

BEER MAT MENTORING MEETING NOTES

(10) Promotion

Whether you have a fabulously successful rural business or you are just trying to get off the ground (things always take longer and cost more than you think), you need to grow sales. Sales Promotion is a creative way to do just this.

Practical promotion

If you want more people to give your product or service a go, here are a few ideas.

- Contact a local society or association and ask if they would distribute an exclusive introductory discount voucher to members.
- Offer a free product sample at shows or in a store, or a free check-up.
- Offer a no-quibble money back guarantee (this reassures buyers and take up tends to be low).
- Offer existing customers a reward for finding a new customer.
- Run a competition through a local magazine with some of your product as a prize.
- Contact a local charity and offer to donate an amount for every sale if they tell their network.
- Offer your product free for a local event in return for publicity.
- Offer a gift version of your product with a free gift card.
- Offer appropriate promotional items – mugs, pens, postcards, t-shirts – free or at cost price.
- If you sell through a shop or other distributor, offer an additional discount or other reward for a certain level of sales.

Successful promotions include a café that sells their own branded coffee mugs to customers; a lodge giving away free postcards of the house; and an interpretation company that gave away mugs with their phone number and all the languages they covered.

Piggyback ride

Look out for partnerships: can you give away something relevant and of significant value to your customers that actually doesn't cost you much? There may be another business with a non-competing product or service sold to a similar market to yours. Maybe you could 'cross sell' with each of you giving away a sample or voucher for the other company?

Offering something of significant perceived value but at little cost can be effective: for example, a local gym might let you give away a free three months gym membership if you were selling to their target market and thought they could convert your customers to paid membership after their three months. But look carefully at probabilities and take up rates for offers and give-aways. Remember the Hoover free flights offer? It was cheaper to buy the qualifying £100 worth of Hoover kit, throw it away, and take up the free flights to the USA. It cost them £50m. You have been warned.

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