

17 “Old School” Ideas for Putting Your Marketing Message in Front of an Offline Audience

Throughout these guides, we’ve been focusing mainly on online advertising and marketing strategies. However, there are some offline “old school” ways to market your business that are still quite effective. And that’s exactly what you’re going to be learning about in this Offline Marketing Guide. So, without further ado, let’s get started...

1. 5 Ways to Write a Newsy Press Release

A press release is a powerful way to market your business, mainly because it doesn’t look like an ad. People read these releases without having their “ad defense shields” up, which creates a warm, open audience. However, this also means your press release cannot in any way look too promotional. To that end, you need to create a press release that shares news. Here are five ideas:

- Write about a grand opening or launch. If your business is just launching, write a press release about it. Likewise, if you’re launching a new product, share this news in a press release.
- Share news about a sponsorship. For example, if you’re sponsoring a local dog rescue event, share this news in a press release.
- Offer tips. For example, if you’re in a gardening niche, you might share timely information about how to prepare a garden for the fall.
- Link to current news. Let’s suppose you’re in a dieting niche, and a popular diet drug just got pulled off the market. You can comment on this news and perhaps offer safe weight-loss alternatives.

- Share partnership information. If you're partnering with a big name in your field, write about it.

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2. How to (Softly) Promote Within a Press Release

As mentioned, you can't create a press release that looks like an ad, or no one will publish it. Instead, what you need to do is softly promote your business. This involves two steps:

- Quote yourself in the press release. As you share information, use your full name and business name to position yourself as an expert. E.G., "Expert dog trainer John Doe from Sit-Stay Training offers these tips..."
- Insert your link in the last line of your press release. E.G., "To learn more great tips for training your dog, go to [yourdomain.com](#)..."

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3. Two Ways to Distribute Your Press Release

There are two main ways to distribute your press release:

1. Send it directly to media. You can do this yourself, or you can outsource this task to a service that will send your release directly to the media. If you do it yourself, there are places that sell the contact information of media outlets around the country (which saves time so you don't need to look up the info yourself).
2. Distribute it using an online service. This is where you place the press release online, and then media goes to these sites to pick up releases in their niche. This isn't as effective in getting you ink, but the advantage is that you can optimize your release for the search engines and get found by your target market. One such service is PRWeb.com.

Here's the next tip for offline marketing...

4. Offer Yourself as a Guest Expert for the Media

Your local media and talk radio are always looking for experts on certain topics. That's why you'll want to write to the producers of these shows to introduce yourself, explain your qualifications, and present a clip of yourself talking on a niche topic.

For example, you might send your introduction out to the producer of a morning local news talk show. You might even pitch ideas for segments they could do where you could contribute. (Be sure to watch the show several times first so you get an understanding of what types of information and experts they bring onto the show.)

If you do land a guest expert slot, generally you'll be introduced by your name and company, and you may get a chance to share your web link as well. As always, don't be aggressively promotional, because this is news (not an ad).

5. Give Local Talks to Organizations

Another way to get in front of your target market is to offer yourself as a guest speaker for a local organization. For example, if you're serving a gardening market, you can offer yourself as a speaker at a local gardeners' club. You can promote yourself by creating an informational handout that includes your web link along with a call to action to get more information. (This link can point to your lead page.)

6. Set Up Your Own Local Talks

Still another way to get in front of a local audience is to offer a free workshop. You can rent a hotel conference room for a morning, or you can do a joint venture with a local related retail shop. For example, those in a weight loss niche can swing a deal with a local fitness supplement store to do a free talk in the store (which gives them plenty of foot traffic).

7. Create a Postcard Campaign

The idea here is to send out postcards to your own prospects and customers, if you've collected their mailing information. Alternatively, you can buy a targeted list of mailing addresses. Either way, you can use a postcard mailing service to print and ship these postcards. Companies such as VistaPrint.com, Click2Mail.com, and even the USPS.com can help you with this process.

8. Do a Joint Mailing

You've seen those envelopes full of offers from different retailers? Now you can do the same thing in your niche. Handpick a few related marketers and ask them to split the cost of a mailing with you. You can do this with one or two others, or a dozen. It all depends on your goals and how much you want to invest in the campaign.

9. Attend a Niche Event

If you live in or near a big city, then you surely can find niche events going on all year long, such as expos and trade shows. You can do three things at these events:

1. Be a guest speaker or give a demo. You'll need to contact event organizers to find out how they select speakers. This will give you the most publicity.
2. Rent a booth at the event. To save money, you can rent a booth with someone else in your niche.
3. Network at the event. These events are good places to find potential joint venture partners, and networking face-to-face at an event is a good way to build relationships.

10. Give Away Advertising Specialties

Advertising specialties are physical products that have your branding and URL on them. Examples include calendars, pens, mugs, shirts and more. The

advantage of these items is that your marketing message stays in front of your audience because they'll regularly use your branded product.

You can give these items away individually to prospects you meet at your local talks and events. You can mail them to your online subscribers who request them. You can also talk to big event organizers in your niche about including your product inside a swag bag/goodie bag.

To get started, search for "advertising specialties" in Google, and you'll find dozens of companies that that will create these items for you.

11. Placing Newspaper Ads

Another way to get your message in front of a local audience is by placing a newspaper ad. You can place a display ad in a targeted section of the newspaper, or you can place a classified ad.

TIP: Save money by calling the newspaper to ask about remnant advertising. These are unused ad spots that the newspaper will sell to you at a big discount, sometimes as much as 80% off the list price.

Here's the next tip...

12. Get Involved in the Community

The idea behind this strategy is to sponsor local charities or other organizations. For example, if you're in a sports-related niche you might sponsor the local Little League. Or if you're in a pet niche, you might sponsor a dog rescue event.

There are two ways you benefit from this:

1. Your business name (and often link) is listed in all promotional materials as a sponsor.
2. You can send out a press release announcing your sponsorship, which generates free publicity.

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13. Place Ads on Bulletin Boards

This is a bit of a “guerilla advertising” method, but depending on what you’re selling it may work quite well for you. The method simply involves you placing flyers on local bulletin boards. For example, many grocery stores have a bulletin board in their entry way.

TIP: If you have a business of interest to tourists and travelers, then talk to local hotels about getting your flyers or brochures in their lobby, as well as your ad in their “hotel services” book.

Here’s another idea...

14. Purchase Ads in Free Publications

Many times, you’ll see free publications (such as niche newspapers) available in the entry way of grocery stores and other retail stores. These publications tend to get a wide distribution since they’re free to consumers. If you can find a publication in your niche, then you can test advertising in these free newspapers and magazines.

15. Look for Creative Ad Opportunities

Time to think outside the box. For example, ever notice that at small cafés they sometimes put down placemats with advertising on them? That’s another venue for you to consider.

TIP: You can pitch these ideas to local restaurants, and then recruit the advertisers. This gives you the opportunity to place a free ad, since the other advertisers will defray the cost of printing the placemats.

Here’s the next idea...

16. Network at Meet Ups

The website MeetUp.com lets anyone find groups of people with a specific interest who meet up offline on a regular basis. If you can't find a suitable meet up in your niche, then you can create one.

Depending on what you're selling, you can simply network at these meet ups with potential customers. These meet ups may also be good places to meet potential joint venture partners. For example, you can join an entrepreneur's club to network with likeminded people.

Another idea is to offer yourself as a guest speaker at these clubs. For example, if you're serving a fitness market, you might join a fitness meet up and lead a group exercise class. You can then handout flyers with weight loss and exercise tips, along with a call to action to visit your site to get more information.

TIP: It's a good idea to attend meet ups to get a feel for the group culture before you offer yourself as an expert. That way, you can tailor a talk to match the group's "vibe" and expectations.

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17. Do Joint Ventures with Brick-and-Mortar Stores

As mentioned above, you can do a joint venture with a retail shop, where you give a free talk or demo (and the shop gets free foot traffic and publicity for hosting the event). That's one idea, but there are plenty of other ways to do it.

For example, you can offer a bookstore free bookmarks (with your advertising embedded).

Another example: you can offer a veterinary office a free tips booklet on dog health, which includes both your advertising and the vet's advertising. The vet will distribute these booklets to their clients and you'll both get exposure.

One more example: you can provide branded coffee sleeves to a bakery or coffee shop.

For more information on how to land joint ventures, see the Joint Venture Guide.

Conclusion

While your market is really connected and engaged online, they still live in the offline world. And that means you can reach more deeply into your market by using some of the offline advertising methods you just learned about. As always, be sure to test and track your offline campaigns to ensure you're getting good results before you invest additional resources into it.



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