



How to get your business
in front of your customers

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Let us know how you're promoting your business.



You're great at what you do. Let your potential customers know it too.

As a small business owner, you are passionate about your business and proud to be your own boss. You care about your customers and you're interested in creating the best service for them.

The next step is making sure they've heard about you.

And this is what this e-book is all about: getting your business in front of your customers.

You'll discover the various marketing

materials you can use to promote your business, from business cards and flyers, to brochures, postcards and more. In every section we'll go over the advantages of using each marketing material, as well as the dos and don'ts of creating them.

We're looking forward to hearing your ideas and questions about marketing your business, so please use the links at the end of this book to get in touch.

We wish you the best business success.



What is today's biggest challenge for small business owners?

In a nutshell: competition. At the start of 2013, there were an estimated 4.9 million businesses in the UK. Small and medium enterprises accounted for 99.9 % of all private sector businesses in the UK, with 9% of those being created between March 2012 and March 2013 (source: ons.gov.uk) In London alone, there were more than 841,000 private sector businesses.

More and more businesses are created every week and you want your customers to choose yours.

Your advantage as a small business



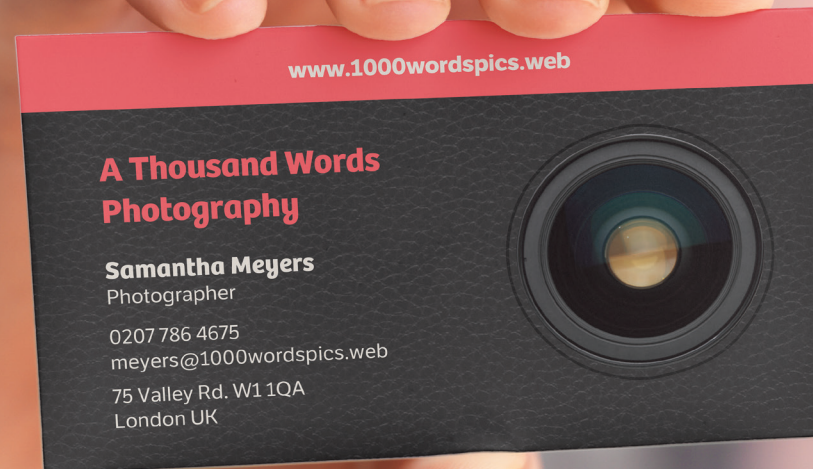
As a small business owner, you have some great cards in your hand. A recent global study (BBMG, GlobeScan and SustainAbility, October 2013) shows a third of the global consumer class are "aspirational consumers" that are characterised by their love of shopping (78%), desire for responsible consumption (92%) and their trust in brands to act in the best interest of society (58%).

So what does this mean?

- Being small lets you interact directly with your customers and get first hand feedback, which in turn helps you customise their experience. Tell your customers why you wanted to start a business in the first place. Share your passion and let them know your story.
- If you are a maker, a baker or an artist, it's likely you are creating your products yourself and are offering your customers something unique. This is a USP in itself.
- With a bit of research it's easier for you to review your consumption and make your business greener; something customers are looking for.

People want better services and products. They want your business to become their new favourite. They want to tell their friends how great your business is. **You just have to give them a good reason to.**





Business cards

Your networking tool

Your business card is the first marketing product a potential partner or customer sees from you. It's also one of the best ways to let people know you run your own business.

Choose your design well and your business card will make you look professional, build trust and set you apart from others in your field. If you're at a conference or business fair, handing

out your business card can be an ice-breaker and can help make networking a bit easier.

When talking to a potential customer, giving them your business card says you care and that you are there to answer their questions.

What's the worst mistake you can make with a business card? Not having one.

10 golden rules for designing your business card

1 Get the details right

We can't stress enough the importance of clear contact details, correct spelling and a readable font. Apart from your name and job title, make sure you mention your business, telephone number, website, email and even social media handles. Make it easy for customers to contact you in the way they feel most comfortable.

2 Make first impressions count

Your business card says a lot about you and your business. The design and quality of the card tells customers whether your company is an affordable solution, or if they should expect a more premium service. You can also convey what kind of business you are: fresh and contemporary, or established and well-respected?

3 Choose the right design

Make your card easy to recognise by selecting colours and design elements that are easily associated with your business. We've even seen fashion and hairstyle businesses leaving space for their customers to doodle their own designs. Make it memorable.

4 Create a matching look

Ensure your card fits your brand by using a design that's consistent with your website and marketing materials. Or if your business is well known for something in particular (be it your banner, the building, the uniforms of your staff), try to integrate that into your business card design.

5 Give your card the wow factor

For a more memorable card, use special finishes such as embossing, raised print and metallic finishes. Or you can even choose a folded card. Customers will notice the difference.

6 Suggest additional uses

Experiment using the backside of your card for appointment reminders, loyalty stamps and calendars. With calendars, don't just use a basic template, try to mark important dates for your customers. For example, a gardening company could highlight the best time of the year to plant new bulbs, while a beautician might mark the days when they offer discounted treatments.

7 Make it sticky

Forget marmalade fingers, 'sticky' means how long your card will be in a place where your customers can see it. We've seen magnetic cards work very well for businesses offering recurring services, like plumbing, painting, gardening, pet sitting, hairdressing and car services. People put the cards on the fridge and refer back to them later.

8 Hand out multiple cards

When you're giving your card to a satisfied customer, consider handing them a few more cards to give away to family and friends. If there's a way to include a discount for customer referrals, mention it on the card.

9 Promote partner businesses

Use your card to promote partner businesses and ask them to do the same for you in return. Joining up with similar-sized, complementary businesses is mutually beneficial. If you run a B&B, for example, recommend some local restaurants on the back of your card. Similarly, if you have a hairdressers and there's a great nail place around the corner, talk to the owner and see if you can offer a discount and vice versa.

10 Keep your card in good condition

Giving out a wrinkled, stained or outdated business card will suggest to your customer that your business is disorganised, out of date and unsteady.



Flyers and postcards

A fuss-free way to connect with your customers

Flyers are great for promoting your business and getting new leads.

They're established, people trust them and most importantly, they work. What's more, they are low cost, versatile, easily readable, easy to distribute and can get into the hands of a large amount of people fairly quickly.

Apart from using them to promote a product or limited-time offer, flyers are a great pretext for getting in front of your customer.

Take the opportunity to talk to your prospective customers and listen to their feedback.

10 tips for flyers and postcards with a longer life

1 Find your customers

For your flyers to have the biggest impact, leave them in places where your target customers will see them. For example, if you run a business fixing car engines, leave your flyers in a DIY or car parts shop.

2 Make your flyer stand out

Your flyers will be competing with lots of others on bulletin boards, counter tops and high streets. Make sure you design a flyer that stands out. If possible, gauge the competition beforehand by looking at the flyers in your area. Generally, you want your design to have:

- bold, easy-to-read font
- colours that are eye-catching but not gaudy
- enough white space so you can absorb the message at a glance

3 Write engaging copy

Your customers are bombarded by so many marketing messages every day, that they stop making connections between what they actually need and the advertising they're exposed to. The challenge for your flyer is to jolt customers out of their reverie and

make them think, "Actually, this company is offering me something I want/need".

Direct, benefit-led questions like, "Do you want to save money on...?" or "Need help with...?" speak directly to the customer and encourage them to take a closer look.

4 Explore all avenues

While it's important to follow tip #1 and seek out your customers, you should also make sure your business is as visible as possible. Place your flyers on community boards at the local shop, gym, library, school, café, hairdressers or wherever else you think makes sense. Someone may see your flyer several times before they actually read it and several more times before that reading turns to action.

5 Use flyers as inserts

If you have a shop, consider stapling a copy of your flyer to every customer's receipt or put one in their bag. This would work well if your flyer mentioned an upcoming sale or promotion. If you send your products by post, include a flyer in the packaging. If you're giving out samples in bags, do the same. These people are already your

customers, and these little things can help reinforce their loyalty.

6 Hit the streets

In addition to leaving your flyers in the right places, another tactic is handing them out in person. People are more likely to remember a flyer given to them with a smile and a kind word. High streets, markets and local events are all good places to start. (Check beforehand if you need permission to hand out flyers in your area).

7 Go digital

If your company can support the content, consider putting a QR code on your flyers. Customers can scan the code with their smartphones and receive more info, photos and videos about your business. These interactive flyers are great for those customers who have a little bit more time with your flyers, such as passengers on buses and trains.

8 Keep your flyers secure

It's a little obvious but worth mentioning, make sure your flyers are securely fastened to the message board to avoid littering.

If you leave a stack of flyers, ensure they won't get knocked onto the floor or disturbed by a draft.

9 Be creative

You can still have fun with your flyers. In addition to tip #1, put them in places that allude to the strength of your business. For example, if you sell and fix computers, you could advertise in the computer area of the local library.

10 Work together

If you have a small business that complements another business in your area, unite your marketing. Perhaps you are a plumber. If you're installing pipes into a new house, fix your flyers to the contractor's signs by the roadside. Similarly, if you're a baker and the café in town sells your wares, post a sign to that effect in the café window.

Flyers are an often-overlooked piece of the small business marketing puzzle. Use these tips to get more from your flyers.



Brochures

Give your customer time to decide on their own

Brochures are an effective way to offer customers an insight into the ethos and personality of your business. People take a little more time to leaf through a brochure, so use these valuable seconds to catch the reader's eye and present your business in the best light.

The colours and the design, together with the tone of your copy and the images you choose, can make your customer feel like they are in your spa, your cafe, or in your office having a conversation with you.

A brochure written with your customers' needs in mind will also save you time if people ask the same questions over and

over again. If you're offering different price options, using a brochure as a support when you explain these to your customers will make it easier for them to decide. They'll leave feeling your business is transparent and that they are in control of their decision.

When dealing with undecided customers, brochures are helpful in letting your customer take their time studying the options, whether it's items on a menu or different subscription packages. When they take your brochure with them, this becomes a reminder of the benefits they would get from your business, which is all working in your favour.

10 ways to create more effective brochures for your business

1 What is the purpose of your brochure?

Is it to present your products and services? Perhaps you want readers to get in touch for a quote? Keep this goal in mind when writing your copy, since everything should lead towards fulfilling this goal.

2 Consider your target audience

Imagine your typical customer (or the customer you'd like to attract) standing in front of you. How would you talk to this person? What language would you use? This leads us onto the next point...

3 Think about tone

You're writing for your audience, so use language that will resonate with them. As a rule of thumb, keep things simple, choose words everyone understands and avoid unnecessary jargon.

4 Write an engaging headline

You want your headline to catch the reader's attention and encourage them to read more. Asking a question, conveying a benefit, addressing a need or a fear are all good ways to do this.

Here are some different headlines a beauty salon could use:

- Question: Which therapy will you enjoy most?
- Benefit: Get a manicure in your lunch break.
- Need: Beauty treatments available until 10pm.

5 Address the reader as 'you'

Talking about yourself in the third person and referring to your readers as 'customers' will make your copy sound corporate, cold and lacking personality. Instead, use 'we' and 'you'. The copy will speak directly to the reader and ensure your brochure is more personal and memorable.

6 Keep your language clear

Aim for short, simple and direct sentences. Keep to one idea per sentence. Avoid rambling. And as George Orwell mentions in his 6 rules for writing, "Never use a long word when a short one will do."

7 Split paragraphs into 'chunks'

Big blocks of text are an effort to read and put people off. Instead, break your copy up into smaller, more manageable chunks. Combine this with short, explanatory sub-headers and your readers will scan through your brochure and easily find the information they need.

8 Bullet points and numbered lists

These are other ways to avoid bulky blocks of text. People's eyes are drawn to lists, so they're an effective way to convey information that's easy to digest. A note of caution: don't make your lists too long or they'll look chaotic – stick to six short points max.

9 Ask a friend to read your brochure aloud

Getting someone to read out your brochure can highlight the following:

- Awkward wording
- Typos, errors and spelling mistakes
- Areas that are difficult to understand

It's a valuable exercise and essential before you get your brochure printed.

10 Include a call to action

It's important you tell readers what to do once they've been through your brochure. Whether it's calling for a quote, making a reservation, visiting your website or claiming an offer, make sure your next steps are clear and compelling. For example:

Visit us at www.mybusiness.web to view our full range of services.

Call us on 0800 1234 567 and ask for a free quote.



Websites

Do I really need one?

Yes, you do.

Whether you've been a business owner for 3 months or 3 decades, you're aware of the importance of having an online presence for your business. The benefits are clear: you're open 24/7 to prospective customers, you have the ability to reach a high number of customers at low cost, it's easy and affordable to maintain and you have somewhere to tell your story.

Whether you work with a web developer, use a website builder or create a website yourself, make sure you cover the most important information: have a contact page with

your address, phone number, email and office hours. Have at least one page where you explain what you do and why you do it. An 'about' page with a short history of your business and a description of who you are will help build trust. Anything else, like videos showing how you make your products or deliver your services, will help customers understand what it's like to work with you.

Are you ready to start building your website? Here's a short checklist to print out and stick next to your desk or show to your web developer.

10-item checklist for better business websites

1 How can people contact you?

Write your contact details, address and office hours plus add any social media links. Make it easy for people to get in touch with you.

2 What do you do?

Have a page where you describe exactly what you do, whether it's promoting a service or selling a product.

3 Why should people choose you?

Highlight the benefits of using your company, particularly for new customers who might not know anything about you.

4 What are your prices?

Outline your pricing and, if it differs on a case-by-case basis, create a simple form with a few questions so customers can get a quote.

5 Create an 'about' page

Outline who you are and your background. You can make the page as personal as you want. We've seen some owners talk about their personal journey and others who just describe what makes them different.

6 Address your FAQs

If new customers often ask the same questions, create an FAQs section: you're more likely to attract the right kind of customer.

7 The look and feel

Opt for a clean design. With company websites, less is more, so don't try to fit everything onto one crowded page.

8 Choose the right web address

Try to get a domain name that makes sense (such as your company name). If that's not possible, keep it catchy and descriptive.

9 What are your competitors doing?

Look at your competitors and ask yourself whether there's anything on their websites you could benefit from doing yourself.

10 Have you considered mobile?

Make sure your site is mobile responsive. According to the Office for National Statistics, in 2014 58% of UK adults accessed the internet daily using their smartphones.



Promoting your business

An ongoing relationship, not a one-time event

How creative can you be when promoting your business? As creative as you want! Anything that tells your story in a compelling way can be a marketing opportunity. Adding your logo or company message on everyday objects can keep your company in your customers' minds.

Calendars

What better way to make sure customers regularly remember you than by putting your business on a calendar? Make it even more useful by marking dates related to your business, like planting different types of shrubs for a gardening company, or engine-check-ups for a car service business.

Magnets

A cheap and easy way to make your business more sticky, magnets are easy to put on and take off.

Mugs

The quirkier your business, the easier it will be for you to deliver your message on a cheerful, morning mug. Give your customers that extra boost you get from sipping your tea or coffee from an uplifting mug.

T-shirts

T-shirts are another simple and effective way to put your business out there. You could offer them as freebies to your most loyal customers, or you could sponsor a set of T-shirts for the local football team and add your logo on the back.

Photo books

Photo books are a great way to display creative work, from illustrations and photography, to baby apparel, party decorations and food styling – whatever you can think of!

And these are just a few ideas. As a small business owner, you have the flexibility to try new ideas and see what's working and what's not much faster than larger companies.

Our point is: be bold and stay true to your business and your customers. The rest will follow.

So, how are you going to promote your business today?

We'd love to hear from you!

Follow us on **Facebook**, **G+** and our small business blog, **My Biz Hub**, for more ideas on how to grow and promote your business.

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<http://www.mybizhub.co.uk/>

About Vistaprint

Vistaprint empowers millions of business owners worldwide to market themselves professionally. Our wide range of quality products at affordable prices, along with design tools suited to every skill level and need, mean everyone can create the customised materials they need to get their message across.

Absolutely Guaranteed

Every time. Any reason. Or we'll make it right.

We stand by everything we sell, 100%. So if you're not satisfied with your order for any reason, neither are we. We'll make it right – from reprinting your order to refunding you in full. We'll even cover delivery. It's as simple as that.



