



20 TIPS TO Market and Brand Your Struggling Business

from the *BLUE SAGE on Business Series*

Whether you're starting a new company, managing a non-profit or looking for ways to refresh your image, there are lots of ways to use marketing and branding techniques to improve and update your business. To make sure that you make the most of the resources around you, **consider these tips...**

1 | **Define Your Brand.**

You only get one chance to make a good first impression. Clearly state who you are, what you do, why someone should buy from you and why you're different.

2 | **Develop a Brand Positioning Statement** (in two sentences or less).

Create a statement that succinctly describes your products and services as they relate to your clients' needs. Refresh your positioning statement as needed.

3 | **Create a Plan.**

Think through the details for getting your products, services and business in front of the right people. Write it down. Refine it over time. This is called a plan.

4 | **Get Feedback from Customers and Prospects.**

How do you find out why your business isn't where you want it to be? Get out and talk to customers. Talk to prospects. Find out what they need and how you can fill their needs.

5 | **Reinforce Your Message.**

It takes at least three impressions for someone to remember your products and services. Get the word out about what you do over and over again using a variety of media types.

6 | **Deliver Benefits Which Customers Really Desire and Value.**

How does a customer know whether or not your offering can fix a problem that they don't even know they have? Describe benefits: how your product or service uniquely satisfies a need, fills a void, provides a solution or identifies a problem.

7 | **If It's Broken, Fix It.**

Find ways to constantly improve your business. If something isn't working, be prepared to change it.

8 | **Identify What Your Brand Means to Customers.**

Loyal customers are your greatest asset. Find out just how loyal your customers are by asking them to tell you exactly what makes your offerings valuable to them.

9 | **Audit and Track Your Success.**

Use the services of a colleague or a research firm to perform quarterly or semiannual audits to see how satisfied your clients are or are not. Take action on the information that you get from these audits.

10 | **Match Your Pricing to the Value That Your Clients Get from Your Offerings.**

Test different price points for your products and services. Research the price points and pricing models from competitors in your field. Value is in the eye of the beholder.

11 | **Organize Your Products and Services in a Logical Way.**

Consider your offerings as a system of products and services that work together. Be sure that they are clearly named, priced and marketed so that clients can make an informed and clear buying decision among, and between, your offerings.



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12 | Spend as Much Time as You Can Getting to Know Your Customers.

Write down a detailed description of your ideal client. Once you've found them, take the time to understand their needs, issues and buying patterns.

13 | Include Your Product and Company Name on Everything.

Reinforce your image and brand by putting it on everything from email signatures to note cards, websites, direct mail pieces, marketing materials and voice-mail messages.

14 | Tell a Story About Your Product or Service.

Everyone loves a good story. Write an account of a how a client found you, a problem that you solved for them, or the successes that they've experienced with your products or services.

15 | Tell Your Clients' Stories Using Their Words.

Testimonials and reference letters are effective ways for your clients to sing your praises. Develop a collection of "client stories" that you can access at a moment's notice.

16 | Push for Quality.

Strive to delight your clients by exceeding their expectations and meeting your promise for results.

17 | Speak to Your Clients in a Language They Can Understand.

The style, tone and content of all communications to your clients should be easy for them to understand. Avoid acronyms and technical terms unless widely understood by your audience.

18 | Get Out to the Marketplace – No Matter What.

Whether or not your business takes you beyond hyperspace, get out and talk to other business owners. Get involved in industry associations. Attend conferences and other educational events.

19 | Establish Solid Business Processes.

Document and update the basic series of actions that describe how you run your business. Include steps for taking orders, answering customer inquiries, post-sales interactions with customers and other aspects of operating your business.

20 | Stay Relevant.

Businesspeople often "reinvent" themselves. Keep up to date on issues and developments in your industry that may affect how (and what and for how much) you sell your products and services. Be on the lookout for opportunities to meet client needs in a new and different way.

BLUE SAGE Consulting, Inc. is a SOMWBA-certified business consulting firm, established in 1997 to work with companies to successfully market and sell their products and their services. www.bluesageconsulting.com
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