



MET Design, Inc.
315 West 102 Street, Suite 3B
New York, NY 10025
212.665.4155
www.metdesign.com

10 (Almost) Free Ways to Get Publicity

by Marya Triandafellos, President, MET Design, Inc.

@2001MET Design, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

You just launched an excellent Web site, but surprise, no one is visiting! Many companies overlook the importance of publicizing their sites. And yes, a full-scale publicity campaign can be an expensive venture. But we have helped companies increase visits by following these (almost) free ways to get publicity. Of course, we are available to plan and/or implement any or all of these ideas and more—if you don't want to do it yourself.

1. Issue Press Releases

A press release can be the most effective tool in your marketing arsenal. A quote or article in a major trade publication can raise awareness of your business dramatically. Here are some tips for making your press release effective:

- **Think like a reporter.** Press releases are meant to be newsworthy. Editors are inundated with hundreds of press releases every day. Be aware that they are looking for unique story ideas. For example, don't simply announce a new product or service—highlight the unique or innovative benefits.
- **Offer solutions.** Readers are always looking for solutions to their business problems. Illustrate the unique benefits of your product or service in a clear and concise fashion.
- **Use efficient language.** Avoid making your press release vague, technical or inundated with adjectives. Get to the point quickly and instill a sense of excitement in the reader.
- **Consider hiring a professional.** They know how to write a press release that warrants being published. A professional can also guide you on the proper publications to which you should submit the press release.

2. Register on Search Engines and Directories

Registering on search engines and directories is an essential part of promoting your business, especially if you are strictly an online business. To achieve the best results, manually register any page of your site directly with search engines and/or directories. Or, you use an online service to submit your URLs automatically. Consider hiring a professional online marketer to position your site in the first ten or twenty results within a keyword category. This can be expensive, but the results can provide an excellent ROI. Also, make sure you are working with a reputable firm that guarantees results.

3. Develop an E-mail Marketing Campaign

Developing an e-mail marketing campaign using a double opt-in list has the dual advantages of low cost and a high response rate (4-6% on average). Several companies supply market-segment e-mail lists. While creating the content of your e-mail keep the following tips in mind:

- **Keep it brief.** Keep your message short and to the point. Include a link to a unique page on your site to provide additional information about your offering. Track the visits to that URL with your datamining software (your site statistics software provided by your website hosting service) to monitor the effectiveness of your promotion.
- **Include opt-out instructions.** This is essential in mass e-mail campaigns. Anti-spam laws dictate that all mass marketing e-mails must include clear and straightforward instructions for opting out (being removed) from the list.

4. Develop a Press Kit

Your press kit is your company's resume. Include information and press that will inform and impress media, investors and prospective clients. Here is a list of the contents:

1. Pitch Letter: Make a good first impression with this introduction. The pitch letter should serve as a "table of contents" for the other components of the press kit as well as explaining what you can provide (a product, service, investment, or a good story idea) to the reader.
2. Two business cards.
3. Recent articles about your business.
4. Press releases.
5. List of testimonials.
6. Company brochure
7. Although it may seem obvious, contact information and the URL of your website.

5. Newsletters

Inspire visitors to register for your free newsletter, which you will distribute via e-mail or publish online. This is an inexpensive way of announcing new developments in your business and providing informative articles that illustrate your expertise.

6. Write and Submit Articles in Your Area of Expertise

Keep a database of all print, online magazine and newsletter contacts in your target market group. Submit story ideas and articles that are relevant to the topics they cover. Be sure to end the submission with your e-mail address and URL.

7. Form Unique Strategic Alliances

Align yourself with companies that produce products or offer services that complement your own. Some advantages of unique alliances are:

- **Build your brand** by increasing exposure to a wider audience and the “virtual” size of your company.
- **Expand your offering** without a monetary investment or much risk.
- **Test a product or service** that you are considering adding to your core services through a company who already provides that product/service.

8. Offer Promotions

Offer your product/service at a discounted price to your top clients. This can result in an immediate increase in business. Promotions can also be in the form of premiums (gifts) to your target audience. The premium should relate to your offering in a memorable way.

9. Ask for Referrals

Word of mouth is the least expensive, most effective way to get new business. If you treat your clients well, they can refer new clients to you. Establish an official Referral Program for your company and announce it through an email or postcard campaign.

10. Integrate your Marketing

To develop a unique and cohesive brand, consider the message you are disseminating in all of the above techniques. Assure that all of your materials voice a unified message relevant to your target market.

Stay tuned for more articles on publicizing your site. Good luck with your venture!