



Module 10 : Marketing Your Business & Social Media

- How to make the most of social media and online marketing tools
- Why networking is still important
- Other ways to market your business which do not involve the internet
- What to include on your advertising material

By the end of this module, you will know:

- How to make the most of social media and online marketing tools
- Why networking is still important
- Other ways to market your business which do not involve the internet
- What to include on your advertising material
- How to optimise your website

10.1: Social Media



The stronger your online presence, the more seriously potential clients will take you.

If they search the name of your business or your act on the internet and find that you have your own website, a Twitter account and a Facebook page, they will be reassured that you are a real and reputable company. The fantastic thing about social media is that it is a free, or at least very inexpensive, way of marketing your business and spreading the word about the services which you offer. You won't have to print as many flyers, or pay for expensive adverts in local newspapers or magazines if you can really optimise the way in which you use social media.

Don't be afraid to ask your friends and family to help you out whilst you are still setting up your business. The more likes and shares that you get on Facebook, the more people there will be who get to view your profile and the more seriously they will take your business once they see it. There is the option to use paid advertising on Facebook. You can pay a small fee and Facebook will show your advert on the newsfeeds of people who fit certain criteria as your target audience. This is a very cost effective way of marketing your business, but it will be a complete waste of time until you have got a complete profile with plenty of content and support. Ask your friends and family to like and share your Facebook page to make sure that it has a high level of support before you start to pay to sponsor the advert on other platforms.

Whenever you perform at an event, ask your client to like your Facebook page and to leave a review. You can even offer small incentives, like giving a 5% discount on their next booking if they like the page, or a 10% discount if they share the link to your website. This a great way to generate more business from them, but also to spread the message to similar people who might share the same interests, increasing your potential client base quickly and easily.

10.2: Website



Websites are extremely important for small businesses looking to make it in this digital age.

When it comes to designing your website, less is more. Don't overcomplicate the design or try to add too many sophisticated features to start with. You will always be able to update the website as time goes on, but if you don't have time to do it properly when you are setting up the business, you run the risk of trying to fit too much onto the site. This can make you look sloppy and unprofessional; not the look that you should be looking to promote when you are running your own company.

When it comes to content, however, the more you have, the better you will look. Upload video teasers of previous performances that you have done; include reviews from people you have performed to; write a blog about your experience as a freelance balloon modeller and include links to your social media accounts and pages. Make sure that everything is easy to find, but that everything that anyone could possibly want to know about the service that you offer is right there on the website. This will also make your job easier as you will get fewer e-mails and phone calls asking questions which could have been answered on the website.

The most important section of your website will be the 'contact' page. This should be updated the second any of your contact details change. It should have a phone number, an e-mail address and the links to your social media accounts and pages. People will never be able to make a booking if they cannot get in touch with you.

For most people, your website will be the first impression that they are given of you and your company. Make sure that it reflects the tone and the ethics of your business and that it is a good representation of who you are and what you offer. If you need to pay someone else to set up the website for you to make sure that it looks professional and is easy to use, then you shouldn't hesitate to do so. Getting that first impression right is so important and could be the difference between taking bookings and losing business to your competitors.

10.3: Good old fashioned marketing tactics



Just because the internet now seems to rule most people's lives, doesn't mean that you should only market your business online.

People are also more likely to trust you and to hire you if they have actually met you in person; so attending events where there are likely to be lots of potential clients for you to see and speak to is always a good idea. Going to events such as summer fetes, bonfire night celebrations, Christmas markets and countryside rallies is a great way of getting to meet potential new customers face to face. You will also be able to demonstrate your skills live so that people will know exactly what they will get when they hire you. Never pass up lightly an opportunity to market yourself in this way.

There are lots of other things that you can do besides hand out flyers in order to market your business. You could give out balloon models at events, making sure that you attach your business card to them or write your phone number on them before you give them away. You could paint your name and contact details on the side of your car so that everywhere you go you will be recognised. You should also hand out business cards whenever you go to an event where there are lots of potential clients.

As long as your strategies don't cost too much money, you can never be too creative when it comes to marketing. If you are not comfortable using the internet then not all of your advertising has to be done online.

10.4: Local awareness



Your most profitable events will be ones which are local to you so that you are not forced to pay travel expenses.

You should therefore target all of your marketing, at least when you first set up your business, on the local area. Advertise at local summer fetes, in village shops or local schools. Make sure that you become a familiar face in the community and you will find that word of mouth will start to take over for you.

10.5: Target customers



Every penny which you spend on marketing or advertising is one less penny's worth of profit.

However, if you invest in the right marketing opportunities then you will be able greatly increase your future income so it will be worth the amount that you spend. You just need to make sure that every penny counts and you only spend money on marketing and advertising plans which will actually turn into sales.

The easiest way to do this is to think of the sort of person who would be likely to require your services and try to target areas where that sort of person might be likely to see a flyer or an advert. If you think that parents are your ideal target market, then you should look for places to advertise where lots of them will look.

Adverts in local newsletters, on school noticeboards or in youth centres are likely to be seen by lots of people with children.

10.6: What to include on your advertising material



If you are using a poster, flyer, blog post, Twitter account, website or Facebook page to advertise, then you need to make sure that everything a potential customer could possibly want to know is written on there.

You should include your fee per hour or per party, your name, a link to your website, Facebook page and / or Twitter account, a contact telephone number and your e-mail address. The easier you make

it for someone to get in touch with you, the more likely they are to contact you to ask about bookings.

Make sure that your posters and flyers are colourful and eye-catching. You want to attract people's attention and make sure that they read the information included on your promotional materials. The best way to do this is to make them look appealing. Use large fonts, bright colours and pictures to make sure that people want to read all about your business and the services that you offer.

Module Summary

Lessons Learned

A presence in social media is a definite benefit in today's internet age, so open up Facebook and Twitter accounts and get your friends and family to like and follow you to give your business some support.

Create a professional website that reflects your company's brand and tone. Don't forget networking in person; attend events that will host potential clients, handing out fliers, business cards, and even models with your contact details attached, to procure business.

Focus on your local area initially to keep your travel costs down, making your name and face well known in the community and ensuring that you focus on your target audience to maximise the effect of your marketing.

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