



## Conquer the Top 6 Small Business Marketing Challenges

by Patrick Zuluaga, [PMZ Marketing](#)

Whatever industry you are in you are likely to encounter the top 6 marketing challenges for small businesses. As a small business what can you do? We will have a limited war chest of marketing dollars or even marketing staff at our disposal to tame these challenges. Like most small businesses you will be faced with other priorities from all aspects of operating a business and will struggle to find the time to do any marketing at all. That is until you realise that sales are not growing to the levels that you want or worst you are faced with declining sales.

This guide will tackle the key marketing challenges revealed in a recent online survey conducted by [PMZ Marketing](#) and will offer some very practical guidance that will help you improve your efforts for better marketing results.

### Marketing is Business Development

Let us understand that marketing generates business development opportunities. This is the end-objective of marketing to build qualified prospects that convert into sales revenue. You must make the time for marketing or face closing your business. Marketing does not have to be complicated or time consuming. Every small business must develop a marketing engine or process that can be managed and fine-tuned with a planned effort of a couple of hours per week.

Now let's get started and tackle those top 6 marketing challenges for small businesses:

#### 1. Defining Target Markets

Who are you targeting and where can we find them? Basic stuff, but the very foundation of your marketing starts here. If you want to be successful with your marketing you must have a clear idea of your target market. Put together a short description or profile of your ideal customer. Write it down and refine it, work with your team and identify the buying criteria used by your ideal customer. Once you have conceptualised your ideal customer it will help you prepare and personalise your marketing message to make it relevant and important to the intended recipient. The next time you are writing promotional messages or offers put the profile in front of you and it will guide you in your efforts to communicate more effectively with your target market.

#### 2. Increasing Repeat Business

The ability to deliver to the satisfaction of your customer is the threshold level to remain in business. Make sure you deliver. That said - you need to give them a reason to come back for more! Consider including a thank you coupon with every purchase that provides an incentive or discount that they can receive on a future purchase. You need to nurture the customer relationship by keeping in touch and offering value with every contact you make with your customers. The most cost effective manner to stay in touch with your customers and drive repeat business is with permission based email or e-newsletter marketing. Every business must have email marketing in their communications tool box in today's Internet connected world.

#### 3. Getting Consistent Referrals

People generally want to help so why not ask them for their help in getting referrals? I have found this as quite striking among small business in general. Small business owners and managers agree that referrals are important to their business but so many are hesitant to openly ask for referrals. Let all your customers and network of contacts



know that their referrals are important to your business. Make sure you can track their referrals, keep them updated and show your gratitude for their efforts in some way whether it is informal or structured as part of a referral program. Make a working system of it and drive referrals as an integral part of your marketing activities.

#### **4. Increasing Sales Conversions**

Sometimes we may even think to ourselves marketing does not work or we have tried that before with minimal results. Well look again what was in the marketing message? Make sure you make a relevant and attractive offer to your target market that requires a decision to be made by the recipient. However, before you commit to it, test it to refine and improve your results and test it again before running the entire campaign. Small business can not afford to spend on purely image or brand building advertisement. You can build and promote your brand or company image while generating increased sales conversions by providing an offer with an incentive to take action within a specified time frame! Make sure every promotional campaign is primary focused on generating a response that converts into a sale while at the same time building your brand.

#### **5. Finding Time & Resources for Marketing**

Do you find yourself thinking that you can not afford to spend time and money on marketing? If you do, then do not be surprised to find out that your business will not be achieving its capacity to grow. Can you afford to let your sales opportunities run out? Absolutely not! The fact is that you simply can not afford not to invest the time and resources into marketing. Say again – you can not neglect your marketing if you want your business to prosper. Take the time to explore what you can achieve with the exceptional marketing methods that are now available to small businesses that have minimal costs to implement.

#### **6. Developing a Marketing Plan**

Everyone seriously in business must have a marketing plan to support their business objectives. There are numerous sites on the Internet that can provide marketing plan templates. Download some to give you an idea of what you need to think about. Keep it short, not more than three pages. Take the time to prepare and develop your marketing approach and strategies including how you will track and test it. If necessary get a marketing specialist to assist you develop the plan. Without a marketing plan to run it is likely you will find yourself trying different “marketing ideas” that others have suggested and ending up with the expenses and no profits to show for it.

[CONTACT PMZ MARKETING TODAY TO ASSIST YOU CONQUER YOUR MARKETING CHALLENGES](#)

I appreciate your feedback and would like to hear from you on how you are handling these marketing challenges, send your comments to [patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au](mailto:patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au).

#### **About the Author**

Patrick Zuluaga has more than 20 years experience in marketing and business development roles with Australian and international companies. He is Director of PMZ Marketing, a consultancy focused on Small and Medium Enterprises to **help you succeed in business with better marketing results**. You can reach Patrick on 0403 436 889 or email at [patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au](mailto:patrick@pmzmarketing.com.au) or visit the web presence at [www.pmzmarketing.com.au](http://www.pmzmarketing.com.au).