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Five Creative Marketing Ideas For Businesses That Won't Break The Bank

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The holiday season marks the time when companies begin bombarding consumers with expensive commercials and marketing campaigns. Toys “R” Us, for example, spent \$88.3 million on marketing for the holiday season in 2012. Small businesses, with more down-to-earth budgets, often get lost among the multi-million dollar campaigns for major retailers and brands.



A man walks past a big suit at a shopping mall in Shenyang, Liaoning province October 28, 2012. A garment company made the 6.5 meters high suit in three months and applied for a new Guinness World Record for the largest suit.

This year, small businesses should focus on using unique marketing methods to reach a larger audience, instead of trying to compete with big retail advertisements and glitzy marketing campaigns. The following are five cost-effective and creative marketing tactics that will help your small business get recognized this holiday season:

1. **Social Media Marketing:** Seventy-seven percent of adults in the 30-49 age bracket use social media, according to [Pew Research Center](#). Since this age range represents a significant portion of those in a household with purchasing power, make sure you target your audience through social media platforms such as Facebook and Twitter. Post a visual of holiday deals or fun holiday products and invite your audience to share and comment. You can even film short holiday-themed commercials and post them to your social profiles.

2. **Product Placement:** Product placement is perfect for those looking to gain air time for their products without the extensive holiday campaign budget. Contact production assistants or networks and explain why your product is the perfect fit for a time slot this holiday season. Product placement allows marketers to spend the money and effort displaying their products, while ensuring the chosen time slot or location reaches very important and influential demographics.

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S&P 500	1,836	-35.7	(-1.907%)
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3. **Guerrilla Marketing:** A tactic that is perhaps the most effective with reaching younger audiences is guerrilla marketing. It focuses on non-traditional methods for increasing brand awareness, using various brand ambassadors to interact one-on-one, in a very intimate manner. Using minimal resources, this tactic is proven to have a significant effect on driving sales, as well as growing brand awareness. In addition, the interactive nature of guerrilla marketing aids in building a brand experience by helping a community create a more lasting relationship with your product beyond the holiday season.

4. **Lifestyle Marketing:** If your small business is a lifestyle brand, consider utilizing lifestyle marketing to reach your audience this holiday season. Lifestyle marketing is very much the word-of-mouth of the industry. Place your products or messaging at locations where your consumers frequent such as hair and nail salons or popular lunch spots. These locations can carry a lot of influence with a local community and a product or flyer visible in these locations will help grow brand awareness for your small business during the holiday craze.

5. **Holiday Shows:** Work the holiday shopping fair circuit. Metropolitan areas have hundreds of these shows each holiday season. Make use of these popular venues and rent a booth for your business. These fairs are great for exposing your products to a large crowd at little expense to you. Even if you don't sell a lot of merchandise, these fairs are great networking tools for small businesses to grow awareness of their brands among the shopping community. Make sure you hand out business cards and talk-up your products.

When planning on how to spend your money on marketing this holiday season, consider utilizing less traditional and more affordable and creative marketing methods. A big-bucks commercial is not the only way to reach your audience anymore. Tactics specifically targeting the lifestyle and location of your audience, whether it be online, on television or in person, can help your small business reach a large audience without bursting your budget.

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