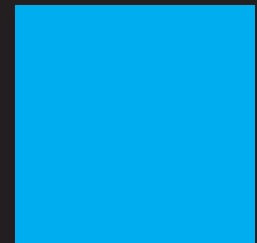


15 Marketing Must-Haves for Professional Services Companies

A Guide to Effective and Affordable Marketing for the Professional Services Industry



Compliments of Allegra, your local full-service marketing and print resource **MARKETING • PRINT • MAIL**





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Keep your company strong and growing by using the basic techniques and strategies of good marketing

As a professional services provider, you know that your firm needs a constant flow of patrons in order to be successful. And in today's tough economic climate, you can't just depend on new clients to find your company. You have to take the initiative to actively attract new clients and retain current ones, too.

Effective marketing programs are now more important than ever for all professional services companies. But you may not feel fully qualified to start making ever more complex marketing decisions. This guide was developed to help you get your marketing efforts off on the right foot.

Your Guide to 15 Marketing Must-Haves for Professional Services Companies

#1: Professional Identity Materials

At a minimum, every business needs a set of matching letterhead, envelopes, invoices, memos, note cards and purchase order forms. In addition, you and every employee who deals with the public should have a coordinated business card. Make sure these are professionally designed and produced because they will establish a look and feel for the other marketing must-haves you'll want to develop, including your website and your sales collateral.

#2: Website

It's not an overstatement to say that today if you don't have a website, you don't exist as a business. Your site doesn't have to have a lot of fancy bells and whistles, but navigation should be easy and intuitive to help potential clients find what they are seeking. Content should state clearly who you are, what your company offers, how to get more information, office hours and location and how to schedule an appointment or meeting.

#3: Sales Literature

Your website will serve as your key piece of sales collateral. But even in a digital age, it's helpful to have printed sales materials to mail or hand out to potential clients or to use as a "take-one" in your lobby. Printed materials such as brochures and flyers can repeat website content, provide valuable additional information or promote new services your clients will appreciate.

#4: Client Referral Program

Referrals are probably the most effective way to keep your company growing and replace clients lost through normal attrition. An effective way to gather the names of potential new clients is to simply... ask current clients. A question on your website or referral cards enclosed with invoices can generate leads you can contact, qualify and nurture with communications and special offers.



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#5: Professional Referral Program

Many firms rely on referrals not only from clients, but from other professionals as well. Reaching out to companies offering services that complement your own for referrals is a great way to boost business. For example, a financial advisor or accountant often refers clients to an estate-planning lawyer. Through emails, newsletters and direct mail you can keep your company top of mind with other professionals. Conducting a survey or offering a special incentive to potential referrers can also help build relationships.

#6: Customer Communications

It costs less to keep a current client than to find a new one. Second only to providing quality services in your practice, staying in touch with clients is an important way to cultivate loyalty and a positive image for your firm. Communications can range from postcard mailings to an informative newsletter printed or emailed at regular intervals.

#7: Lead Generation Program

Whether you're targeting start-up companies, wealthy individuals or businesses within a certain industry, a proactive outreach program can be a big winner. Direct mail (postcards, self-mailers or envelope packages) can get your message into the right hands – with maximum impact and minimum waste. An effective direct mail campaign starts with a targeted mailing list; work with a professional who can access the thousands of mailing lists available.

#8: Give-Away Items

A wide range of inexpensive advertising specialty items are available to be imprinted with your name and address and used as client appreciation gifts and special event incentives. Give-aways related to your area of practice are the best choice for creating a lasting impression.

#9: Yellow Pages/Business Directory Listings

Many consumers turn to printed or online business directories when looking for professional services, especially after moving to a new area. You can arrange for a highlighted listing or take out a small ad with a brief description of your company in the various business and telephone directories distributed in your area.

#10: Satisfaction Surveys

Many small businesses mail or email follow-up surveys to make sure customers are satisfied with their performance. Your company should do the same. A short survey tells clients that their opinions and feelings are important to you, helps you gauge overall client satisfaction and identifies areas that need improvement. Positive comments may also be used as testimonials in promotional materials – after obtaining permission.

#11: Press Releases

When you hire new staff, add new services, move, win an award, address an organization or anything else newsworthy happens in your company... alert the media! Send a one-page description to the "business editor" at local newspapers, magazines and radio stations and include a contact name and phone number in your office. There's no guarantee your news will get published, but if it does, it is very inexpensive exposure that adds great credibility to your firm.



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#12: Seminars

Set aside an evening or lunch hour to invite clients and prospects to your office for an educational seminar on a topic of broad or timely interest. Share your expertise over light refreshments, and have brochures on-hand for those who are interested in your services. Any event that helps your clients get acquainted with you and your staff promotes loyalty.

#13: SEM/SEO

Search Engine Marketing (SEM) and Search Engine Optimization (SEO) are two separate technical strategies designed to help move your website to the top of the page when someone searches for specific related keywords. The Google AdWords program is a good place to get started, or find a Web services company for assistance.

#14: Client Reactivation Program

Efforts to reactivate former clients can be very successful. “We miss you” letters, postcards or emails can point out how long it has been since the client was in. Special offers or incentive pricing could also be offered to help win clients back.

#15: Networking

Whether face-to-face at country clubs, chambers of commerce and charity boards, or online at Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, networking is a great way to meet potential clients. Having a consistent presence for your firm will help to build customer loyalty and generate new prospects.

Discover how Allegra can help with all of your marketing and print projects.

As you can see, there are lots of marketing options open to you. But you also face a growing list of challenges: fewer inside resources in people, time and dollars and increased competition in the marketplace – that can influence the development of a successful marketing program.

That’s why the help of an experienced full-service marketing and print provider like Allegra can be a vital asset when you’re planning and executing a marketing plan. Sit down with one of our experienced consultants to determine the best strategy for turning your marketing plan into a profitable flow of new clients.

You can depend on Allegra for all these professional marketing, printing and mailing services:

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