



LOW COST MARKETING IDEAS

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We figure this might be the most popular section in the Guide!

Get involved and contribute to your local community

Support local causes, family events and sporting clubs with prizes/giveaways to experience your product. This will help build local customer loyalty. Send a media release to travel writers and news journalists that might be interested in giving support to the community events you sponsor. Frame letters of appreciation and display them in a high profile public area. Include a section on your website to promote your community support and link to the websites of the groups and organisations you sponsor. Offer locals a loyalty membership card with opportunities to gain discounts and rewards.

Toll free numbers

Check with your telco provider if it has a special deal on toll free numbers for business customers. If so, they're a simple way to connect with interstate customers or travellers on the road.

Messages on Hold

Use the time your telephone callers are on-hold to tell them about your product and services with targeted messages. You can create and manage the messages yourself or hook up with a company that will manage everything for you. They will write your messages, do the voice recordings and chase you up on a regular basis to refresh your content. Of course, you can change the messages at anytime and it's a great way to spread the word about new or seasonal campaigns, as well as get messages across about your usual services and experiences.



Guarantee your responsiveness

Make sure you respond quickly to customer voicemail and email requests for information. It's amazing how impressed consumers will be when you get straight back to them. They'll know you're really on the ball when it comes to your customer service and that just might be the clincher for them.

Join networks, industry and community organisations

Turn up for events – Woody Allen once said '80% of life is turning up'. If you have the time, energy and commitment volunteer for a committee position. Send media releases and stories to their newsletters, offer a lucky door prize, and give standing discounts to other members. If other businesses know you and your business they are in a perfect position to recommend you.

Nominate for industry or professional awards

There are lots of awards held each year. Find out which are the most prestigious and if you meet the criteria, enter! By entering and winning you can get exposure to new markets and industry groups. Issue a media release when you win and display your awards where customers can see them. Awards are usually sponsored by:

- government bodies
- industry and professional groups
- special interest groups
- private enterprise.

Participate in trade events and missions

Check with TQ and your RTO on upcoming trade events, missions and road shows. Piggy back on other tourism promotions and leverage off their advertising. If possible, share exhibition space and displays with an operator you package with. Look for events that are planned for your region. The beauty about local events is they can save you time and money. While you may have some upfront costs, in the long run trade are coming to you, in one place at one time.

Team up with other local operators

Work and package with operators in your region who target the same type of consumers as you. Share the costs to develop online and printed guides or flyers that promote, e.g., a day trip experience. Make sure these guides are readily available through each participating business.

Referrals and recommendations

Refer your customers to other tourism network buddies. Both parties will appreciate it and be more than happy to return the favour!



Be professional and maintain a positive attitude

Your positive attitude and open approach are your most important business assets!

Recruit happy, friendly employees who are customer focused.

They're a huge selling advantage to your business. Continue to train your staff and

keep them motivated by making the workplace lively and fun. Being a positive person and choosing cheerful people to fill roles in all areas of your business can be one of your smartest marketing tactics.

Use branding, signage and displays

Brand as much as is feasible with your logo, from carry bags to crockery – don't miss an opportunity to put your name out there. Decals, magnets and stickers on your company vehicles are a great way to promote your product while running errands, attending community and business events and travelling to and from work, or even while the cars are sitting idle in a car park. If allowed, use an A-frame sandwich board on the footpath to promote your specials or other devices that are visually appealing. Also, use fixed and obvious signage at the front of your business and on route to your business so people can easily find you.

Think of others

Keep a birthday diary of your key business and customer contacts. Call, send them a card or email to wish them a great day and let them know you're thinking of them. They'll remember you because you remembered them. Ask new customers if they were referred and, if so by whom. Then follow with a brief but sincere email or card of thanks to the person or people who recommended you.

Membership club

Creating a membership club will help you build repeat business and your customer contact list. A club also helps to build customer loyalty, particularly in your local community. Offer member benefits, specials, events and newsletters.

Visit competitors

It's essential you know as much as possible about your competitors. Visit their product and experience it first hand, collect their brochures and pay special attention to how they operate.

Vouchers

Encourage people to try your product and services by distributing vouchers or coupons through newspapers, brochures, coupon books, direct mail and email. Include an expiry date to create a sense of urgency and use a code to track the success of each campaign.



Bookmark your site

Make it easy for consumers to bookmark your website by adding tools such as [Digg](#), [Delicious](#) and [Addthis](#), or to share it with social networks such as [Facebook](#) and [MySpace](#).

Check your home page

As simple as it sounds make sure your product and services are clearly identified on your website home page. Consumers should be able to see in an instant what kind of tourism product you are and what services you offer. It can be effective to advertise your special offers on your home page as well.

Google it!

Check out [Google](#) and [Google Local Business Center](#) for free business applications such as GoogleMaps, information and resources.

Apply for grants and funding programs

Regularly check Tourism Queensland's Tourism Assistance Database (TAD) - at www.tq.com.au/tad. TAD is a database of grant and funding programs relevant to the tourism industry, including some specific grants designed to help businesses with their marketing. Each grant listing contains a 1 page overview on the key things you need to know such as deadlines, eligibility criteria and how to apply.

Link your product to domestic touring routes

Around 10 million visitors each year take drive holidays or short breaks in Queensland. Queensland has a number of [drive routes](#). Packaging for the drive markets can help to keep visitors in your destination longer and spending more money. It's worth checking with your RTO if and how it's promoting these touring routes and if you like what you hear, look for ways to become involved.

TQ has three international marketing campaigns based around touring experiences. These campaigns are:

- [The Great Sunshine Way](#)
- [Reef to Outback](#)
- [Great Tropical Drive](#)

Read industry newsletters

Industry newsletters from bodies such as TQ and your RTO, LTO and council contain useful information to help you with your business. When you're busy it can be easy to scan and delete them quickly however by taking the time to read through them, you'll come across some great information as well as marketing and development opportunities - which are often free or low cost - for your business. If you haven't already, make sure to subscribe to TQ's weekly e-newsletter [Tourism on Q](#).