

SUMMARY

ProtoImage Designs offers a wide range of design options to help kick start your business if you are in the start-up phase, and add value if you are already established. Working closely with clients allows us to provide them with quality work, helping them achieve their goals through visual communication.

PRINT SERVICES

ProtoImage offers affordable rates for all your print design needs. We work to produce attractive design pieces that will bring your ideas to life. ProtoImage can provide in the following areas of graphic design (but not limited to):

- PAGE LAYOUT AND PRODUCTION
- FLYER DESIGN
- LOGO DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
- BUSINESS CARDS
- BROCHURES
- PRESS/MEDIA KITS
- POSTER AND BANNER DESIGN
- DVD OR CD SLEEVE & INSERT

Providing clients with compelling and attractive print designs helps to creatively maximize their marketing and promotional efforts.

WEB SERVICES

The goal is to provide solid web design solutions that are both functional and esthetically pleasing. Working closely with you will help us achieve that goal. ProtoImage can provide in the following areas of web design (but not limited to):

- WEB SITE DESIGN AND DEVELOPMENT
- WEB PAGE LAYOUT DESIGN
- WEB AD BANNERS
- WEB FLYERS & E-VITES
- E-CARDS
- FLASH INTEGRATION
- DYNAMIC WEB PAGE CAPABILITIES
- E-COMMERCE CAPABILITIES
- WEB MAINTENANCE
- WEB HOSTING

Having a web site is absolutely necessary in today's competitive market. An online presence with both design and functionality keeps you on the competitive edge.

9 FREE ADVERTISING SOLUTIONS

When sales slump due to a slow economy, a business owner's first inclination is often to cut the marketing budget. After all, one has fixed costs and cash flow can be irregular. But marketing should be the last activity you eliminate or you risk an even faster downward spiral. Advertising your business and attracting new customers should be an ongoing process, and there are many things you can do that cost absolutely nothing. In these times money might be tight but the need for revenue is continuous, here are just a few suggestions.

1. BECOME THE EXPERT

Submit articles related to your business to the local paper, trade journals and professional organization's newsletters. Choose a topic that reflects your expertise on the subject and make sure your business is mentioned. You might also find a website that may be interested in letting you host a guest column. Whenever you get published, make copies and send them to all your current and potential customers.

2. BE A GREAT PUBLIC SPEAKER

Professional meeting planners are always looking for presenters and workshop leaders for conferences. Research contact names in the Directory of Meeting Planners or start with your local Chamber of Commerce or Rotary Club. If, like most people, you dread the thought of public speaking, join your local Toastmasters [<http://www.toastmasters.org/>] club; this is also a great way to meet potential customers. When you do get the opportunity to make a presentation, be sure to collect business cards for a drawing to win a book or other prize related to your business.

3. TEACH AN ADULT EDUCATION COURSE

This is an excellent way for customers to see you as an expert and help advertise your business. This works especially well for service-oriented businesses such as financial planning, healthcare or tax preparation. Simply call your local school district or community college where adult education courses are offered. Better yet, offer free or inexpensive seminars at libraries, restaurant event rooms or a friend's office.

4. REWARD REFERRALS

One of the best ways to get new customers is to enlist the help of your current ones. Offer a reward of free merchandise or services for any lead that turns into new business. If you publish a catalogue, include a card where customers can provide the name and address of someone else who might want to receive one. When you get a new customer from a referral, be sure to send the source a personalized thank you note along with their reward.

5. SEND OUT AN E-ZINE

It's crucial to keep in touch with your current customers as well as potential ones, and what could be easier than sending out a regular newsletter? After you obtain permission from the recipients, you can describe new products, offer coupons and provide links to articles online your customers might be interested in reading. Keep it simple with pure text or include photos and other graphics.

6. MAKE THE MOST OF (FREE) PUBLIC RELATIONS

Whenever there is an event of any significance in your business, be sure to send a press release or a simple e-mail to all the local newspapers and TV stations. Whether it's a new product, a big order or expansion plans that might result in new jobs, they will probably want to hear about it. Local radio stations also look for interesting people to interview, so find the producers' contact information and let them know you're available.

7. GIVE BACK

Any time you do anything for a charity such as sponsoring an event or donating free materials, make sure the press knows about it ahead of time. They might send a reporter to cover the occasion, but if not, send them photos to publish afterwards.

8. START A BLOG OR CONTRIBUTE TO A FORUM

This can be a great way to drive traffic to your website and keep a conversation going with your customers. There are several free blogging sites to get you started, I recommend Blogger, WordPress or Tumblr. Here you should post any type of news, promotional messages or information related to your product or services. Another way to get your name out there is to contribute to online discussion groups (without making it obvious you're advertising). Find the forums that relate to your business by typing in keywords at the top online group websites. I recommend Google, Yahoo and MSN groups. Be very careful when using forums to advertise. Many discourage users from bombarding discussions with their own links or promoting their business. Find a forum built for this type of promotion, otherwise you could lose credibility.

9. PARTNER UP

If you sell any type of product used by families, contact your local PTA and offer a special shopping night where a percentage of the proceeds will be donated to the school.

Think there's no time for all this? Or you made plans but got too busy? Try scheduling one to two hours per week or a specific date and time to focus on advertising your business. When the phones start ringing with new orders, you'll be glad you did.