

What are some creative ways to market a new business?

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Andrea Jones, leader and coach at Jonesing for Leadership. *SUPPLIED*

Capital Ideas members were asked about unique

ways to market a new business. Here's what members of our community of Calgary business owners helping business owners had to say:

“Guerrilla marketing is perfect for new businesses, and it's is so much fun to do. By definition, it's creative marketing with little or no budget. It can be as simple as chalk drawings on a sidewalk, making origami invitations for your launch party or clipping a hedge into the shape of your logo. Of course, it can be much more elaborate, too, if you have the budget. The whole idea is to be different, be eye-catching and above all, have fun with it.”

— *Andrea Jones, leader and coach at [Jonesing for Leadership](http://jonesingforleadership.com)*
(<http://jonesingforleadership.com>)

“Don't be afraid to use something that is eyebrow raising, but captivating and humorous to draw attention. In tough times a funny ad can be like a tonic. Round up some friends to help you get the creative juices flowing, keep your target audience in mind, put yourself in their shoes and test run your idea with a sample of potential customers before you launch. Start off by handing out a quirky item such as a branded packet of flower seeds or branded toilet paper with your logo on the sheets and a coupon on every 10th sheet to would-be customers at a public event. Make people smile and remember you.”

— *Leone Joubert, CEO and founder of [West Works Group Inc.](http://westworks.ca)*
(<http://westworks.ca>)

“There's a saying or phrase in the Silicon Valley startup world that is 'do things that don't scale.' When we needed to get the word out about our site and had no advertising or marketing budget I grabbed my iPad and went to the Baby and Tot show in Calgary. I simply walked around the showroom floor and chatted with moms with small kids that may be searching for child care. I showed them our site right on the iPad and got their feedback. It was a great way to get in front of a bunch of potential users. Maybe one day we will be back at the Baby and Tot show, but as an official exhibitor this time.”

— *Craig Pearce, co-founder of [DaycareIQ](http://daycareiq.com)* (<http://daycareiq.com>)



Voke Boghean, CEO of The Jolly Table Meals Inc. *SUPPLIED*

“(Try) **cross-promoting with** other new or already established businesses that are complementary. For example, as a meal ingredients delivery service our company seeks out local producers whose quality, values and business align with ours. We are then able to build a mutually sustaining relationship that can be leveraged in communications to current and potential customers.”

— Voke Boghean, CEO of *The Jolly Table Meals Inc.*

<http://thejollytable.com>)

“When trying to attract attention from your target market, think first ‘how can I help them?’ A good way to start may be sponsoring a community event, industry trade show or charitable function. If your budget is small perhaps offer to volunteer at these events or put a small ad in their brochure. Showing that you are interested in helping your target market is an important first step to attracting customers to your new business!”

— *Elizabeth Harris, independent employee benefit advisor, co-founder of [HB Consultants](http://hbconsultants.ca)*

“I’ve seen several service and retail businesses have tremendous success by motivating their existing customer base to promote them actively through social media. The average Facebook user has 338 friends and that’s a pile of potential customers that you can reach with a click. The message you’re ultimately going for is that their trusted friend or family member shops at, and approves of, your store or service. For example, if you own a hair salon or dog groomer, try offering your customers a small discount in exchange for posting a smiling ‘after’ photo to their Facebook account. Other businesses have success by giving customers a small discount if they ‘like’ your page and ‘check-in’ on Facebook. Just having 10 customers a day doing this will potentially extend your reach to thousands more, helping you earn those all important word-of-mouth referrals.”

— *Ryan Jorden, managing partner at [VR Business Brokers](http://vrcgy.com)*

“The best opportunities and engagement numbers in marketing right now are coming from video. Video can be used on your website, in social media postings, newsletters, tweets, on Snapchat, in-store screens and just about everything else. Why is this? As a general rule, if it moves, you have a two to three times better chance to capture and hold someone’s attention than with an image or just text. Virtually any business can make use of video and different video styles, from aerial drones to animation and stop-motion to vlogging. If you want to get customers excited and engaged start experimenting with video.”

— *Michael Tighe, managing partner at Solid Site (<http://asolidsite.com>)*

“Our online mantra is ‘content is king.’ On the Internet you have seconds to grab someone’s attention. We spend an inordinate amount of time creating the right images to support our text, with appropriate search terms and keywords. Building trust is another huge part of our marketing strategy. Our brand



Michael Tighe, managing partner at Solid Site.
SUPPLIED

is about people with exceptional skills and knowledge and we constantly look for opportunities to showcase this, be it a networking event or an industry specific fair where people are able to touch and try on our creations and talk to us.”

— *Erica Jago, director and owner La Vogue Vintage (<http://lavoguevintage.com>)*

“The best, most innovative marketing strategy will get your customers’ attention once. Once you have it, make sure you keep it! If you provide great value, easy transactions, friendly and genuine service you’ve got the two most powerful marketing tools ever — a happy (likely to repeat) customer and the beginnings of a positive reputation. These are the very foundation that every other social media, networking group and ad campaign are built on. Without them, you’re sunk – with them every other innovative idea that you use will work better!”

— Richard Milliken, president of The Growth Coach Foothills (<http://thegrowthcoachfoothills.ca>)

“Discover your voice and your story, one that tells your customers, your employees and your stakeholders exactly who you are and what you have to offer. Make the story visual, compelling and worth hearing to launch an authentic branding campaign. (Then) consider presenting your

story in a different way. Startle people. Break out of your comfort zone and do something unexpected: run an offbeat ad, fire up a guerrilla marketing campaign, refresh your brand, collaborate with a competitor to increase market share.”

— *Kris Hans, strategist at [Market Grade Ltd.](http://marketgrade.com) (<http://marketgrade.com>)*



Michelle Mackintosh, marketing strategist at Pulse Digital Marketing. *SUPPLIED*

“**Start with a solid** digital home base: a mobile-responsive website that is optimized for search. Have a storefront? Own your Google My Business. Get social, share what you know and add value to the lives of the people you serve. Encourage trial through promotions or partnerships; reach out to influencers. Use social advertising such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn — the targeting opportunities make these tools highly cost-effective. Get reviewed. Ask happy customers to share their experience in the digital world on Google, Yelp, TripAdvisor or Facebook. Finally, get creative. Know why you are in business,

who you serve and who you are. Stay true to those things but don’t be afraid to try new things.”

— *Michelle Mackintosh, marketing strategist at [Pulse Digital Marketing](http://pulsedigital.ca) (<http://pulsedigital.ca>)*

“**Our budget isn’t big** enough to get too creative and try anything too fancy so I try to be purposeful. We engage in multiple low cost strategies all at the same time. For each strategy there must be a ‘call to action,’ an ‘offer’ and a system to track response. We have approximately 25 forms of lead generation and we work to analyze which of these are working most effectively for us. When we track we can then measure what’s working and put more money and/or efforts into those specific areas.”

— *Noreen Ward, owner of [The Gift Designers](http://thegiftdesigners.com) (<http://thegiftdesigners.com>)*

“**(Marketing) is now done** online. Affiliate marketing is where you pay

somebody with a large following/fan base to market your business through their social media platforms without anyone knowing you are playing them. (You can) create groups on social media based around your industry to get an in with and attract your target demographic. Creating blogs shows your potential clients you are an industry leader and also ranking better on SEO. Follow people around online. Once they visit your site, you follow them around on social media, for example your business pops up on their Facebook timeline!”

— *Brittany Michalchuk, CEO, GrowMe.ca (<http://GrowMe.ca>)*

“Marketing is about building a relationship and sustaining it. Ensure your business is everywhere your target customers are. Think partnership and cross-promote your business. Sponsor a great cause and define your business corporate social responsibility (CSR). Go digital, think mobile app and use social media. Give speeches and use the opportunity to craft an elevator pitch. Attend business events and networking meetings regularly — a strong network is one of the greatest assets any business person can have.”

— *Alison Lennon, manager of entrepreneurship at [ATB Financial](http://atb.com) (<http://atb.com>)*

“A less-known but very lucrative form of awareness, which creates a quick trust relationship with new customers, is reviews. The main (way) is claiming your Google My Business site, creating a Google+ page and making customers aware of your business and your site. Another site is Homestars.com, a place where customers look for well-reviewed companies. A key feature of these review sites is the owner’s response which allows for some subtle advertising and a bit of bragging as you expand on a customer’s gracious review. I find that customers who used to question me to build trust, now trust the reviews of other customers and just have me do the work. I have been chosen over my competitors frequently due to these reviews. As well (the reviews) contributed to my winning the 2016 Consumers Choice Award. All this awareness advertising amounts to over \$100,000 in solid business.”

— *Michael Chartrand, owner of [A Laptop Shoppe Corp.](http://alaptopshoppe.com) (<http://alaptopshoppe.com>)*

*The above answers are in response to a question posed by **Wellington Holbrook**, executive vice-president of ATB Business. Here's his take:*

“Traditional marketing such as print, radio, and TV are great, but they do come at a cost. Creating a robust social media presence is becoming more and more vital to the success of marketing a new business. It is inexpensive but effective in reaching many and marketing your brand. Using non-traditional resources, such as crowdfunding platforms like Alberta BoostR, allows you to build a community and create brand advocates while giving clients something in exchange for their support. All that said, nothing beats face-to-face promotion. As someone starting a new business, it is important to live your brand and connect with people in your community. You need to build and acquire advocates to support your brand and a great place to do that is at networking events, just like Capital Ideas.”



Wellington Holbrook, executive vice-president of ATB Business. *SUPPLIED*

Get Involved!

Answer our next question: **What kind of budgeting process do you have for your business?**

Submit your answers at the Capital Ideas website (<http://capitalideascalgary.com/home/latest-question/?source=CH1001>) by Monday, Feb. 8. We'll publish the best answers, along with your business name and website URL, in the Calgary Herald (and here!) on Feb. 11, 2016.

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