lists, product sheets, and any other collateral material your sales force would use to leave behind with potential customers. They are useful for cold calling, mailing, trade shows and in displays. Don't skimp on the design of your materials. You will get better results if you hire a professional, like Phase 3 Graphics, to put these together for you.

Social Media Ads on social media can be costly (as measured by CPM) but a well maintained social media account is free! Take advantage of this free opportunity to make new connections.

Trade Groups & Events These include Chamber of Commerce meetings, networking groups, and industry trade shows. Meetup, Facebook groups and trade magazines are a good place to find these type of groups.

Website A well-designed website is a constant presence to help your company reach new customers.

YouTube Online videos (or podcasts) are great if you have a product that needs to be demonstrated, or you have helpful "how to" videos that are specific to your market. You can also take advantage of this trend by sponsoring popular shows that are relevant to your market.



WE CAN HELP

Don't spend a lot of money on an advertising campaign, then skimp on the design. We have experience designing effective display ads, billboards, mailings, and other sales materials .

ASSEMBLING YOUR CAMPAIGN

Once you have decided on a campaign strategy and method, you are ready to assemble your advertisement. Every campaign should include the following:

1. BRANDING

Back in section one we looked at branding your business. Your ad should be consistent with your branding. Using the colors, fonts, slogan and other branding standards you have established will make your ad instantly recognizable.

2. A SPECIAL OFFER

Your advertisement needs to say more than just “Hey, we exist”. You want people to be motivated to make a purchase. You need a special offer, or series of offers, to attract new customers. Think about the most popular product/service(s) you offer, the one thing(s) that bring the most people through the door. If you own an automotive shop, that one thing might be a brake replacement or an oil change. A coupon or special offer(s) for these widely purchased items will be most effective. You might also include special pricing or offers on your highest profit margin items, where you have room to adjust pricing.

Your special offer doesn't need to be related to price. A free gift giveaway, a grand prize drawing, charity benefit, or other special incentive are other effective strategies.

3. CALL TO ACTION

The purpose of the advertisement, and offer in particular, is to get the recipient to take a specific action, such as calling to schedule an appointment, or going to your website to request a quote, or make a purchase at the store where your product is sold. Whatever action you are trying to solicit, make it obvious and easy to take that action. That means a map so people can find the location you want them to go, or the phone number to call listed often and noticeably.



DESIGNING YOUR CAMPAIGN

If you have the content of your advertisement finalized, but just aren't very confident in your ability to make something that looks professional and effective, don't worry. Phase 3 Graphics has professional graphic designers on staff, all with decades of experience in putting together effective marketing materials. Contact us for help.

OTHER CONTENT TO INCLUDE

One clever way to help move people towards your call to action is to include a list or paragraph about why you are better than your competition. Remember, your branding will also send that message - see section 1.

For some industries, looking like the trusted experts in the field makes your marketing more effective. To set yourself up as the experts, include customer reviews, endorsements and awards. Any chance to offer free advice useful to your target market also helps establish you as the helpful experts, and makes it more likely that your customers will hang on to your marketing material to refer to later. The chart below lists a few other things you might consider including in your advertisement, as well as the three necessary things we already mentioned.



WHAT TO INCLUDE IN YOUR AD

REQUIRED

- Your company branding (logos, colors, fonts, slogan, etc)**
- A special offer(s) (coupons, BOGO, free gift, prize drawing, etc)**
- A call to action that is easy to take**
- Reviews or comments from your customers
- Product photos & details
- Hours of operation
- Map of your location
- Contact info & social media handles
- Endorsements or awards you're received
- Free expert advice
- A price list
- Why you're better than the competition