



Chapter Two

Marketing

You may have a great idea for a micro business. Your product or service is brilliant. It will help people, save them time, money or frustration. You are bound to be a success and everyone you ask tells you so. But if cannot find the people to buy your life-changing item, you will not succeed. Having a great product or service is not enough, you also have to find customers and meet a need that they have. That's where marketing comes in.

Describing your customer will help you come up with ideas on how to reach them. In this chapter, you will learn dozens of ways to reach your target market near and far and create a marketing plan.

Describe Your Customer

***The golden rule for every business man is this:
Put yourself in your customer's place.***

Orison Marden, founder of Success magazine

When you wrote your marketing plan in *Starting a Micro Business*, you had to answer some questions defining your customer and how you will reach them. Those might have been pretty tough questions to answer. Maybe you even left them blank because you did not know how to reach your potential customers. This chapter will give you a few ideas and tips.

Let's start by drawing a word picture of your typical customer.

What is their age?

Where do they go? List physical places and on-line sites

What do they read? List books, magazines, websites

What websites do they visit?

What do they do with their free time?

What do they spend money on?

Here are some examples to guide you.

Sarah's Saddle Blankets

Describe a typical customer. *Horse owner*

What is their age? *Teenage girls*

Where do they go? *They attend horse competitions and shows, boarding stables, parks and farms.*

What do they read? *EQUUS magazine, Horse Illustrated, Horse & Rider*

What websites do they visit? *Horse.com, HorseCity.com, NewRider.com*

What do they do with their free time? *Ride their horses, attend horse shows.*

What do they spend money on? *Their horse! Boarding fees and vet bills!*

From thinking about her customer, Sarah decides to sell her handmade saddle blankets at horse competitions and shows. She cannot compete with the big websites that sell saddle blankets, but she does have a small website to show off her unique handmade blankets. She had some postcards printed with her website and color pictures of her blankets and left the postcards at a few boarding stables and with the local horse vet to pass out to his customers. Sarah also leaves samples of fabric at some of the stables. She is not taking orders over the internet, but interested customers can e-mail her and discuss placing an order.

Ryan's Tutoring Service

Describe a typical customer. *Struggling math students*

What is their age? *age 12-17 years old*

Where do they go? *School. Football games. Soccer practice. Music lessons.*

What do they read? *Not much.*

What websites do they visit? *Facebook*

What do they do with their free time? *Play video*

games, watch movies, play sports, sleep

What do they spend money on? iTunes, food, clothes, cars

Ryan defines his customers pretty well, but that didn't help him figure out how to reach them. Instead his business mentor told him to concentrate on reaching the students' parents. When Ryan thought that way, his answers were different.

Describe a typical customer. Parents of struggling math students

What is their age? age 30-50+ years old

Where do they go? Work, their kids' sports games, concerts and plays where their kids perform

What do they read? Newspapers, information from the school, magazines on hobbies and parenting.

What websites do they visit? News sites, parenting websites

What do they do with their free time? Drive their kids places

What do they spend money on? Their kids!

Ryan came up with some great marketing ideas. He went to the math teachers in his school and asked to be recommended as a math tutor. He gave each teacher 20 fliers to send home with struggling students. They were on bright paper to be eye-catching. He also put fliers on cars at a football game. Finally, he asked his mom to post an electronic ad for his tutoring service on the parent forum of his school's website and on a local moms' social networking

website that she visited.

If your initial answers failed to give you marketing ideas, go back and ask the questions from a different angle, like Ryan. Maybe you will find a new way to reach your customers.

Reaching Your Local Market

The customers for your micro business may be nearby in your home town or far away and reached by the internet. Marketing to local customers is very different from reaching across the miles, so I have broken down these ideas into two groups. If your micro business has clients both near and far, you can gather ideas from both lists.

Reaching a Local Market

- Fliers or brochures. Display your fliers at libraries, community centers, gyms, art stores and bulletin boards. Put them on cars where your customers congregate such as sporting events, school events and church services. It is polite to ask permission from the school or organization first. Replace the fliers every few months if they are removed.
- Postcards. These can be mailed to potential customers, or handed out like fliers. Leave a few at local businesses like hair salons or stores where your potential customers might shop.
- Business cards. Like fliers and postcards, leave these everywhere a potential customer might see them. I have seen business cards displayed at grocery stores, car washes and libraries.