

MARKETING BASICS

for busy Creatives

You may have the best ideas, products or services but if no one knows about you, or where to find you, you cannot run a profitable business. Getting the marketing basics right is key to part of that success whether you are just starting out or looking for new ways to adapt or grow.

Welcome to the Marketing Basics factsheet, summarizing the key points from the Workshop session delivered as part of the Flourishing Barnstaple Programme. This guide will provide you with essential marketing knowledge to help you promote your work effectively. Whether you're a painter, musician, writer, or any other type of creative artist, these tips will help you reach a wider audience and achieve your goals.

What is the Point of Marketing? The purpose of marketing is to reach your target audience and communicate the benefits of your product or service — so you can successfully acquire, keep, and grow customers.

Do you need to do Marketing? If you want to grow your business, or build your reputation or, maybe some of your existing customers have moved away and you would like to reach a new audience, or perhaps new businesses have started up in competition, maybe you have introduced new products or designs, and you want to let people know about them. These are just some of the reasons why you need to do Marketing!

Who are your customers? Try to conjure up an image (or 'Avatar') of your typical customer – do they have any particular characteristics? Can you describe their characteristics? This could include age, gender, ethnicity, whether they have children, maybe hobbies or interests that they might have in common, socio-economic status, employment status, etc.

Think about what triggers their decision to make a purchase? Who are your regulars? and who spends the most money with you? More importantly - are these the people that you want to be dealing with? Or do you want to attract a different type of customer?

Who are your competitors? How do their products compare? How does their pricing compare with yours? Do they offer extra "add-on" products or services? What do they do well? (or poorly?) Who are their customers? (are they actually the same as yours?), How/where do they advertise? Is there anything you can learn from them?

What is your 'Unique Selling Point' (USP)? The definition of the USP of a product or service is a particular feature of it which can be used in advertising to show how it is different from, and better than, other similar products or services. Your USP is the unique thing that you can offer that your competitors can't - it's your "Competitive Edge."

Consider all of the decision-making criteria (explicit and hidden) that your customers might use when making their purchasing decisions. Rank yourself and your competitors by these criteria and identify where you perform well, and craft a USP from this. Remember that you will need to defend and build your USP as your competitors evolve!

Digital Marketing Almost every business needs a website these days to promote their products and services and communicate with their customers and it is important to publicise your website address as well as provide relevant/targeted content, making sure the material used is interesting, engaging and informative.

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Display your website address in as many places as possible. This can include marketing materials such as Leaflets, posters, advertisements, printed letterheads, Business Cards, Banners/flags and Merchandise. It can also be printed on your products themselves, as well as Packaging/wrapping material, price labels and Compliment slips. Also consider including the address on Signs or window decals on your business premises, Vehicles (wraps/magnetic signs) or even on corporate clothing. And don't forget to put links on your social media pages and on your email signoffs.

Search Engine Optimisation (SEO's) These are the little tricks that help your website to perform well in response to search engine enquiries (e.g. Google). Try to use keywords: these can range from simple terms such as a generic description such as 'ceramic', 'watercolour', 'landscapes', 'hand-carved' to longer phrases or product names or, maybe, related words or phrases that help contextualise your work. When choosing keywords, it is important to put yourself in your customer's shoes and think about how they would word a Google search if they were trying to find what you produce.

It is important to keep the website fresh, with regular meaningful updates (ideally monthly) - one way of regularly generating fresh material for the website is to get into the habit of writing a Blog. Also make sure the website loads quickly and is mobile-friendly.

If possible, create a 'Google Business Profile' for your business - this provides a brief overview of the business including contact details, opening hours, website links, Google Maps 'pin', space for product images, Google Review information and much more.

Use of Social Media Like it or loathe it, social media is now one of the main ways to build an online profile for your business and it is better to set up a dedicated business page, rather than try to use a personal page. You can then use it to post information about special offers and encourage customers to share pictures and/or like and follow your posts.

There are many social media platforms, including Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X (formerly Twitter), WhatsApp, Pinterest, BlueSky, LinkedIn or, even, YouTube. However, don't overstretch yourself - it is better to make do with one or two platforms and keep them up-to-date and relevant. If you are managing multiple social media channels, it can be quite a time-consuming exercise to write posts for each channel several times a week (and what happens when you are away on holiday or attending a trade show or just plain busy?!)

Social Media Management Tools enable you to coordinate all of your posts through a single piece of software (so you only need to write one post and then publish it across all of your channels). It is also possible to schedule posts for publishing later (anything up to 75 days in some cases) so you can make use of quieter times to write a series of posts, which can be programmed for release over the coming month.

Think about how often you post - too little and you risk not being seen, too often and your posts might become repetitive and annoying. Also consider the timing - when are your customers likely to be looking at their social media feeds? If you post on a Friday, they might see the post over the weekend, but can they get in touch to place an order? If you post at a similar time to other like businesses, will your posts be noticed? Or will they just get swallowed up by other online chatter?

Try to keep your posts varied and engaging. Mix it up a bit and include occasional informative posts about how you produce your wares and maybe include the odd 'quirky' post about a 'day-in-the-life', or how your cat is helping with packing and dispatch!

Offline Marketing In the modern age, it's easy to lose sight of some of the more traditional types of marketing and dismiss them as 'old school' but, depending on your craft, or the types of wares you produce, there could still be a place for this, and it shouldn't be entirely ruled out.

This could include putting up leaflets or posters in Community Halls, Libraries or any other places where people congregate. Leave a supply of leaflets in Tourist Information Centres, campsites, holiday letting accommodation, Pubs, Hotels, Guesthouses, tearooms, Shops and business premises (especially in tourist areas). You may even be able to swap a few with other creatives so that you can help to promote each other's work!

You may want to think about placing advertisements or feature articles in local Community Newsletters or 'Lifestyle' Magazines such as Exmoor Magazine, Devon Life, etc. or Event Programmes (e.g. Queens Theatre, The Plough, Ilfracombe Landmark or possibly local sports clubs) or just spreading the word through networking activity.

Other forms of 'offline' marketing' could include the use of branded clothing or packaging materials, a sign-written or wrapped vehicle, signs, name boards or banners at your business premises. You could look for opportunities to attend trade shows, craft fairs, business networking events etc. or to sponsor local events.

Depending on the nature of your work, you may wish to approach venues where you could display some examples of your wares (e.g. libraries, community spaces, co-working spaces, etc.) or even organise your own exhibitions or 'open studio' sessions.

Before participating any networking or marketing event, try to develop an 'Elevator Pitch': this is a brief (think 30 seconds!) way of introducing yourself, getting across a key point or two, and making a connection with someone. It is called an elevator pitch because it takes roughly the amount of time you'd spend with someone riding between floors in an elevator (a.k.a. lift !).

Useful Website Addresses:

Social Media Management Tools:

Hubspot - <https://www.hubspot.com/>

Hootsuite - <https://www.hootsuite.com/>

Buffer - <https://buffer.com/>

Social Bee - <https://socialbee.com/>

Canva - <https://www.canva.com/>

Google Services:

Google Business Profile -

https://www.google.com/intl/en_uk/business/

Google PPC Advertising -

https://ads.google.com/intl/en_uk/home/

Google Analytics - <https://developers.google.com/analytics>

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