

MICRO-BUSINESSES – TOO MUCH TO DO?

GET YOUR MARKETING PRIORITIES RIGHT

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Where resources are limited it is vital to prioritise on the best value for money and that means being ruthless about what you allocate and where – but to do this it is important to understand the options available and how they best work together. From our experience of these many options we have found that these days your initial mix will probably look something like this:

Website:

This is absolutely the first priority. We use Wordpress. It is important to keep it simple, 4 or 5 pages will give a solid core, plus a blog page. Be focused, but invest in good content – words and pictures. A lot of free photos and graphics are available on the internet, plus a lot of very low cost ones can enable you to brighten your presentation and create an attractive layout (do check that you have the right to use whatever you download as copyright disputes can be expensive!). Words may be more difficult – you may be able to write yourself, or it may be preferable to get a professional to produce what you need. Whichever you choose do take time over it and consider carefully what you want to say. Keep it simple and invest in developing the site continuously with new material. See our [“Top Tips for your Industrial Website”](#).

Directories:

Free directory entries are a great use of your time. It is true that they do involve quite a bit of manual input and effort – but if you put yourself on 20 to 30 sites then the information stays there almost permanently. Directories are great for SEO and organic searches so choose the major national ones plus specialist niche ones. If your business is local/regional then also use local/regional sites and Google Places. In addition if you can identify really worthwhile specialist directories then by all means consider paying to enhance your free entries, but of course be careful with your money – perhaps delay spending until the free entries have had a chance to work.

From the early days of the internet we have taken it as part of our PR remit to put a client’s company profile onto free directories under our philosophy of “getting coverage wherever possible so long as it is free” – and it is a policy that has paid off handsomely – with directories now more important than ever and many online journals taking on a directory role. See our whitepaper [“Managing your Free Directory Entries”](#) and [“Top Tips for Directory Management \(free entries\)”](#) on our [sister](#) site.

Social Media:

Love it or hate it – the social media can play an important part in your low cost promotion – regular activity and engagement are vital to this aspect – so post to your blog frequently, set up company pages where

possible and re-work your blog posts onto Twitter, LinkedIn, Facebook and Google+. Do them yourself for greatest authenticity, but if you can't, or don't have time, then by all means employ a specialist social media manager. Read our "[Top Tips to Industrial Social Media](#)".

Video:

Online video is probably the most underused promotional channel on the internet – even low cost simple videos can generate tremendous interest and web traffic – so create a few simple videos and put them on YouTube. Repeat as posts on your blog and link from social media. Even a cheap amateur video can get thousands of hits. For more helpful material see "[Top Tips to Video on the Net](#)".

P.R.

Much maligned "Public Relations" in this case is probably better considered "Press Relations" and is often one of the most effective activities available to a small business. To begin create a mailing list of the main publications in your industry. Then send them press releases regularly, e.g. once a month. You will need appropriate content – words and a picture for each – check out our "[how to do P.R.](#)" resources. Do not forget the printed publications as these can be very influential in specialist markets.

All these activities can be done for free and as the owner/operator of your micro-business they may all be within your capability. If not, we can show you how and put you on a suitable path with a one-off consultation or a custom program.

If you are scared by the budget – then quite right – as a micro-business person you need to be very careful, so let us now take a look at how else you may spend your money and ask the question "what is the best value?"

Options include:

Rent an office – to pick a figure this could cost circa £24,000 p.a. and perhaps would provide a comfortable work environment but would be lost money from your business – there are other options. For example if you can't work from home all the time there are plenty of public places where desk space can be found for the price of a cup of coffee.

Exhibitions – typically circa £2000 to £10,000 p.a. – it can be nice to speak to a few people and connect personally, but the key is in the word "few". Are they really good value?

Advertising – can easily cost circa £10,000 p.a. for a useful campaign, but traditional advertising has very limited monitoring possible and where it is possible the numbers are usually limited, making this a very expensive exercise.

Pay per click advertising – this essentially comes down to Google AdWords which I believe can work extremely well, but seems to depend on considerable time input and expertise to ensure good keyword selection and management e.g. of negatives to minimize waste. By all means PPC is worth a try if you

can identify some clear keywords and establish a reasonable cost per click. Personally I believe there are some issues over the value of traffic generated so it needs careful management, probably by specialists.

For more information please review our [other whitepapers](#) – or call us to arrange a consultation.