

**EXPERTS' FORUM** | Open Forum

## New Year's Marketing Resolutions

**Low Budget Ideas**

Add these low-cost tools to your existing marketing strategy.

1. Shop around for a good networking group in person and online, as a guest if possible, to see if it has the right mix of prospects and referral sources.
2. Print competitive differentiators on the back of your business cards.
3. Train employees to talk about your company's competitive differences.
4. Invest in social media training and use these free tools more effectively firm wide.
5. Send thank you notes to referral sources and prospects.
6. Promote a contest on your website that offers complimentary consulting to the winner.
7. Make five "house calls" a month to check in with clients.
8. Offer value-added services like parking validation, courier services or payment plans.
9. Improve your website bios with linked articles related to the person's expertise, a bit of personality and great photos.
10. Survey your clients to make sure you are doing a great job, to confirm your competitive differentiators and to learn about areas for improvement.

**Targeted Ideas**

Manage resources carefully and maximize free online tools in your marketing team.

1. Prepare your company for ICANN changes; if you can't invest \$185,000 to register your own top level domain as ".xyzcompany," you need to

understand the impact of these changes on marketing, branding, customer service and business development.

2. Look for bundled print and online ad and sponsorship opportunities. The goal is to get more value for your ad budget.
3. Stay close to your customers through trade associations and online groups and look for opportunities to volunteer on committees, share information, sponsor an event or speak.
4. Develop and maintain an electronic newsletter with important industry updates and ready-to-use tips and ideas that clients and prospects have permission to reprint. Archive it on your website by topic and repurpose the information to pitch to bloggers and business media.
5. When speaking or exhibiting at trade or recruitment events, offer a fun game, contest or bonus material that drives attendees to your website.
6. Develop service niches as microsites with their own online presence and teams; start thinking about how to brand key talented individuals at your company.
7. Promote niche services through direct mail campaigns with odd-sized cards. Odd sizes may take more postage, but will stand out in the mail.
8. Send holiday or appreciation greetings at a time other than December.
9. Build SEO by commenting on related industry blogs and linking articles from your site or other resources to those comments.
10. Develop products for your company that reflect your brand: podcasts, e-books, and branded "apps."

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