

## 61. 10 Creative Ways to Market Your Business with Janice Hostager

**Janice Hostager:** 0:04

I'm Janice Hostager. After three decades in the marketing business and many years of being an entrepreneur, I've learned a thing or two about marketing. Join me as we talk about marketing, small business and life in between. Welcome to my Weekly Marketing.

**Janice Hostager:** 0:28

One thing I've noticed in my more than 30 years of marketing is that small businesses, and sometimes larger ones too, tend to gravitate to do the same things that other businesses are doing. If they see something that works for their competitors or other businesses, they want to try it too. I get it. I've been there myself, especially when I was first starting out. I was so nervous about looking like a fraud or an imposter that I thought if I could follow what other people were doing, it would make me look professional. The problem is that everybody doing the same thing creates a lot of well sameness and people tune that out after a while. If we don't stand out, we, by definition, blend in, and who's going to buy your product or service if they don't know you exist? Think about it. Remember during the pandemic, when everybody was dancing on TikTok? Once everybody joined in, it wasn't unique anymore. Or how many pens do you have with a business name on them? Do you really even notice the name on them anymore? Or how many brands use the same Canva templates on their Instagram? Truthfully, I'm not putting this out just to make anyone feel ashamed. We all work hard and do the best we can and, like I said, I've done it too, but to get ahead in marketing we need to stick our necks out a little bit. Take a chance to be a bit different. That will get you noticed and remembered. So that's why I try and keep my eyes open for marketing ideas that are a bit different or that I've had some great successes with. Here's a list of some ideas that you can try too. First up, create personalized video messages. I've done this and my clients love it, especially when it involves a more specific problem or question that they're asking. You can record a message on Vidyard or Loom both have free Chrome extensions or sometimes I just record a message on Zoom and if it's not too big to email directly, I'll put it in a folder on Google Drive and share the link. This is also really helpful if your client or prospective client has a question. Either way, sending personalized video messages makes a stronger connection and helps you stand out from your competitors. This is really useful during a launch or promotion, when customers have questions or are on the fence about buying.

Sometimes they need to know that they're important enough to have you reach out directly and answer their question. Try it and see how it works for you.

**Janice Hostager: 2:52**

Number two team up to create collaborative webinars. Partnering with complementary businesses to host collaborative webinars will reach a wider audience and is valuable on other fronts too. Do this with a business where you share the same audience but are not competing. For example, a web designer might team up with a copywriter, or a social media strategist might team up with a videographer, or a social media strategist might team up with a videographer. The only rule I have for this is to make sure it brings real value. People won't tune in on a webinar unless you promote a clear transformation that they'll get from attending. Of course, you need to sell, so give away a quick win or two and many of the leads will be backed to buy your offer, and you'll get a chance to generate new leads from sharing your lists as well.

Number three strategic partnerships. You can also team up with the same type of businesses to do a joint promotion or partnership. I've seen portrait photographers team up with makeup artists with a package promotion, and I've teamed up with sales experts for workshops. Or, if you have a local business, you could consider a mailer or an open house. Being collaborative on this one or on a webinar can lead to referrals and new opportunities for you both.

**Janice Hostager: 4:07**

Number four interactive online tools. Develop interactive online tools or calculators related to your business and house them on your website. This can attract traffic and generate leads and website visitors, which is good for your search engine optimization or your SEO. It can also bring people to your website to see your products or services. You can go to a website such as [geeksforgeeks.com](https://geeksforgeeks.com) and they have the exact embed code that you can put on your site for various calculators. You can also have ChatGPT. Create some code for you. Think about tools and references your ideal customer uses. Often it could be a digital tool, a calculator of some sort, or maybe even a statistical analysis that other sites will link to in their blog posts. Any of these can be embedded on a page on your website so you can get more traffic and draw in your ideal posts. Any of these can be embedded on a page on your website so you can get more traffic and draw in your ideal customer. You can even consider gating the content so they need to share an email address to access it. The options here are limitless.

**Janice Hostager: 5:08**

Number five podcast sponsorship. As a podcaster, I can tell you that every episode costs money and time to put together. So even if a podcaster isn't soliciting you that every episode costs money and time to put together. So even if a podcaster isn't

soliciting sponsorships, they'd probably be open to the idea of a sponsor if you reach out to them. It's difficult to know how many weekly downloads they have unless they volunteer that information. So it's hard to know exactly how big of an audience you'd reach through each sponsorship, but you can get a feel based on their rankings of podcast hosting sites such as Apple Podcasts, spotify or GoodPods. Of course, choose relevant podcast episodes to reach a targeted audience that aligns with your ideal customer.

**Janice Hostager: 5:50**

Number six user-generated content campaigns. Happy or excited customers love to tell others if they've had a great experience with your business. So you can encourage your customers to create a short video or a social media post to talk about the experience they had with you. You can even sweeten the deal by offering a prize for the best submission or a discount coupon for everyone who enters. If you have a brick-and-mortar location, having a photo op wall makes it easier to solicit user-generated social media content, as people will likely share posts from your location. These all count as testimonials and referrals, and they're one of the most powerful forms of marketing there is, so give it a try.

**Janice Hostager: 6:32**

Number seven a storytelling campaign. A storytelling campaign is a marketing strategy that uses compelling stories to engage and connect with an audience. Instead of just promoting products or services directly through an ad, storytelling campaigns focus on sharing stories around your product or service that evoke emotions. Video is a great and powerful medium for this. We see a lot of storytelling campaigns and Super Bowl ads. One of my favorite was for a Google search ad, where all we see is the screen of someone searching on Google First for a Paris cafe, then French words, then long distance relationships, then churches and then the final one was how to assemble a crib. Seriously, I tear up when I think of it, and it was so memorable, at least for me I'll put the link to that in the show notes, too. One of the things I absolutely loved about that ad is that it was entirely a screen capture video with music in the background, which would have been so easy and inexpensive to make. Your stories might be about why you started your business, your bigger, why your values, your customers experience or any other compelling story around your product or service. The goal is to make the brand more relatable and memorable, ultimately leading to increased brand loyalty and customer engagement. Remember, people buy based on emotion and your know, like and trust factor. The more transparent you are about your core beliefs and your brand story, the more people will be drawn to you, and if they're not drawn to you, they're not your people.

**Janice Hostager: 8:07**

Number eight subscription box collaboration. We continue to see a huge surge in niche subscription boxes catering to specific hobbies, lifestyles and interests. Collaborating with these boxes can introduce your product to new audiences specific to your niche. Of course, this works best for product-based businesses, but you can also include a discount coupon or a flyer for local business services too. Think about a photography promotion, a free consultation with a coach or a social media strategist for a box going to entrepreneurs. If you have a service, instead of reaching out to a subscription box, you might approach someone who has a membership program to join with them on a training episode for their audience. It's a good way to get a little side income going and it's a great way to expand your audience. There are so many ways to collaborate. I love it.

**Janice Hostager: 9:01**

Number nine voice search optimization. In 2023, 1.25 million people used voice search and more than half of adults worldwide use it every day. So if you want to be part of that trend, you need to optimize your online content for voice assistants like Siri and Alexa. To do this, look at the content in your website. Use natural and conversational language in your blog posts and make sure to insert phrases that people would ask for naturally. Also, provide concise answers to common questions, since voice search queries are often in the form of a question. You can have an FAQ page that answers basic business questions like how long does it take to get an order from your business, or how long does it take to get photos from a photographer after the wedding, or it could be even how long are you open on Fridays, or something like that. You can set this up using schema markup. Schema markup, or structured data, is a type of code that helps search engines understand the content on your site better. It can be added to your HTML to improve the way search engines read your page and present their search results. Adding it will make your content more likely appear in voice search results. I'll put a link to Google Structure Data markup tools in the show notes or, if you're not really a techie type, you can ask your developer for more information on this.

**Janice Hostager: 10:25**

And rounding up my list, number 10, cause marketing campaign. Do you remember the Tom's Shoes craze a few years back? If it taught us nothing else, it's that cause marketing really works. Creating a campaign where some of your revenue goes to a cause is a win-win. It should support a cause aligned with your values and the values of your ideal customer. To work, however, it can be as simple as a single week-long promotion or an actual fundraising event. Think it over and brainstorm some ideas that will benefit you and a charity. So that's my quick list of marketing ideas for you. I hope it sparked a few ideas of your own so you can use it in your marketing. For a list of these

and for information and links that we talked about today, visit [myweeklymarketing 61](#). As always, thank you so much for joining me today. I'll see you next time. Bye for now.