

Marketing on a Shoestring

If the marketing budget's looking tight but you need some big results, work your way through our ideas for an action plan - you'll find some great ways to make that precious cash stretch.

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Refocus existing marketing

Already sorted	Action now	Consider later
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- Make sure your advertising is targeted to your best customers
- Identify what marketing is working and repeat

Free or cheap options

- List your business in free online and print directories
- Become well known as the expert by giving talks
- Write articles on your area of expertise for online and print media
- Send out online press releases about any newsworthy events
- Publish feedback and testimonials from happy customers
- Sponsor local community events if the target markets overlap
- Use free social media like LinkedIn, X, YouTube and Facebook

Find complementary businesses to share the costs with

- See if you can build any strategic alliances or partnerships
- Launch joint promotions to split the marketing costs
- Provide each other with free reciprocal advertising

Get the most out of each sale

- Train staff to suggest related products at the point of sale
- Provide attractive guarantees or warranties to help secure the sale
- Offer free add-ons to make an irresistible product bundle

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Use your customer database

Already sorted

Action now

Consider later

Invite customers to join your contact list

Send regular email newsletters

Look after the customers you already have

Contact the customers who bring in most of your profit

Develop a social media presence and invite customers to join

Focus your efforts specifically on the highest-return customers

Offer discounts or special terms to longstanding customers

Offer incentives for bringing in friends to the business

Map out every point of contact your business has with customers

Write a plan for improving customer service at each contact

Build customer loyalty programs

Constantly improve how much you get for your money

List your marketing methods with measurable outcomes

Ask customers where they found out about you - and do more of it

Identify the marketing methods that give you the best return

Adapt your marketing plan to invest in the highest-return methods
