

Having trouble with marketing your creative business? Run out of ideas? Check these out and see if they trigger any interesting strategies...

Word of Mouth is the Go

1. Enlist your family and friends to spread the word about your services. Your mum could be your greatest advocate.
2. Send out an email to everyone in your address book, announcing the existence of your creative business. Tell them what you do, where you are and what you can offer.
3. Are you still in touch with a previous employer from the same field? Ask them for a reference or a referral, especially on LinkedIn. Can you get a review on Google or Facebook?
4. Offer something for free to new referrals – maybe a first consultation?
5. Consider offering a referral or finder's fee to anyone who recommends you – it could be a flat fee, or a percentage of the fee you get for the work.

Use your Contacts

6. If you're in touch with a previous employer (and they liked you), let them know you're freelance now. They might have some contract work for you.
7. Start a newsletter and email it out to everyone you know. Make sure it speaks about what your potential clients are interested in. There's nothing duller than a newsletter that's completely self-centered and not focused on the needs of the client.
8. Take advantage of every outgoing email by using your email signature as a marketing tool. Say something pithy about what you do with a link to your website.
9. If you're a picture person (artist, designer, photographer), get a calendar made featuring your work for potential clients to put up in their offices to serve as a constant reminder.
10. Make a poster for potential clients to hang on their office wall – as long as it's beautiful.
11. Contact people you used to work with and find out if they have any run-off work – could you be the place that work gets delegated to?

Make a Fabulous Website

12. All this referring is fine but you want to be able to show people some of your work – get your website up and running, even if it's just a few pages. Make sure it's search engine friendly, beautiful, well-organised and includes your social media badges.
13. Get a domain name that matches your business or personal name (if you are your own brand) so your website looks even more professional.
14. Attach a dedicated email to that website – example - you@yourcreativebiz.com.
15. Find out as much as you can about SEO (Search Engine Optimisation) and use it to the MAX.
16. Find out as much as you can about social media and use the best websites and links to help you connect to potential clients.
17. Keep your website, LinkedIn, Facebook and other social media sites constantly updated and interesting so people have a reason to go back. Constant updates will also help your SEO.

Talk the Talk

18. Join your local Chamber of Commerce, or other local business organisation, and get involved if your clients are likely to be there.
19. Go to as many industry events as you can, including conferences, workshops, seminars, association meetings for your professional organisation, and whatever else you can find.
20. What events do your potential clients go to? You should be attending too.

21. Sponsor something at an event that your clients would attend, even if it's just something in a giveaway bag or a lucky door prize.
22. Make sure you have a fabulous business card and it's always at the ready to be given away.
23. Find a charity that has links to your industry or your potential clients and do some volunteer or pro-bono work.
24. Think sideways - social groups can be a fab way of spreading the word about what you do. Try connecting to school, university or community groups as a start.
25. Join your industry organisation and get a listing on their website and in their printed material.
26. Offer to give a free seminar to a local business group or community organisation about an issue or area in your field that might be of interest.
27. Visit one of the online sites such as [Eventbrite](#) or [Meetup](#) to find events in your area that would be interesting or valuable from a networking point of view.
28. Have your cocktail party chit chat ready for wherever you are – you must know an entertaining answer to the question “What do you do?”
29. Participate on online forums if it's appropriate, and use the forum signature line.
30. Comment on blogs and draw people to your site, especially if you also have a blog.

Promote Yourself

31. Get car signage. Advertise yourself wherever you go.
32. Get funky t-shirts made with your website details.
33. Try location based [Google Adwords](#) – make sure you check how pricey it will be first.
34. Advertise in a niche magazine or trade publication aimed at your potential clients.
35. List yourself in business directories, both online and traditional print if it's worth the money.
36. Research sites your clients are visiting and buy advertising there, if it's affordable.
37. Advertise in online directories, especially if they're free.
38. Take out an ad out in a local newspaper (if you are targeting the local area of course).
39. Participate in a trade show, if it's appropriate and you can afford it.
40. Give something away for free and tell everyone about it.
41. Place an ad in an industry newsletter, if you can afford it.
42. Merchandise is cool! Offer branded thingies like pens and paper at industry events. Check out [Vistaprint](#) or [Society 6](#) for cheap merchandising ideas.

Be an Industry Expert

43. Pitch an article to an industry publication about something you're knowledgeable about.
44. Pitch a story to a blog or resource website that's interesting to the readers.
45. Offer to speak at industry and networking events, even if it's for free.
46. Start a blog and publicise it. Tell all your contacts, please just make sure it's interesting and entertaining. There's nothing worse than a boring or pointless blog.
47. Submit tutorials or “how-to's” to websites about your field.
48. Get on community radio – it has a lot more listeners than you might think and they're always looking for things to fill the air that don't cost them any money.
49. Write an eBook or Report for your target market and promote it online.
50. Enter your work into competitions and awards... and win!

Use the media

51. Issue a press release about a story related to your services and try and get it into a local newspaper or magazine.
52. Pull a publicity friendly stunt (think Richard Branson). Try and keep your dignity if you can.
53. Run a contest that ties into your services. Make sure the prize is cool.

Job Boards and Classifieds

54. Keep an eye on online job boards. If you've never tried this before, do your homework. Some of them cost money, and some of them are 'race to the bottom' websites that should be avoided. The list is ever changing to get into the habit of looking up 'freelance jobs' on Google and seeing what's out there.
55. Use traditional job sites as well – make sure your profile requests only contract and freelance jobs. [Seek](#) and [My Career](#) are both excellent resources.
56. Keep an eye on offline job boards.
57. Pin up a little advert on boards in your local area or community, like in the supermarket. Sure, it's old school, but if you're servicing the local community you might be surprised!

How do you feel about the cold?

58. If you have a gift for cold calling, research a potential client, find out how you could improve their business and then cold call them with a pitch.
59. Mail promotional postcards to potential clients.
60. Mail other fun promotional items to potential clients (calendars, toys, posters etc).
61. Don't fancy the cold? Try warm calling instead – email potential clients and tell them you'll be posting something in the mail and calling at a specified time after that. Mail them your information kit or brochure, then call when you said you would. If they don't want your call, they'll tell you!

Help Leads Find You

62. Search-optimize your website and get SEO results and more Google traffic.
63. Make sure you have follow-up conversations with all potential leads, within a matter of days if possible.
64. Make sure you're listed in the most-used online directories for your industry.
65. Follow up all leads from conferences and seminars as well, within a week.

Get in Bed with Local Business

66. Contact your local internet service provider or printing house and offer them a commission if they refer work.
67. Establish contacts in larger agencies that can refer their run-off work.
68. Keep in touch with freelancers that will offer clients a complementary service to yours and throw each other work.
69. Create a local business directory and use it to get to know other business owners who might later need your services.
70. Cross promote with other businesses in your local area, if your industries are symbiotic.
71. Ask if you can put your business cards or brochure in local stores.

Industry Specific Ideas – even if this isn't your field, see if you can pilfer ideas...

Photographers

72. Enter your work into a gallery or run an exhibition.
73. Submit some work to stock agencies to attract attention.
74. Do a new series of work so you have a reason to show your portfolio to an old contact.
75. Send in your photography work to industry magazines to make a name for yourself.
76. Start an online photo-journal.
77. Photograph an event or series and pitch it to a newspaper or magazine.
78. Get an agent.

[And check out more resources for photographers here.](#)

Film and Video Makers

79. Make something – borrow a camera, borrow some sound, borrow some friends and make a film. You should always be thinking about how to add to your showreel.
80. Put together anything and everything you've ever worked on and create a showreel, which you can then upload to your own [YouTube](#) or [Vimeo](#) channel for extra professionalism.
81. Enter festivals. All of them – real, online, in other countries. Yes, all of them.
82. Subscribe to [Screen Hub](#) and check out both their paid and unpaid/volunteer positions. Jobs newsletter comes out weekly.
83. Volunteer to work on other people's movies, festivals, student projects and more. Getting to know people is the way in the door.
84. If you're a crew person, get your name on a booking agency's books and start getting some experience.

[And check out more resources for filmmakers here.](#)

Performers

85. Go to auditions. Auditioning is marketing.
86. Build a website or online presence.
87. Build relationships with clients and support organisations. Are you figuring out ways to network and meet directors, casting directors, producers?
88. Take the right classes. When you are not acting (or working to earn the funds to support yourself and your career), you must be in a class. Search out opportunities with your smart-actor filter in place as you evaluate various programs and teachers.
89. Create your own showcase material and putting it on YouTube.
90. Do you have "talking points" that you can use in networking situations? Make sure you're coming off as a talented, personable, engaging and likable person with something to offer.
91. How's your headshot? Do your headshots still look like you? Are they representative of your current image and your brand? If not, get new ones.

[And check out more resources for performers here.](#)

Visual Artists

92. Get a website and make it the most fabulous artist's portfolio ever. The web is the perfect place to showcase your work for a minimal fee.
93. Exhibit in as many shows as possible.
94. Go to as many shows as possible. Meet other artists and check out their work, meet them and their friends and see if you can get to know their agents.
95. Go for as many scholarships and prizes as you can. Winning things breeds interest in you and your work.
96. Attend events, drinkies night, gallery openings and artist talks. Have a business card with your website clearly stated and give it to as many people as possible.
97. Join a community arts network.
98. Prepare a publicity kit, and send it to as many galleries and dealers as you can.

[And check out more resources for artists here.](#)

Illustrators/Animators

99. Start a comic strip blog.
100. Make characters and create merchandise based on them – figurines, badges, t-shirts etc.
101. Enter some competitions to get your illustrations in some famous places.
102. Create an awesome animation that wins you fame and put on You Tube.
103. Do stock illustrations for a [stock image site](#) and have a portfolio site offering custom ones.
104. Write to big blogs and offer to do a cartoon strip.
105. Send in your illustration work to magazines.

106. Create a promo reel of animations or illustrations and send it around to potential clients.
 107. Send your illustrations to gift card publishers.
- And check out more resources for illustrators here.

Programmers & Developers

107. Pitch yourself as a developer who understands web designers.
 108. Create an app, and get some attention.
 109. Answer tech questions on forums.
 110. Use a signature that says you offer freelance coding services.
 111. Enter a programming contest like [Google Code Jam](#).
 112. Contribute to open source efforts and get known among your peers.
- And check out more resources for programmers and developers here.

Writers, Bloggers, Journalists

113. Pitch yourself at ad, design and web design agencies as a copywriter.
 114. Submit articles to article banks for sale.
 115. Write opinionated, witty pieces and get them publicised online.
 116. Pitch article ideas to editors, online and off.
 117. Write a book and publish it with lulu.com.
 118. Check out <http://issuu.com/> to make your portfolio look amazing.
- And check out more resources for writers here.

Designers

119. Submit work to design compilation books and magazines.
 120. Get your portfolio/profile listed on a site like <http://www.coroflot.com/>
 121. Design a great website and submit it to design galleries.
 122. Build a great portfolio and submit it to design portals like <http://www.designiskinky.com/>
 123. Go to as many designer seminars and networking events as you can.
 124. Court people who have too much work and need someone to offload their extras to.
- And check out more resources for designers here.

Musicians

125. Give your music away. If you're a new act, you're unknown anyway, so give your music away and build a buzz.
 126. Put any and all past recordings up at your website as mp3 downloads (if you own them), and on sale at all your live shows.
 127. Come up with some kind of coupon sale, where fans have to enter a coupon or promotional code at your website to get a discount on one or more of your recordings.
Remember this golden thought. "If you are not out there promoting your music, someone else is out there promoting their music".
 128. Who is your fan? Learn their lifestyle habits...and then use your imagination to think up a clever co-promotion with an appropriate local merchant, restaurant, or coffee shop.
 129. Never forget to have your email sign up list handy wherever you perform.
- And check out more resources for musicians here.

Want some more ideas? Here's number 130... [Mondo Marketing from Creative Plus Business](#)

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