

Advertising for 2018: 101 Ways to Advertise Your Business Online and Offline



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1

INTRODUCTION

As a business owner, you know the importance of having other people know about your business. Advertising is rarely an option. Even those huge companies that you know well, who do not need to advertise (because you will likely go to them repeatedly) put a good deal of their profits back into advertising their business.

As a small business owner, marketing your business is important. It does not matter if your business is a small one, such as a local repair shop or retail store, or a larger one, finding the right way to communicate with your prospective clients is critical.

One of the biggest concerns a business has is getting their potential clients to know about them. You know you have a great service. You are confident that you can wow the customer with your abilities. Yet, they do not call. They do not come in to your store. They do not visit your website. The only way to help this process is by spreading the word about your business and letting everyone know what it is and what it can do for them.

Do you have a strong advertising background? Most small business owners (offline and online) do not. Yet, you do not need to have this type of advertising background to find success through advertising means. The more creative and direct you are, the more successful you will be. Keep in mind some things you do not want to do such as promising more than you can offer. However, be as creative as you can be if you hope to attract new customers to your business.

This book outlines the tips and strategies your business needs to do well in 2018, a year that promises to offer new opportunities, new insight and plenty of profit for those businesses that can provide they can advertise well. However, this is an area of business that is changing. If you are to find success in business in your 2018 advertising strategy, you need to stand out from the crowd and approach advertising in new and interesting ways. This book provides you with 101 ways to build an effective advertising plan.

2 HOW IS ADVERTISING DIFFERENT IN 2018?

Advertising a business is still as important as ever. Each year, thousands of new companies open their doors. Internationally, hundreds of

thousands of businesses get their start. Many of these businesses are direct competition for you. With that understood, it is important to consider a few more important details about advertising.

STAND OUT OR NEVER BE KNOWN

With advertising, you need to be more creative than ever if you are going to stand out. A simple ad in the local newspaper is not enough to generate enough talk about your business to have people interested enough. A small banner ad on a moderately sized website is still not enough to generate the type of income that your business is looking for.

More so, the times have changed. Consumers themselves are more used to shock advertising than ever. A scandal may hurt one person, but it can often bring higher revenues to a company. However, now, people have very high standards in where they shop, what they buy and what they pay for it.

To further to explore that topic, consider these important factors when it comes to advertising your business.

1. It is easier for the consumer to do the same thing repeatedly. In other words, they are not going to go out of their way to visit your location or to remember your website's domain name unless you have something that is new enough to them to make them want to do so. If it is easier to do something else, though, people will do that.
2. People do not want to pay more money for something. If you cannot compete with big companies, include those large department stores that seem to outdo every other company out there, then consumers will not pay attention to your business. Use your advertising budget to differentiate your business from the businesses of others. This is more important in 2018 because it now is more important than ever for people to watch every penny they spend.
3. Forget about misleading ads or promising more than you can offer. Most consumers are wise enough to see right through the advertisements that are obviously too good to be true. Consumers also do not want you to spam them, to overwhelm them with mail or email just to learn about your product or service.

4. There is more game in town. That means that there are more people competing for those all important ad spaces on your favorite websites. This may mean that your average advertising dollar is not going to do as much as you had hoped that it would. On the other hand, it may provide you with an ideal option for doing something big that is memorable.
5. The Internet, television, newspaper and even direct mail is all interconnected today. Your message needs to be strong enough to reach across all of these playing fields properly. If you use conflicting information, you will simply confuse your company.

There are a few things to point out, in addition, that are more positive. For example, today's consumer is well aware of the price of products, but they are still looking for a good deal. Getting more for their money is always going to be a big factor for the average consumer. Look for ways to add something to the product you are offering that helps it to stand out from the rest of the world's products.

More so, consumers are knowledgeable. They are happy to learn about new companies, but they want to learn about them before they will use them. Either through your website or through your advertising, you need to communicate who your business is, what it has to offer as well as what makes it unique and better than the rest.

IMPORTANT MESSAGES IN 2018

There are a few important messages that you want to use within the advertising that you do in 2018. These messages are what people are looking for.

1. **Cost effectiveness:** Price is a strong, important tool especially as more consumers are looking for a way to save money after taken advantage of by lenders, leaders and investments.
2. **Environmental friendly:** Today, people expect a business to be doing everything that it can to actually save the world. In your advertising, this can and sometimes should be the message that you give. Show the world that your business is committed to providing a safe haven for the environment.

3. **Something new:** Having a product that is new and better than someone else's product is going to make an impression that you want to make on your customers. Although not all businesses will have the same level of expectation on this front, many business owners should advertise that they have something that trumps the other person's product.

4. **Easy access:** With people saving more money, working more jobs to make ends meet and going out of their way to get the best of the best, it is important to alter customers that you have a product that is easy for them to use or easy for them to get to. Virtually all small businesses need to be online in 2018, even if you are not serving the entire Internet, but a local market. People turn to the web to learn what is happening and to find what they are looking for.

5. **Trustworthy:** Yet another important advertising method for 2018 will be trustworthiness. Of course, with so many people feeling taken advantage of by the horrors of the last few years, it is important to distance yourself and your business from those companies. Focus instead on being a company that is trusted, secure and a great place to be.

When you put all of this together, you will have the right advertising plan for your business. Throughout the rest of this book, you will find more than 100 tips and tricks to help you to advertise your business in 2018. Is this year any different from last? Of course it is. Today, it is even harder to get in front of others than ever and people expect a lot more than ever before.

CREATE AN ADVERTISING PLAN

Can your business make it? With the right advertising plan, your business can excel. Take the time to consider the following tips and methods to improving your business advertising plan. Use as many of these methods as is possible, but do put together a cohesive plan that outlines your goals first.

What does your advertising plan include? How many of the following types of advertising methods can you use? Consider the following steps.

1. Look at each of the advertising methods mentioned here. Determine which of these is most beneficial for your business. If it is a possibility, note that it is. If the plan seems to be a good one right off the bat, mark it as that. If there is no chance of it being usable for your business, you should cross it off.

2. Create a list of those elements that you want to use. Determine how to pursue each one. Determine the cost of each one, based on your business model. Then, factor in your budget. How many of these methods can you pull off?

3. Look for cost cutting methods. Look outside of the box before writing off any of these advertising methods.

4. Build your business-advertising plan step by step. Create your campaign, slogan and go for it.

5. Come back and look at your plan after you launch it. How well did each of the elements work? Is there something more that you could have done or changes that you could have made? If so, factor those in for the next time around.

An effective advertising plan for 2018 tackles a wide range of mediums and it delivers a clear message. It also provides consumers with a clear solution to the ever-popular question, "What does this business do for me?"

3 WORD OF MOUTH IS STILL KING

Word of mouth advertising is one of the oldest forms. Simply put, it is the means of one person telling another person something about your business. It has always been one of the most powerful tools to have as an advertising medium. Ask yourself, are you more interested in listening to what a commercial has to say or what your best friend has to say? Who is more believable?

As a business, part of your advertising plan should focus on word of mouth advertising. OF course, it is important to point out that today; word of mouth advertising is not just one person telling another of a product, as in one woman telling another woman about a product they love. Rather, there are many online and off line methods for delivering a word of mouth experience.

In this chapter, we focus on a few methods of advertising that can help you to pull out those recommendations that you want to get from others. How can you get recommendations and referrals from the customers you already have or the ones that you will be getting?

#1: FOCUS ON CUSTOMER SERVICE

The first and most important element of advertising is not spoiling the business that you have. Each customer that comes into your doors needs to be a customer treated as if they are the most important customer for the business. Although this may seem difficult to do, it is all about delivering a quality service and smiling.

Customer service is important to business success. If you have a bad experience at a restaurant, you tell your family and friends about it, and stop them from going there. Not only does the business lose your business but that of your family and friends, too. What you want to create, on the other hand, is an atmosphere in which the words being passed on are top quality recommendations to visit your establishment.

If you are not sure what you can do to improve your customer service, go right to the source: your customer. Find out from them what you can do to improve your overall experience.

#2: LOCAL OFFERS

If your business is a locally based one, as opposed to one that is Internet based, focus on local offers that can help bring in customers. For example, a customer comes in to your hair salon. You know they had a great experience and so you offer them a discount card and one for their friend. If they pass on the card, you have an opportunity for them to tell the potentially new customer about your salon. This is easy advertising!

#3: BE ACTIVE IN THE COMMUNITY

Another way to generate more word of mouth advertising is to let others know about your business by allowing them to get to know you. Be an active role player in the community. Churches, community organizations as well as government offices are great ways for you to grow your local popularity. Introduce yourself to your customers. Shake their hand. Be present in your place of business.

#4: SPONSOR LOCAL ACTIVITIES

It does not have to cost you much to sponsor a group of local baseball players or to buy the t-shirt uniforms for the school's soccer team. It does not cost you anything to host a fundraiser for a local person who is ill where you donate your profits. However, these types of actions get your name in front of the masses. They are all instances that you can show that your business is the business in town to be involved.

#5: ASK FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

Unbelievably, one of the best ways for you to get the customers to respond to you is to ask for a recommendation. For example, you have saved someone \$250 off his or her car repair bill. That is nothing to be shy about. As the customer is happily paying their now discounted bill, you can easily say to them that you are looking for new clients. Would they please recommend your service to their friends and family?

When you ask for business, even if it is simply by asking for a group of customers to come back again, you allow those customers to feel welcome within your business. More so, they are happy to tell others about their experience, especially when asked to do so.

More ideas:

Here are a few more, short and easy ideas for building up your business through word of mouth advertising.

#6: ASK CUSTOMERS TO COMPLAIN

Did you know that most customers who have a bad experience never report that experience to the business? However, they do tell family and friends about it, or even worse, they get online and start talking about it. Ask customers to tell you of the problems they have with your business.

#7: KEEP THE PROMISES YOU MAKE

As a business owner, if you promise to do something for a customer, you had better do it. The negative word of mouth advertising this will cause is enough to cause any business to struggle significantly. However, when you do keep your promises, customers will respond to that as well.

#8: DO MORE THAN THE MINIMUM

Next, work on going over the expectations of your clients. You do not want to do the bare minimum or to get the basic level of acceptance. Rather, you want to focus on beating their expectations so that your business can flourish when they come back repeatedly so you can take advantage of what you have to offer.

#9: SATISFY THE UNHAPPY CUSTOMER

The customer is never wrong, even when you know they are wrong. It happens within every business. A misunderstanding leads to a confrontation. You do not want to stand down or to lose business. How do you handle the angry, unhappy customer? Do what you can to satisfy them. In fact, many studies show that when an unhappy customer is satisfied, they become a lifetime customer of the business, simply because the business listened to them and fixed the problem.

#10: AS FOR REPEAT BUSINESS LATER, TOO

At first, you may ask for a customer's repeat business when they are leaving your establishment or even through your invoice online. However, in a week or so, give them a call. Send them an email. Send them some mail. Ask them to come on back to experience what you have to offer again.

#11: LOOK THEM IN THE EYE

When you are working with customers hand in hand, shake their hand, look them in the eye and let them know how important they are to you. This establishes a bond of trust and it helps to develop customer loyalty. Reach out, ask for their business and thank them for visiting you. This will make a difference.

As you will notice, virtually all of these word of mouth advertising methods are free or inexpensive. They make sense. They should be part of your advertising plan without fail. If they are not, add them in to the mix to ensure that your business has the foundation it needs to excel in 2018.

4 FREE WAYS TO ADVERTISE YOUR BUSINESS

We just spent a chapter working on word of mouth advertising. It is what people need to know and need to use as the foundation of their business success. However, every business needs to do more than that to get into the eyes of the customer. However, most businesses, especially the startups will find it hard to pay for these advertising methods.

If you could afford to hire a professional advertising company, you would still see some of these free methods for promoting your business. However, many people do not put in enough time to learn them.

The following are a few free ways to advertise your business. Some are offline while others are online methods. Use as many as makes sense for your business.

12: GOOGLE LOCAL

Google Local is a local listing service on the web for local businesses. You do not have to do much but contact Google Local and provide your company name, address, phone number and website address. You will need to verify this information through a postcard but it is easy and gets you listed on Google easily.

#13: GOOGLE COUPONS

Have you considered coupons? Why not mesh coupons with Google. If it sounds like something that is interesting to you, the good news is that it is easy to do. You are able to bring in new customers and bring the old customers back to you. All of this occurs through Google's free coupon tool that you use to get your business on local searches that are relevant to your website.

#14: CHECK OUT YELLOW PAGES ONLINE

While it does cost a fee to get your website listed in the big Yellow Page book, it is free to do so on the web. Remember, people come to the web to learn about stuff long before they actually buy from a business. Therefore, being in the online Yellow Pages makes sense.

#15: GET ON YAHOO LOCAL

Just like Google Local, Yahoo Local offers the same type of benefit. Of course, it benefits those who are using the Yahoo search engine instead of those who use Google. Yahoo is the second largest web search engine and highly important to any online search. It is free to get listed on Yahoo Local, too.

#16: GET REVIEWS ON YAHOO LOCAL

One of the things that Yahoo local does that Google Local does not is to allow customers to review your service. It takes only a few minutes to set up this process, but encouraging your customers to visit the website and to write a review is an important step in advertising local businesses. It is free to do and takes moments, but it could mean the difference in a customer choosing your business over another company's business.

#17: SEND OUT PRESS RELEASES

You can send a press release to a news organization. This is a better option than sitting around and waiting for them to come to you. Be sure that what you have to say is newsworthy, and it should not be a blatant advertisement of your business. For example, it could be a press release announcing your collection of food for a local charity. It could be your special fundraiser for a sit child. You can use online press releases in the same manner, but be sure they are newsworthy before you try to have them sent out.

#18: TRADE WITH OTHER BUSINESS OWNERS

Is there a business that will compliment your own? When you find one that is you should trade services with them. Alternatively, trade advertising with them. For example, perhaps your business is a spa. You know that those that come to your spa are concerned about their fitness. You collaborate with a local fitness club and trade advertisement flyers at your establishment for their business while they do the same for your own.

Now that this chapter has gotten you started with a few free ways to advertise your business, we will move on to methods that are more specific. However, many of the other activities within the rest of this book are low cost or even free. They are well worth your time investment!

5 BUILD A WEBSITE

One of the most important ways for a business to advertise in 2018 will be through the Internet. Beyond a doubt, this medium is important. As mentioned previously, people turn to the web on a regular basis. They look for directions online (your website you should include local directions.) They use the Internet to help them to find the best deals that are available. You need to be included in their search or they will not find you.

So, how can you use a website to advertise your business? Consider the following tips and resources listed below.

#19: BUILD A WEBSITE

Most small businesses that are not selling on the web directly still need a website since customers routinely use the web to research businesses before they actually start using them. Those businesses that do have the ability to sell on the web will need a specially designed website to accommodate this need, generally an e-commerce site.

In either case, a website should be included. This way, you can inform your customers of who you are and you can educate them on what you can offer to them. Then, you can use your website to promote your business further.

#20: GET YOUR WEBSITE LISTED IN SEARCH

ENGINES

The next step in the process is to get your business listed in the search engines. There are several ways to do this, but the most fundamental is simply submitting your website to these search engines manually. Google and Yahoo are the largest, but others are just as important. There are software tools that will automatically submit your website or you can wait around for the search engine spiders to find your website on their own.

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