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Devise a plan

"Even with no money you should have a staged plan for marketing. Stage it on having no budget and work from there. If you only want to generate sales and build a brand, use social media and set down how much time you'll spend on Twitter, blogging or Facebook. With a plan you can then refer back to it and get back on track if you need to."

Marketing Eye chief executive Mellissah Smith

Identify your point of difference

"Marketing begins with a product that addresses a customer need. What customer problem does your product solve? What is the most compelling reason that your customers should purchase your product? Find out what your unique proposition is then focus on that message in all communications."

Founder and director of Marketing Is Us
Anne Sorenson

Use your contacts

"One of the first things to do is tap into your network of contacts – family, friends, colleagues – and ask them for referrals. It's a great way to get leads from people who trust you and already have an experience of you."

Marketing Angels CEO Michelle Gamble

Start a website

"A website is your most powerful resource. You can get a free website from [a Google and MYOB partnership], which won't be the best but if you have nothing else and no expertise to build one yourself, it's good to start with."

Marketing Eye chief executive Mellissah Smith

Pick up the phone

"Be strategic about who you call but cold calling can get you clients. Follow up people you know and contact companies that way."

Managing director Interactive Investor
Susan Werkner

Use social media

"The main benefit of social media is you can build a network very cheaply. Sites like Twitter give you the opportunity to build relationships with influencers, journalists and other people you otherwise might not have come across."

Marketing Angels CEO Michelle Gamble

● Many years ago a manager commented off the cuff that Marketing Eye chief executive Mellissah Smith "worked in sales". Smith was irritated by the description until she decided he'd made a valid point.

"I was quite annoyed about him saying marketing was the same as sales but they actually do go hand in hand," she says. "Marketing creates the forum for sales to occur."

Generating sales is ultimately why any business funnels time and money into marketing. The good news for smaller businesses – and start-ups in particular – is that time can be as valuable as money when building a forum for sales.

"The sky's the limit," Smith says. "Marketing doesn't need to cost anything other than time. You can do a lot more today, much more than in the past, because there are so many terrific platforms to communicate through."

Smith says picking up the telephone and

Bang

for your

buck

It needn't take a huge budget to market a business. All it takes is time and a little forethought. **Report:**
Georgina Dent

A small direct marketing campaign

"For \$1000, you can still pay for a letterbox drop or B2B direct marketing campaign; you might need to be creative. You could do a postcard to 200 businesses and integrate it with social media and your website, which might cost 55¢ each. It might get you to the next level."

Marketing Eye chief executive Mellissah Smith

Design your logo

"A brand is far more than a logo but if you need to design it yourself, think about what your brand stands for. If your brand was a person, how would you describe it? Mock up a logo then use a designer to finish it. It might cost \$300."

Founder and director of Marketing Is Us
Anne Sorenson

Online advertising

"Try something like Facebook ads, which are very cost-effective. You can use that to direct people to your page."

Marketing Angels CEO Michelle Gamble

Buy a do-it-yourself marketing kit

"For business owners on a budget, you can purchase a kit with reusable templates to guide you through designing a marketing plan, profiling your ideal customer, your unique selling proposition and brand development for about \$300 from Marketing Is Us."

Founder and director of Marketing Is Us
Anne Sorenson

Hire a PR person

"Public relations can be powerful, so you could engage a PR expert. If it's a well-targeted story, you could get new clients and achieve greater brand awareness."

Mellissah Smith

Get connected

"Identify which online platforms your customers are using, select a couple and establish your presence. Consider Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn or location-based media such as Foursquare. Integrate a blog into your website, which is good for search engine optimisation. These platforms are free to establish, you just need to invest time to post. Share information that is valuable to your customers and set up a calendar to plan your posts."

Anne Sorenson

\$1000

getting active online are the two greatest marketing tools any business without a huge budget can use.

The founder and managing director of the online investor relations firm Interactive Investor, Susan Werkner, says picking up the phone was the first marketing exercise she undertook and snared Macquarie Bank as a client in the process.

"I drew up a list of 50 listed companies to cold call," Werkner says. "I examined the culture in those organisations because there was no point chasing the staid companies that weren't ready to do something different [but] Macquarie Bank was very innovative in the way it communicated with investors."

Once Macquarie Bank joined as her first client, Werkner says the other banks were quick to follow. Werkner's second marketing undertaking was learning to build a website, which again didn't cost a cent.

"I built mine from scratch," she says. "Your website is the key window to your world

which allows you to promote your business. On a sophisticated website, your business can look much bigger [than it is] and attract and secure more viable clients."

Smith agrees that a website is any business's greatest marketing tool but also says that engaging in public relations is also worthwhile.

"PR can be incredibly powerful. I've seen companies grow really fast because of media exposure and it doesn't need to cost anything."

The director of boutique legal recruitment agency Alex Correa Executive, Alex Correa, says submitting articles gave her free publicity and helped spread the word about her business.

"Writing articles for different publications and journals was a very effective tool at no cost," Correa says. "It was an investment of my time but it was great publicity."

Marketing Angels chief executive Michelle Gamble says social media sites are a

marketing dream. "The main benefit of sites like Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn is you can build a network of fans very cheaply," she says. "It gives you an opportunity to connect with influencers you might not have otherwise come across."

When they're used correctly, it's a great way to build a trusted network. "With all social media sites, it's about what you can offer, not what you get. The idea is not to spam people on Twitter or Facebook but to interact, to distribute information, to start passive conversations and build relationships."

Marketing Is Us founder and chief executive Anne Sorenson says regardless of budget, there is one factor that every marketing campaign turns on. "Marketing begins with a product that addresses a customer need," she says. "You need to understand which problem your product solves, identify how you do that differently to your competitors and the most compelling reason your customers should choose you over your competitors." **BRW**

Improve your website

"You want a very good website with perfectly branded content that is integrated with your online strategy. Websites don't cost that much; you can buy one for much less than \$10,000 that is just as good as a more expensive version. When there are so many free marketing avenues, \$10,000 is not a bad budget. It allows you to leverage [the free tools]."

Managing director Marketing Eye Mellissah Smith

Make a video

"Whether it's a how-to guide or one that explains the benefits of your product, it might be worth investing in some video. Video is not just about the content, it's the syndication which is valuable and the fact it continues to work for your brand long after you spent the money."

Marketing Angels chief executive Michelle Gamble

Invest in marketing expertise

"Engage specialist marketing support to help guide, plan and implement your efforts. This leaves you free to focus on delivering a great product and delighting your customers so referrals and testimonials will flow."

Founder and director Marketing is Us Anne Sorenson

Search engine marketing

"Invest in a concerted search engine campaign. You can get decent results using something like Google Ad words for about \$1000 a month."

Marketing Angels chief executive Michelle Gamble

Ramp up your publicity

"Invest in support to find and place newsworthy stories about your business and industry to be placed in media relevant to your target audience."

Founder and director Marketing is Us Anne Sorenson

Host an event

"Partner somebody with non-competing interests but who targets the same market to host an event. You will double up resources and halve the costs."

Marketing Angels chief executive Michelle Gamble

\$10,000

\$100,000

Invest in a fully integrated campaign

"This is not a budget to sneeze at. For most growing businesses turning over less than \$10 million, \$100,000 is a very good budget.

You can engage in a fully integrated campaign using advertising, public relations, social media, online video and wi-fi."

Marketing Eye chief executive Mellissah Smith

Sponsorship

"You can really put rubber on the road at this budget. Depending on whether you are B2B or B2C, I'd look for opportunities to get your brand in front of your target market for a long period. It might be a sponsorship of an event relevant to your market."

Marketing Angels CEO Michelle Gamble

Direct marketing

"Think about who you are targeting and what results you're looking for. You could direct marketing to 60,000 small businesses and still have change from \$100,000."

Mellissah Smith

Broaden your reach and increase frequency

"At this budget, you should have the foundations right – understand your brand, have customer management and market intelligence-gathering systems. Then you can extend the range and frequency of activities, including publicity, advertising search engine optimisation and search engine marketing and sponsorship."

Founder and director of Marketing Is Us Anne Sorenson