

28 Low-Cost Marketing Ideas for WAHMs



by Darlene Bishop

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Assuming your business provides a quality service at a reasonable price, it's natural to say that your business will grow when more people know of its existence. As such, it's imperative that you get the word out to as many people as possible.

For most small business owners, Work-At-Home-Moms (WAHMs) in particular, that's a daunting task. We are often limited in our marketing efforts simply because we *do* work at home - we don't meet as many people to share our business information with.

We are also limited, as a rule, because of lack of funding. So any marketing efforts we undertake must be low cost.

But there are a number of inexpensive, or even no-cost, ways to promote your business, both online and off. This booklet will share 28 of them.

In no particular order, and by no means conclusive, this list will help you put your little gray cells to work. It is meant to serve as a springboard for your own brainstorming session on ways to promote and grow your business.

1. Write, hire, or barter with a writer to create an original skit to tell people who you are, what your business is, or any other message you wish to convey. This can be as simple or elaborate as you choose. Then find some budding actors (teenagers are great for this) to present the skit at the mall or in a park where there are a lot of people.



2. Create, hire, or barter with a desktop publisher to create original posters/flyers and put them **EVERYWHERE**. Simple, one-page flyers can be created with any professional wordprocessing software and can be placed on car windshields, tacked to bulletin boards, taped to store windows or distributed door-to-door by a hungry teen.

3. Host a flyer contest with prizes for first, second and third places. You can even find other WAHMs to donate prizes for a mention in your marketing. Once you've awarded the prizes, make copies of the winning entries and post them everywhere as noted in above.

4. Sponsor a Community Business Day. Write a letter and mail to other WAHMs or small businesses in your area and invite them to attend. Offer refreshments, share ideas, network.

5. Publish a newsletter - in print or online. This is one of the best and quickest, **PROVEN** methods to promote your group, inform your members, and build credibility and goodwill. If you can't do it alone, email dbishop@wahmteam.com for professional help.

6. Write, hire, or barter with someone to write words set to popular or well-known music that tells the story of your business. This can be humorous or serious. But it must be memorable! Then, have someone record your jingle and send it to current and prospective customers.





7. Write a special letter to every first-time customer. Thank them for their business, offer them a free gift upon return,

encourage them to tell others about you.

8. Brag about your business and your customers often. Encourage feedback. Ask every customer to tell even one friend about you. And offer them a referral - a discount or a free gift - if a new customer mentions their name.

9. Organize and print a cookbook in your business name. This oldie is not only a goodie, but a goldie! You can make money by selling copies, give new customers a free one, use as a contest prize, offer to employees for their dedicated service, and much more. It doesn't have to be long or elaborate but it can really pay off in new business.

10. Write, barter with, or hire someone to write a press release about everything your business does. Send each one to every area newspaper, radio station, and TV station you can find.



Emphasize the benefits your business offers to the community. Be sure the release is professionally written and not simply a sales pitch, or you'll be wasting your time! If no one in your group is capable of writing a press release that is publishable, *definitely* hire a professional. It costs less than you'd think and it's too important a task to allow shoddy workmanship. Email dbishop@wahmteam.com or visit <http://wahmteam.com> for help.

11. Host, or co-host, a Resource Fair or Trade Show. Get similar companies, organizations, and individuals to set up booths, distribute materials, etc. This can be free or you can charge a small fee. Publicize the event extensively. Let everyone know when, where and why. Have fun and make tons of new contacts!

12. Create and distribute feedback forms and ask each new customer to complete one. Include the forms in every order you ship, every bag you fill. Once they start coming in, act upon the valid suggestions you receive! Make your business what your customers want and they're sure to return.

13. Videotape special events and share the tapes with customers, prospective clients, the news media, etc. If you have a physical store front, set up a VCR and play the tape often for your visitors.

14. Write, or hire someone to ghostwrite, a regular column for your local, community newspaper(s). Then offer the column at no cost for a "resource box" that includes your contact and company information. Many small, community papers are eager for regular content to fill their editorial needs. If you can write proficiently about a subject of interest and value to the community, it's a great way to generate interest for your business. If you're not a writer, hire a ghostwriter by emailing dbishop@wahmteam.com or visiting <http://wahmteam.com>. It's worth the minimal cost for the marketing return.



15. Set up guest appearances on local radio and community television talk shows to discuss ways your business is meeting a need in the community. Do you sell toxin-free products to make the world a safer place? Offer computer lessons to senior citizens? Teach

children manners and etiquette? That's something the media would want to know about, so tell them!

16. Print and use letterhead, envelopes, note pads and anything else that you can put your name and a simple logo or graphic on. Be sure to include a motto, slogan, or tagline so people can easily remember and relate to you and your business.

17. Create a simple brochure. This is another idea that must be done professionally to be effective, but it need not be elaborate or expensive. Something that shares your corporate mission, benefits of doing business with you, and how to order from you work very

well. Need a pro? Email dbishop@wahmteam.com or visit <http://wahmteam.com> for a quote.

18. Ask other businesses to distribute your literature, brochures, flyers, etc. in exchange for you distributing theirs. You can get link up with hundreds of WAHMs online at <http://www.themompack.com> who are interested in swapping advertising information. Membership is free and offers a tremendous networking opportunity as well.

19. Place your company literature in libraries, doctor's offices, lawyer's offices, grocery stores... anywhere possible. Give every customer a few brochures or business cards and ask them to distribute in the places they frequent.

20. If appropriate, ask area churches or other groups to allow you to speak to their members about your business. This works well for craft companies, cosmetics and beauty products, etc.

21. Present seminars in libraries and meeting rooms on topics related to your area of expertise, then distribute company literature afterwards. This should NOT be a sales

presentation, but an offering of valuable information that will help others to walk away better educated and impressed with your concern for the community.

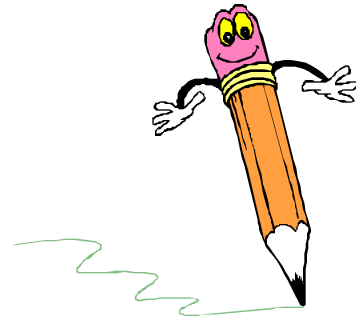
22. Write or hire someone to write press releases about your *customers* and what they are doing. This is a new take on the traditional press release and is a tremendous marketing strategy. Not only does it offer newsworthy information to the media, but your customer will love you for it, too! Send these releases to area newspapers, radio and TV stations. And be sure to list their affiliation with your company. (This works especially well if the customer is well known in the community.)

23. Give free T-shirts, bags, mugs, etc. to be used as prizes by area radio stations. They're always looking for free giveaways, and they offer great publicity to the donor.



24. Better yet, take your favorite DJ a batch of homemade brownies or a cherry pie, "just because," and

be sure to tell him/her the name of your company. This can often generate more talk than the prizes mentioned above!



25. Create, barter with, or hire someone to create a comic strip about your group to be printed in newsletters, flyers, and local newspapers.

Distribute this freely to anyone who would like to reprint it.

26. Send birthday and anniversary cards to every customer and prospect in your database. This builds goodwill and inspires your customers to tell others about this wonderful company with whom they do business!

27. Have bumper stickers printed with your company name, logo, or tagline. Distribute through libraries, bookstores, radio and TV stations, other businesses or grocery stores - anywhere they'll let you leave a stack for give away. These work especially well if you can tie in a local slogan or event that would make people want to put the sticker on their cars.

28. Create a slide show with background music to use at special events, trade shows, craft fairs, etc. Be sure it presents your company in a positive, appropriate light and shares the benefits of doing business with you rather than your competitors.

28. Have mugs printed with your company name and logo. Fill with candy and give to customers and friends for birthdays, anniversaries, the birth of a baby, hospitalizations, as door prizes, etc. These are also good as gifts for the secretary of a new customer you want to do business with.

Have other ideas for low-cost marketing? Share them with us! If we use them in an upcoming booklet, we'll give you and your business credit. Send them to:

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