

Marketing on A Budget

A business toolkit for marketing your
tourism SME on a budget

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Marketing on a budget

Marketing your business can feel overwhelming, especially if you're a small outfit operating on an even smaller budget. The good news is that you can effectively promote your tourism business on a limited budget, or even on no budget at all.

Consumers today spend more time using the internet than they do watching television, so if you're not already leveraging digital marketing, it's a great place to start – and you don't need deep pockets to see results.

Once you've decided which marketing route, or routes, to take, there are plenty of apps, tools and websites that can save you money on everything from image creation and graphic design to data analysis. You can also use online marketplaces to source affordable freelance creative support.

While it's true that professional-quality video is expensive to produce, there's significant appetite for more spontaneous video content on platforms such as Facebook Live and Instagram Stories, and this can be made on a shoestring budget.

Other affordable digital marketing tactics include email marketing, reviewing all your online listings, influencer marketing and search engine optimisation.

But digital isn't the only marketing strategy that won't break the bank. You could apply for business awards within your field to generate some free buzz and boost your credibility. Something as simple as placing business cards or brochures in local cafes, offices and shops that share your target market will have an impact too. If you possess a creative streak, consider guerrilla marketing. Plan a flash mob, offer free samples, tell a story – be imaginative!

This toolkit is packed with effective online *and* offline budget marketing ideas, from offering incentives to collaborating with local businesses. You'll also find inspirational case studies, tips for developing a marketing roadmap, and practical advice on how to make your existing content work harder to promote your business.

A creative and agile approach to marketing is more important than a big budget.

CREATIVE STORYTELLING



Case study

Historic Royal Palaces's 2018 #BoleynIsBack campaign showed that creative flair can go a long way towards gaining an impressive ROI. The Tower of London used social media, partner collaborations and a great story to earn significant attention from users and the media.

The marketing team recruited an actress to enact a day out in a thoroughly 21st-century London as Anne Boleyn. Boleyn tweeted and shared selfies of her journey in a takeover of @TowerOfLondon's Twitter account. Other brands joined in to bolster the campaign, with Transport for London commenting on the queen's Tube ride: "more comfortable than the royal horse-drawn carriage," Boleyn tweeted.

The takeover came to a climax with a press conference featuring Thomas Cromwell announcing Boleyn's arrest. Finally, the audience was invited to book tickets to see a play at the Tower to find out the rest of the story.





Ofcom's Online Nation 2019 report showed that around **70% of UK adults have a social media account**, that about one in every five minutes spent online is on social media services such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Instagram and Twitter, and that online use is becoming increasingly video-centric.

Statistics suggest that a whopping **87% of millennials** use social media for travel research and use the information gathered through social media for creating their travel plans.



Almost **97% of millennials** share the photos and videos of their holidays online.

Shared photos are the primary example of user-generated content, which often is the most important source of free promotion for travel-based businesses.



IDENTIFY YOUR TARGET MARKET ON A BUDGET



Who's your audience?

An understanding of your target market forms the foundation of marketing strategy, so make the effort early on to identify those people most likely to buy from you.

The insights will help you decide which marketing platform is best placed to reach your customers and the most effective tone of voice to adopt. You can search for target market profile examples online to help you.

The people in your target market will share some common characteristics. To start to build a picture of them, use key identifiers such as gender, age range, interests, income and location (a specific place or a type of place).

Once you've established some broad assumptions, use free social media insights tools, Google Analytics and competitor analysis to slowly refine and define your target market. Listen to your existing customers too, and make changes accordingly.



Case study



VisitScotland's Happy #Coosday campaign was effective - and cheap.

A play on the well-known #TravelTuesday hashtag, every Tuesday the tourist board posted a different picture of a Highland cow, a lovable symbol of Scotland.

Before long, the campaign started to run on its own momentum, with followers and tourism businesses posting their own snaps or videos of Highland cows, saving VisitScotland time and providing it with plenty of user-generated content (UGC). The campaign rocketed in July 2019 when



VisitScotland launched a stuffed toy Highland cow into space, attracting media attention!



How to start

Marketing, with or without a budget, can be daunting so start by sketching out a marketing plan, or roadmap. Key elements are your budget (however small) and goals, which should be aligned.

Your marketing goals could be driving bookings, building brand awareness, launching a new product or service, reaching new customers or enhancing existing customer relationships. Examples of items to factor in to a marketing budget are software, content creation, freelance or full-time marketing support, as well as paid advertising opportunities such as print ads, sponsored

content, direct mail, search engine ads, event marketing or social media ads. If digital marketing features, allow some flexibility so you can reallocate budget quickly according to real-time ROI figures.

While each business's marketing plan looks very different, there is one effective strategy that everyone can start to build early on: offline and online networking with other local businesses. Build relationships so you can collaborate on marketing activities such as webinars, exclusive events, social media takeovers, competition prizes or guest blog exchanges.

As well as splitting any costs and sharing your learnings, collaborations help you to reach new audiences and grow your visibility organically. Ideally your partner appeals to a similar audience, but is not a direct competitor. For example, a watersports company could collaborate with a local walking tour business to offer an active weekend package. Both partners gain access to a new audience with a proven interest in their field – in this case, active holidays in West Sussex.

Have you thought about?
Collaborating with nearby businesses to reach new audiences and gain fresh insights into local tourism?

Top tips



Position yourself as a thought leader by writing guest articles for industry publications and speaking at events.



Offer incentives – a small gift or charitable donation – to customers who refer new visitors.



Grow your reach with an online competition to win an experience with your business.



Join relevant Twitter chats and engage directly with people who may like your product.



Build an email list of past customers so you can directly contact them about special offers and news.



Think local for PR: sponsor a local event; keep your local paper updated with your plans.

Marketing Magic



Make your content work harder

Reusing your existing content will save you time and budget while putting your message in front of more people. As the marketing adage goes: write less, promote more.

There are two ways you can do this. Simply update popular content so it remains relevant and continues to attract the same people. Or repurpose it, changing the content's format and/or target audience to appeal to a different group of people. Both are effective ways of breathing new life into old content so it continues to add value by reinforcing your message and reaching more people.

Ways to add value to your content include: using free tools such as Unsplash, Canva or Piktochart to transform data-rich slideshows into visually appealing, social media-friendly infographics; turning existing articles into a podcast, or using them as a starting point for a discussion, to appeal to those in your audience who prefer to listen to content; work in-depth articles or a series of themed posts into a daily email series, which you can deliver using a free email marketing tool such as Mailchimp.

Find out more

[!\[\]\(47734e4656765d20df4fdbd5b7aff048_img.jpg\) VisitEngland: Market Your Business](#)

[!\[\]\(bd3b31712ad9bab5a241210fa6925cdd_img.jpg\) Hootsuite: Social Media Resources and Learning](#)

[!\[\]\(0fb13ad0bfa3d86868cdd3883e5665b3_img.jpg\) Materials](#)

[!\[\]\(799877f5c2f906134441300079881630_img.jpg\) SocialMediaToday: How to Create High-Quality Video Content on a Budget](#)

[!\[\]\(41aea2746216b27a6939d696d8e035da_img.jpg\) HubSpot Academy](#)

[!\[\]\(7bc43b319a082987e20f7bf78f4bab80_img.jpg\) Content Marketing](#)

[!\[\]\(e50091943b385fe16d3277389202856f_img.jpg\) Institute](#)

[!\[\]\(4436e6b00b9d5e62c2a161129eb3e4d0_img.jpg\) Survey Monkey](#)