

Darlington Business Venture - Sales & Marketing

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Sales & marketing: the basics

Subjects covered in this guide

Introduction

An overview of our guides on marketing

An overview of our guides to pricing

An overview of our guides to advertising and branding

An overview of our guides about effective selling

An overview of our guides on customer management

An overview of our guides to online marketing

An overview of our guides on selling and marketing overseas

Related guides on businesslink.gov.uk

Related web sites you might find useful

You can find this guide on <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk> by navigating to:

Home > Sales and marketing > Marketing > Sales & marketing: the basics

Introduction

Getting your sales and marketing right is crucial to the success of your business.

This guide provides an introduction to practical advice and information on establishing successful sales and marketing methods and policies - from pricing and advertising to sales techniques and a profitable Internet presence.

Reading this guide pulls together and presents an overview of all our guides to sales and marketing. It gives you a taster of what to expect along with links to each individual guide.

An overview of our guides on marketing

Our guide on how to **understand your competitors** will help you learn more about your business rivals. It tells you how to find out what they're doing and suggests ways of acting on the information you discover.

To find out how to identify your customers and work out what to include in your marketing strategy, see our guide on how to **create your marketing strategy**.

When you're writing a marketing plan you'll need to have a clear idea of your objectives. Our guide on how to **write a marketing plan** tells you which strategies generate sales and gives advice on planning your promotional activities.

For more information on market research see our guide on **market research and market reports**. It shows you how to use

research to gain an insight into your customers and how to interpret your findings to develop your business.

If you want to find out about using direct marketing techniques to communicate your business message to customers, see our guide on [direct marketing: the basics](#).

Our guide on how to [reach your customers effectively](#) will tell you how to choose the right sales channel. It's designed to help you understand the various sales methods available to your business.

To get the most out of exhibiting you need to identify the right event and market yourself properly. For more information, see our guide on [trade shows and exhibitions](#).

An overview of our guides to pricing

Our guide on how to [price your product or service](#) tells you how to set the price of your product at a level which delivers profit. This guide also sets out the different pricing methods open to your business.

For more information on how to present your prices to customers, see our guide on [price lists, estimates, quotations and tenders](#). It tells you how to choose the right pricing method to win business.

If you want to learn more about the laws controlling uncompetitive trade practices, read our guide on [price fixing, cartels and monopolies](#).

Our guide on [fair trading, trade descriptions and Trading Standards](#) will help you describe your products in a fair and

legal way.

An overview of our guides to advertising and branding

To get to grips with choosing a method of advertising that suits your business, read our guide on [advertising: the basics](#). It shows you how to identify the right media, commission an advertisement and manage responses to your campaign.

You may need help from an advertising agency, in which case you should use our guide on how to [choose and manage an advertising agency](#).

To grow your business you need a strong brand which reflects the values and strengths of your business. For help with creating, funding and managing a brand for your business, see our guide on [branding: the basics](#).

Our guide on how to [design and print your business stationery](#) provides helpful hints on using your stationery to project your business image. It also tells you the types of stationery you may need and how to order them.

Using the media and other sources of publicity can raise your business' profile. For more help read our guide on [PR: the basics](#). Its advice ranges from getting media coverage to dealing with bad publicity and choosing a PR agency.

An overview of our guides about effective selling

You'll find it hard to persuade potential

Sales & marketing: the basics

customers to buy your product if you don't understand what makes them tick. Our guide: **know your customers' needs** tells you what you need to find out about your customers and potential customers and how to use this information to win business from your competitors.

Our guide on how to **target the right people in an organisation** shows how to identify and make fruitful contacts with decision-makers in your target organisations. It provides information on the people involved in the buying process and tips on dealing with rejections.

Your customers aren't really interested in the features of your products - they want to know what your product will do for them. For more information see our guide on how to **sell the benefits, not the features**.

For more practical tips and information on selling your products, read our guide on **sales methods**. It takes you through basic sales techniques, the use of presentation tools and handling objections.

Our guide on how to **close a sale** tells you how to get a potential customer to commit to buying your product. It shows how you should tailor your approach to both existing and first-time customers.

Tendering for a contract can boost the amount of work you win from public-sector bodies. Read our guide on how to **tender for a contract** to find out what to include in your tender and how to present it.

For more information on using sales forecasts to improve the way you manage your business, read our guide on how to **forecast and plan your sales**. The guide

helps you develop sound sales assumptions and avoid forecasting pitfalls.

You will probably find that some of your customers are more profitable than others. While it does not make sense to ignore any potential sales, our guide on how to **identify and sell to your most valuable customers** will help you get the most value out of your limited sales resources.

Read our guide on how to **recruit and manage sales staff** for information on recruiting the right sales person, managing their targets and setting the right remuneration package.

To find out how to identify contracts available from the public sector, read our guide: **overview of selling to government**. It also explains the benefits of supplying government bodies and gives help on handling the procurement process.

If you work in a particular market sector or geographical region, you may need specialist help. See our guide on how to **choose and manage a commercial agent** to help you decide whether this sales route is helpful, and how to make sure that the relationship works.

An overview of our guides on customer management

Keeping your valuable customers coming back is a sure-fire way of boosting your business profits. Read our guide on how to **identify and sell more to your most valuable customers** to find effective ways of building customer loyalty and maintaining profitable relationships.

Our guide on how to **segment your customers** helps you approach your customers as identifiable groups in order to boost your sales. It helps you split your market into categories covering age, gender, lifestyle and attitudes.

For more information on using a database to improve your relationships with customers, read our guide on how to **manage your customer database**. It helps you communicate more effectively with customers and comply with data protection law.

Up-selling, cross-selling and customer retention will enable you to deliver a superior service while boosting your profits. For more information read our guide on **manage your customer care**.

An overview of our guides to online marketing

If you want to use the Internet to widen your market without spending a fortune, read our guide on **planning for e-commerce**. It provides advice on how best to identify opportunities for e-commerce within your business and the solutions available. To make the most of digital technologies, build relationships with customers and persuade them to return, read our guide on how to **develop an e-marketing plan**.

If you sell on the Internet your business could find a rich source of new revenue. See our guide on how to **create an online shop** for more information on making your website visible and building your online shop.

Our guide on how to **generate business**

from your e-marketing plan shows how to raise the profile of your company website via search engines and online promotion. It gives you the lowdown on the techniques available to your business such as advertising, website links and word-of-mouth.

Our guide on **email marketing** helps you make the most of a powerful means of communication. It tells you how to get people to opt in to your email marketing, create an email newsletter, monitor the campaign and conform to the law.

Read our guide on **accepting online payments** to find out about the methods by which you can accept online payments. It explains the process involved in setting up a merchant account to process the payments.

An overview of our guides on selling and marketing overseas

There's often no reason why you can't compete overseas as well as in the UK. If you are unsure about whether you want to get involved in exporting, the UK Trade and Investment site has a self-assessment tool to enable you to make up your mind. But before using this, you will find it helpful to read our guide: **are you ready to export?** This guide provides a link to the self-assessment tool, and outlines the information you'll need to have on hand to make the most of the process.

If you still have difficulty making up your mind, have a look at our guide on how to **manage the risks of exporting**.

Once you decide to go ahead, you are best advised to build up from basics. A good place to start is with our guide: **exporting**:

an overview, which tells you what you need to know, and where to go for more information.

When you are ready to begin selling overseas, see the following guides:

- **researching overseas markets**
- **entering overseas markets**
- **selling and promotion overseas**
- **manage overseas suppliers**

These cover the process of researching opportunities and building relationships, and also highlight the wide range of support that is available to exporters.

Our guide on **government help for exporters** shows the different ways in which you can benefit from assistance by the UK government.

For specific advice on trading with different parts of the world, see the following guides:

- **trading in the European Union**
- **trading with China**
- **trading with India**
- **trading with the USA**
- **trading with the Middle East**

Related guides on
businesslink.gov.uk

Manage your personal list of starting-up tasks with our Business start-up organiser | **Understand your competitors** | **Create your marketing strategy** | **Write a marketing plan** | **Market research and market reports** | **Direct marketing: the basics** | **Reach your customers effectively** | **Trade shows and exhibitions** | **Price your product or service** | **Price**

lists, estimates, quotations and tenders | **Price fixing, cartels and monopolies** | **Fair trading, trade descriptions and Trading Standards** | **Advertising: the basics** | **Choose and manage an advertising agency** | **Branding: the basics** | **Design and print your business stationery** | **PR: the basics** | **Sell the benefits, not the features** | **Sales methods** | **Close a sale** | **Tender for a contract** | **Forecast and plan your sales** | **Recruit and manage sales staff** | **Identify and sell more to your most valuable customers** | **Overview of selling to government** | **Know your customers' needs** | **Target the right people in an organisation** | **Choose and manage a commercial agent** | **Segment your customers** | **Manage your customer database** | **Manage your customer care** | **Planning for e-commerce** | **Develop an e-marketing plan** | **Create an online shop** | **Generate business from your e-marketing plan** | **Email marketing** | **Accepting online payments** | **Are you ready to export?** | **Manage the risks of exporting** | **Exporting - an overview** | **Researching overseas markets** | **Entering overseas markets** | **Government help for exporters** | **Trading in the European Union** |

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Buy an online course on written communications at the learndirect business website