## 25 Inexpensive Ways of Promoting and Advertising Your Business

One of the biggest challenges that business owners face is promotion and publicity.  Getting the word out is essential -- and it can make or break a business.  Leases are expensive, and owners can’t afford to wait weeks or months for traffic to reach their stores.  Merely putting up an “OPEN” sign isn’t enough.  Business advertising requires some creativity. Of course, most businesses usually have tight advertising budgets.  After rent and suppliers have been paid there is typically little money left over for promotional purposes. Yet advertising cannot be overlooked.  The trick is finding effective ways to stretch those dollars. Fortunately, some of the best techniques for business advertising are some of the least expensive.

 In the AF forums I posted my way of promoting and advertising my business: I have made up several inexpensive sets of earrings, placed each in an organza bag with a business card, and I pass them out to any one I come in contact with each day. I only ask in return that the person visit my website, ask their friends to do the same, and not to forget to enter our monthly giveaway for the chance to win even more free jewelry. I've gained most of my business by doing this and this method (using promotional items) works well for me.

There's a lot of ways of using promotional items and if you research it, you can get fairly reasonable prices (sometimes as low as a penny per piece). Go check your pen/pencil holder. How many pens do you have with a business name on it? Have you ever received a key chain, T-shirt or anything else from another business? Did you ever get a free balloon at the dentist office when you were a child? Everyone has a different way of advertising their business. Let your creative mind flow and see what you can come up with!

**Here are 25 inexpensive ways for promoting your business. Maybe you'll find one that works for your line of business -- that won't break your bank account!**

1) If you have a business that is not "clear cut" (maybe you sell many different types of items, or pieces that cannot simply be shown off by a small sample) how about a pocket calendar? If you have a color printer, you can make them yourself, with pictures of your different crafts. All of your business information can be included, so every time the person opens their calendar, they are reminded of you and your store.

2) Put your business card on magnetic sheeting. Remember, business cards with a magnetic back really stick in people's minds as well as on their refrigerator.

3) Have your business information printed on bookmarks and drop a hundred or more off at the local library.

4) Make a YouTube commercial.

5) Post ads on Craigslist.

6) Put magnetic signs, vinyl lettering or license plate frames on your car.

7) Set up a "home party" with several of your friends to showcase your work.

8) Jewelry designers: What about cell phone charms? Package them up with a business card and you're set.

9) Look for websites where you can advertise for free. Find free on-line classified websites for your community.

10) Write an e-Book on something that is relevant to your business and distribute it for free. By distributing a free product with your brand in it you will garner the trust of those interested in your product thus bringing you free targeted traffic to your business.

11) Offer to teach a class about your craft through the local recreation & park district.

12) Always include a business card in the envelope when you pay your bills.  :)

13) Join your local area Chamber of Commerce. They are always holding business events and "get acquainted" nights.

14) Donate a piece to your local radio station. They have numerous contests and are always looking for sponsors. Your donation can be written off as a tax deduction and you will get free advertising and exposure.

15) Have cardboard beverage coasters printed and distribute them to your local bars or saloons.

16) Contact local area hotels, motels and bed & breakfast inns and ask them if you can do up a Lobby Basket and leave it in their Lobby. What is a Lobby Basket? You make up little packs of info about your business & products and put them into the Lobby Basket for their patrons to take. They usually have a pamphlet wall or area too with pamphlets from local area attractions etc. If they don't have a lobby basket area, inquire about leaving your business info in their pamphlet area.

17) Make a business name tag and wear it every time you are in public. Make sure it has a catchy phrase like "Ask Me About (your company name)" or "Earn some FREE when you party with me!"

18) Have computer mouse pads printed with your company logo, business information, picture, etc. and distribute them to local large businesses. This will keep your website and business in front of them every time they're on their computer!

19) Contact a local Assisted Living Center for Senior Citizens (different than a nursing home!) and see if you can come in & offer a shopping opportunity to their Senior Residents! Seniors can't get out like they used too so they appreciate being able to shop from home. The majority of them don't own computers and if they do, they may not be extremely computer savvy. So offer a one-on-one shopping experience with them. They also appreciate the adult company!

20) Contact realtors and apartment buildings in your area. They usually give out new business packet info to their customers/clients to welcome them to their new home. See about adding your business information to their "Welcome Home" Packs!

21) Establish a Referral program for your business and print out referral coupons. Offer established customers a free little gift or personal discount if they refer a new customer to you. I like to give out 3 Referral Coupons to every new customer I get so that they know they will be rewarded for referring new customers to me.

22) Remember going to get your hair cut, and you get a "punch" in your card each time? By the time you had 10 (or more) haircuts (and punches) you'd get a free or a discounted haircut.  Try it with your business. Print up your own punch cards and pass one out to each customer. Chances are they'll never use it -- or they lose it -- anyway.

23) Make T-Shirts or blouses for yourself, your family members and your friends to wear in public which has your business advertisement on them.

24) Set-up a "Free Giveaway" box at any store or restaurant that will give you permission. Print up registration forms to drop into the box.

25) We all get junk mail with the postage paid envelopes. Just send a flyer or your business card back to the company and use their return envelope. ;)