

## **Fifty Marketing Ideas**

1. Set specific marketing goals every year; review and adjust quarterly.
2. Maintain a tickler file of ideas for later use.
3. Carry business cards with you (all day, every day).
4. Stay alert to trends that might impact your target market, product or promotion strategy.
5. Read market research studies about your profession, industry, product, target market groups, etc.
6. Collect competitors' ads and literature; study them for information about strategy, product features and benefits, etc.
7. Offer a simpler/cheaper, smaller version of your (or another existing) product or service.
8. Offer a fancier/more expensive/faster/bigger version of your (or another existing) product or service.
9. Update your services.
10. Attend a marketing seminar.
11. Read a marketing book.
12. Join an association or organization related to your profession.
13. Establish a credit card payment option for clients.
14. Give "quick pay" or cash discounts.
15. Publish a newsletter for customers and prospects. (It doesn't have to be fancy or expensive.)
16. Develop a brochure of services.
17. Develop a site on the World Wide Web.
18. Create a "signature file" to be used for all your e-mail messages. It should contain contact details including your Web site address and key information about your company that will make the reader want to contact you.
19. Include "testimonials" from customers in your literature.
20. Use colored or oversized envelopes for your direct mailings. Or send direct mail in plain white envelopes to pique recipients' curiosity.
21. Publish an article and circulate reprints.
22. Send timely and newsworthy press releases as often as needed.
23. Get public relations and media training or read up on it.
24. Appear on a radio or TV talk show.
25. Get a publicity photo taken and enclose with press releases.

26. Submit “tip” articles to newsletters and newspapers.
27. Ask your clients to come back again.
28. Return phone calls promptly.
29. Use an answering machine or voice mail system to catch after-hours phone calls.  
Include basic information in your outgoing message: business hours, location, etc.
30. Ask clients what *you* can do to help *them*.
31. Send hand-written thank-you notes.
32. Send birthday cards and appropriate seasonal greetings.
33. Photocopy interesting articles and send them to clients and prospects with a hand-written “FYI” note and your business card.
34. Join a Chamber of Commerce or other organization.
35. Mail a brochure to members of organizations to which you belong.
36. Serve on a city board or commission.
37. Advertise during the peak seasons for your business.
38. Advertise in a specialty directory or in the Yellow Pages.
39. Write an ad in another language to reach a non-English speaking market. Place the ad in a publication that market reads, such as a Hispanic newspaper
40. Distribute advertising specialty products such as pens, mouse pads, T-shirts, or mugs.
41. Mail “bumps”, photos, samples and other innovative items to your prospect list. (A bump is simply anything that makes the mailing envelope bulge and makes the recipient curious about what’s in the envelope.)
42. Consider placing ads in your newspaper’s classified section.
43. Get a booth at a fair/trade show attended by your target market.
44. Give a speech or volunteer for a career day at a high school.
45. Teach a class or seminar at a local college or adult education center
46. Sponsor an “Adopt-a-Road” area in your community to keep roads litter-free. People that pass by the area will see your name on the sign announcing your sponsorship.
47. Donate your product or service to a charity auction.
48. Put a fax number on order forms for easy submission.
49. Remind clients of the products or services that you offer they aren’t currently using.
50. Take sales orders over the Internet.

## Ways to Organize Your Business

Type of Entity	Main Advantages	Main Drawbacks	Taxes You May Be Liable For
<b>Sole Proprietorship</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple and inexpensive to create and operate</li> <li>• Owner reports profit or loss on his or her personal tax return</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owner personally liable for debts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income tax</li> <li>• Self-employment tax</li> <li>• Estimated tax</li> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>
<b>General Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Simple and inexpensive to create and operate</li> <li>• Owners (partners) report their share of profit or loss on personal tax returns</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners (partners) personally liable for business debts</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income tax</li> <li>• Partnership</li> <li>• Estimated tax</li> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>
<b>Limited Partnership</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Limited partners have limited personal liability for business debts as long as they don't participate in management</li> <li>• General partners can raise cash without involving outside investors in management of business</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• General partners personally liable for business debts</li> <li>• More expensive to create than general partnership</li> <li>• Suitable mainly for companies that invest in real estate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income tax</li> <li>• Self-employment tax</li> <li>• Estimated tax</li> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>
<b>Regular Corporation</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners have limited personal liability for business debts</li> <li>• Fringe benefits can be deducted as business expense</li> <li>• Owners can split corporate profit among owners and corporation, paying lower overall tax rate</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More expensive to create than partnership or sole proprietorship</li> <li>• Paperwork can seem burdensome to some owners</li> <li>• Separate taxable entity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income taxes</li> <li>• Self-employment taxes</li> <li>• Estimated tax</li> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>

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<p><b>S Corporation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners have limited personal liability for business debts</li> <li>• Owners report their share of corporate profit or loss on their personal tax returns</li> <li>• Owners can use corporate loss to offset income from other sources</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More expensive to create than partnership or sole proprietorship</li> <li>• More paperwork than for a limited liability company which offers similar advantages</li> <li>• Income must be allocated to owners according to their ownership interests</li> <li>• Fringe benefits limited for owners who own more than 2% of shares</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income tax</li> <li>• Self-employment tax</li> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>
<p><b>Professional Corporation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Owners have no personal liability for malpractice of other owners</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More expensive to create than partnership or sole proprietorship</li> <li>• Paperwork can seem burdensome to some owners</li> <li>• All owners must belong to same profession</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Income tax</li> <li>• Self-employment tax</li> <li>• Estimated tax</li> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>
<p><b>Nonprofit Corporation</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Corporation doesn't pay income taxes</li> <li>• Contributions to charitable corporation are tax-deductible</li> <li>• Fringe benefits can be deducted as business expense</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Only to groups organized for charitable, scientific, educational, literary or religious purposes</li> <li>• Property transferred to corporation stays there; if corporation ends, property must go to another nonprofit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Security and Medicare taxes</li> <li>• FUTA tax</li> <li>• 1099s for payments to non-employees</li> </ul>

## Types of Business Loans

**Working capital loans** are made for a short-term, usually 90 days. They provide immediate funds for business. Farmers frequently need working capital loans for seed or livestock purchase and will repay these loans when the crop or stock is sold.

**Capital improvement loans** are usually longer term and are needed for business expenses that are expensive and will have a long life and will be used in the operation of the business for many years. A manufacturer that is expanding its factory and buying new equipment needs a capital improvement loan.

**Secured loans** are loans guaranteed by some form of collateral. When a loan is made to purchase a piece of equipment, such as a forklift, and the title to that forklift is held as collateral it is a secured loan.

**Unsecured loans** are made against the borrowers promise to repay, nothing is held as collateral. Frequently a bank will not make an unsecured loan to a customer until after it has established a relationship with that customer and feel confident it will be repaid and does not need to hold collateral for protection.

**Demand loans** have no fixed maturity and the bank can call for repayment at any time.

**Time loans** have specific maturity dates.

**Participation loans** are large loans made to a single borrower where two or more banks share the loan. This can happen because the business wants to split its loan among banks in which it has accounts. More often a loan becomes a participation loan when it is too large for one bank to handle legally.

**Floor plan** financing is an agreement that allows a dealer to maintain an adequate inventory of consumer products for display and for sale. In other words, the bank lends money to the dealer and the bank takes the inventory (appliances, furniture, cars, etc.) as collateral.

*Adapted from American Bankers Association's Principles of Banking*

## Credit Checking Process for Business Loans

When you apply for a business loan at your financial institution, you will notice that the credit checking process is much more extensive than it is when you apply for a personal loan.

Because of the larger loan amounts and increased complexities of commercial loans, the investigative process for business loans is far more detailed, and the sources of information are far more numerous, than for consumer loans.

*Credit department.* The starting point is usually the bank's own *credit department* where credit files are maintained on each business account and borrower. These files contain a complete history of the bank's relationship with its customers. They contain reports of interviews; copies of correspondence; financial statements supplied by the borrower; internal memos, including previous credit analyses; and data on average balances, previous loans, and overdrafts.

*Credit agencies.* Credit agencies such as Dun and Bradstreet publish regular business reports, which provide current financial information on a company and include the firm's history, management structure, products, scope of operations, and borrowing history with suppliers.

*Suppliers.* Because most merchandise is sold with credit terms, it is important that a bank know how a company paid its suppliers. This information, in addition to being found in credit agency reports, can be obtained through direct contact with the firms that sell to a particular company.

*Tax information.* A bank must determine that all payroll, sales and income taxes are current and satisfied from prior years. A tax lien imposed for nonpayment of taxes can place a company in jeopardy and threaten its ability to repay its creditors.

*From American Bankers Association's Principles of Banking*

Small Business

<b>Type of Business</b>	
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<b>Legal form of Business</b>	
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<b>Strengths of the Business</b>	

<b>Limitations</b>	

<b>Financial Information</b>	

<b>Financial Goals</b>	

## Market Factors

<b>Description of Industry</b>	

<b>Analysis of Customer Market</b>	

<b>Your Competitive Advantage</b>	

<b>Your Competitive Disadvantage</b>	

## Evaluation of Competition

Major competitors	

Competitor's Competitive advantage	

Competitor's Competitive disadvantage	