

Getting started

It is not hard to learn how to promote your business better, but the key to success is to make it part of your daily routine. Just fifteen minutes a day or a single task will help to keep your business profile high. This guide is packed with simple ideas, many of which are low cost too. So, follow the ideas, plan in a daily promotional activity, and your business will grow.

Using this book

This is a workbook, so keep a pen with it, and make sure you write all over it! Each written section is accompanied by examples, so if you are not clear after reading the text, read the example to see how another business has done it. Try the exercises too – most of them can be done with just a pen and this workbook, although you may then need to go on and show what you have done to someone else for a second opinion, or write

something up on your computer, if you use one. There are lots of online resources to help you which you can download from www.prbasics.co.uk.



Promotion – the basics

Here are a few basic promotion tips, so you can get started right away. First of all, make sure everyone knows what you do. Do not be embarrassed to talk about your work. Use your networks – old friends, family members, people you meet in a coffee shop or at the school gate - you never know who may be interested in your product or service. If someone asks you what you do, start by saying "I run my own business". Then, explain all about it. Prepare a 30 second sentence that sums up what you do – you never know who you may be speaking to. See the exercise at the end of this section for more help with this.

Always keep business cards in your pocket. This saves you searching for a pen and scrap of paper if someone shows an interest in your business. If you have single-sided business cards, use the back to write down something personal, related to what you were discussing. This will make it more likely that the recipient will retain the card. It could be extra contact details, a date, an event, or a product recommendation.

It is cheap and easy to run off sticky labels with your logo and web address on and to stick these on every letter you post – business or not.

What's my USP?

Now that you are thinking about how to tell people about your business, it is time to look at what you are saying to them. You may have a great business with lots to offer customers, but can you get your message across clearly and succinctly? A concise sentence or two summing up what your business offers is essential, for all your promotional materials as well as face-to-face situations.

Working out your 'Unique Selling Points' (USPs) will help you promote your business, and show everyone what is great about it. The example overleaf shows you how one business owner worked out how best to put her business across.

<p>Jane's Toys 12 High Street, Fordfield Bucks BU26 9RD</p> <p>Tel: 01993 864 272 Fax: 01933 864 273 Email: info@janestoys.co.uk www.janestoys.co.uk</p>	 <p>Jane Porter Manager</p>
<p>Unique Fair Trade Wooden and Traditional Toys</p>	

TWO MINUTE TIP

It is free to put your business name, web address and logo at the bottom of every email you send – and good advertising too. Think about other ways you can let people know about your business by simply using your logo, labels and business cards.

After you have finished talking, look at the words noted down. Turn these points and phrases into a few sentences, which sum up your business's good points.

Repeat the exercise with someone else, trying out your new phrases. It should take less time to get your key points across, and they should be clear about the benefits you can offer.

Now, break down the phrases that sum up your business even further. Highlight the key words and use them to devise a slogan.

→ THINK ABOUT... Getting an advisor

It is really helpful to have someone you can turn to for advice on setting up your business. Ask your local enterprise agency if they have any mentoring schemes, or start networking to find an experienced businessperson who you can bounce ideas off on a regular basis.