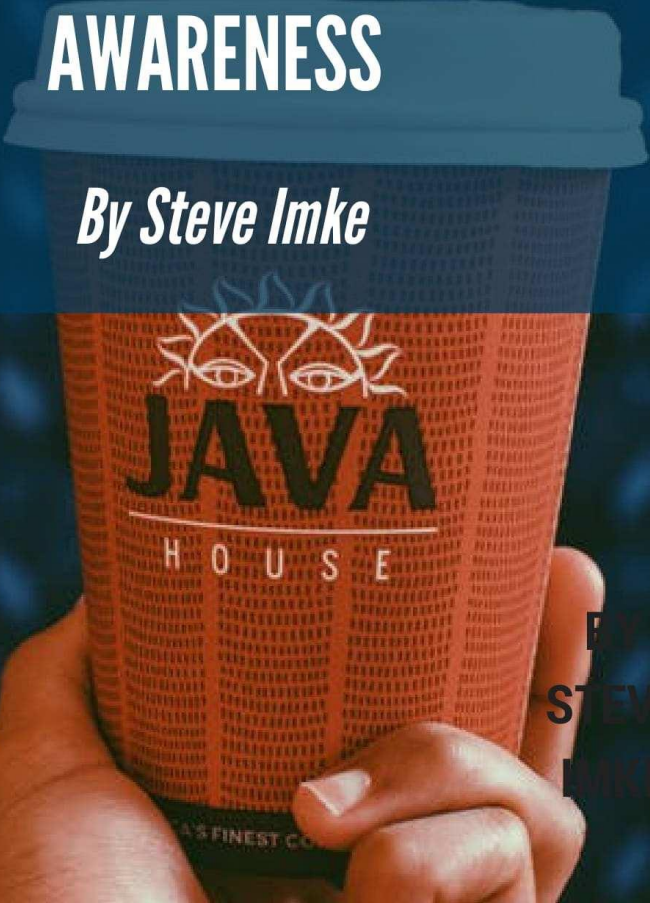


# 27 FREE/INEXPENSIVE PROVEN IDEAS TO CREATE BRAND AWARENESS

*By Steve Imke*



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Brand Awareness has two goals. The first is moving the knowledge of your product or service from the unknown or unconscious mind to the conscious mind. The second is making a positive association with the brand.

According to John Jantsch in his book “**Duct Tape Marketing**” a customer needs to Know, Like, and Trust you to make a purchase. Brand awareness helps with the “Know” part and may contribute to the “Like” part of your marketing effort.

A prospect’s awareness of your brand aids in the sales conversation but does not necessarily produce a sale. Brand awareness helps to associate the company’s name with the brand’s message. **The rule of seven** applies to brand awareness. Therefore, brand awareness requires a constant effort and can not be done just a few times and abandoned because it has not produced sales.

Direct marketing, often confused with brand awareness, by contrast, has one goal: to convert the prospect into a customer through direct means. Direct marketing accomplishes the “Like” and “Trust” part of the marketing effort. Direct marketing need not always be done face-to-face or on the phone but can include direct email, interactive websites, etc.

If the prospect is aware of your product and thinks positively about it, it is infinitely more likely that that s/he will buy from the company when they are a **viable buyer**. When it comes to sales, direct marketing alone without any brand awareness is far more difficult.

## Free Marketing Ideas to Create Brand Awareness

Brand awareness often is not directly responsible for making sales, but aids in the conversion rates of more direct marketing and sales efforts. The brand’s message has to be constantly repeated to cross the divide from

residing in the unconscious mind to the conscious mind before it becomes effective. Therefore, brand awareness is a constant effort. It cannot be done just a few times and abandoned because it has produced no sales.

That being said, here are 5 ways to create brand awareness for free.

1, Write a Press Release about a new product or newsworthy event and distribute it using the many free Press Release Services.

2, Create a human interest message and contact your local news stations to see if they are interested in running a human interest piece on your business. Local news programs are always looking for stories to run on slow news days. When I started my Invisible Fencing business I got all three major networks at the time (ABC, NBC, and CBS) to come out and do a story on us.

3, Market your human interest message to your local newspaper. I contacted the writer of the business section of our citywide and neighborhood newspapers, which like the news stations were looking for story ideas and were eager to help us get our message out.

4, Find a complementary business and exchange advertising posters to cross-promote each other’s stores. For example, a sporting goods store and a golf course or a fabric store and sewing machine repair service could make good pairs.

5, Take out an ad on Craigslist to promote your service business or to sell your products.

## Marketing Ideas to Create Brand Awareness For Under \$10

**BUSINESS CARDS** – If you have a business to consumer (B2C) business, you can use tools like Business Decisions (often available at public libraries) to identify the ideal market demographics and psychographics, known as a Landscape Segment in Business Decisions, for your product or service. Within the text of each Landscape, Segment is a description of the demographic's preferences, which includes where they shop and spend their leisure time. [A free copy of the Business Decisions Landscape Segmentation Resource Manual can be downloaded from the resource tab of \[www.SteveBizBlog.com\]\(http://www.SteveBizBlog.com\).](#)

Once you have identified where your customers frequently shop using the Business Decisions Landscape Segmentation Data, you can go to the parking lot where your prospect frequents and hand out your business cards.

Recently I was waiting for my wife while sitting in my car when a fella came up to the window and said that he noticed my cracked windshield. He handed me a card for his windshield repair business. Years ago I placed business cards under cars' wipers or under the rubber window seal by the door lock, with some marketing success. While it is technically not illegal to leave business cards on cars some people can get pretty annoyed, especially if you touch their new vehicle. 500 business cards can be purchased for under \$10 through companies like Vista Print.

**CORRUGATED PLASTIC YARD SIGN** – We have all seen political yard signs all over neighborhoods as an election nears, or we have seen “open house” signs on houses for sale.

Placing a reusable sign with your company and contact information in the front yard of a customer's home, either while you are working or for a few days after the job is complete, is a good way to promote your business to the

neighborhood. This is particularly effective if the neighbors can see your work, such as with roofers and house painters.

You can also often place these low-cost signs in vacant lots or near intersections for even greater exposure. At a cost often in the range of \$10 per sign, this is a cheap way to create brand awareness.

**PICKET SIGN** – You have seen people protesting on the corner for higher wages or against unfair labor practices, but picket signs can also be used to create brand awareness.

You can simply attach poster-board to a stick to make a picket sign with your company's information. Have idle employees walk up and down the street in front of your establishment to draw attention to your business.

## Marketing Ideas to Create Brand Awareness For Under \$75

**BANNERS** – The other day I went to the bank and passed a car parked in a dirt lot next to the roadway selling bonsai trees. He displayed a banner that ran the full length of his car, attached by bungee cords, to alert people to the fact that he had something to sell.

A reusable banner can be hung on fences, walls and even your vehicle parked on the roadside. These banners often cost less than \$75 to design and make.

**SPINNER/ARROW SIGN** – You have seen these at intersections. Workers can be seen moving to their own beat, listening to music as they dance and twirl a sign promoting an income tax service or grand opening.

You can use an idle employee to stand on the roadside listening to his favorite music and

spinning a sign to draw attention to your message. Signs can be had for about \$75.

#### MAGNETIC VEHICLE DOOR SIGN –

Magnetic vehicle door signs are very popular. A typical sign can be purchased for under \$30 each so your vehicle can become a rolling billboard for under \$60.

The beauty of this solution is that the signs can be installed on your personal vehicle when used for business, then removed when you don't want them.

*A note of caution; you may want to check with your insurance agent whenever you place signs on your vehicle. Some auto insurance policies do not allow you to operate a vehicle for business without a separate business vehicle insurance policy. Each insurance company is different, so you should check your policy before using your personal vehicle for business.*

VEHICLE DECALS – Add a logo or more permanent lettering to your business vehicle than is possible with simple magnetic signs. The price for modifying two doors can be under \$75.

## Marketing Ideas to Create Brand Awareness For Under \$150

MAGNETIC CAR TOP SIGN – Pizza delivery vehicles often employ a magnetically mounted roof or window mounted sign. In most cases, these signs include an internal light that plugs into the vehicle's cigarette lighter, which draws even more attention to the sign after dark.

The signs are visible across a sea of cars and in large parking lots. Most cost about \$150 and can be reused indefinitely.

COSTUME – Dress idle employees in a costume and have them wave at passing traffic. Costumes (such as the popular

chicken, lady liberty, or hot dog) can often be purchased for under \$100 and be used over and over.

I am reminded of a variant on the costume idea when I travel to places like Sturgis, SD, during rally week. There you can often see businesses who hire shapely young women to wave at the traffic sporting nothing but bikinis to draw attention to their business.

SANDWICH BOARD – You see them on sidewalks, inside office buildings, and even at busy intersections. A sandwich board is a free-standing A-frame sign where you can place your message on either side. These signs have the flexibility to set them up and/or move them to a new location in seconds. A deluxe A-Frame sandwich board can often be purchased for under \$90.

WEARABLE SANDWICH BOARD – A variant of the traditional stationary sandwich board is a wearable version.

Have an idle employee walk along the street in front of your establishment or at an event to draw attention to your business.

Professionally created wearable sandwich boards, complete with straps, can be purchased for under \$75 for a blank board. For another \$75 the board can be printed with your logo and message. Of course, you can create your own wearable sandwich board by using two poster boards and some ribbon for next to nothing.

CAR MOUNTED MEGAPHONE/PA SYSTEM – The classic image of a car driving slowly down main street with a political campaigner urging people to get out and vote for their candidate has been used for years.

Or the iconic ice cream truck, slowly driving down an urban neighborhood street playing music, which acts as the pied piper for kids. That same concept can bring brand awareness to your business in the same way.



Either project a live voice, a recorded message loop, or music while you drive your signage-affixed vehicle down a busy street, drawing attention to your business or special invitation.

A decent car-mounted megaphone can be had for under \$150. Handheld units can be purchased for under \$75.

## Miscellaneous Low-Cost Marketing Ideas to Create Brand Awareness

**WALL PAINTING** – Contact the owner of an old barn or blank-walled building to see if you can hang or paint your message. Or use a variant of wall painting, and utilize a projector to display your lighted message on a blank wall for even greater impact at night.

**AIR DANCER** – You have seen the inflatable tube man dancing in front of a business. You can often purchase an arm-waving inflatable tube man, also known as an air dancer, for under \$200 to get folks to look your way as they pass your establishment.

**PARADE FLOAT** – Many parade organizers look for businesses to create floats. By repurposing an old trailer and adding a few leftover items, most businesses can create an appealing float on the cheap.

**THEATER AD** – Contact your local movie theater, where you can often advertise for under \$10 per day.

**SEARCHLIGHT** – Often used to draw attention to a new location, you can rent a searchlight that is visible for many miles and creates a curiosity factor, causing people to go out of their way to discover the light's source. Prices start at \$350.

## Uncommon Advertising Locations for Brand Awareness

**URINAL AD** – Public restrooms for men have urinals affixed to the wall. When in use the man is forced to look straight ahead at a blank wall. With a captive audience for a minute or so, some establishments display advertisements positioned at eye level.

**PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION** – Many buses, light rail, and taxi companies derive additional revenue through advertising inside as well as outside the vehicle.

**BENCH AD** – Bus stops often have a simple bench or an enclosure to keep people out of the weather. These generally contain space for advertisements.

## The Sequence Signs for Brand Awareness

Growing up in Boston, on the way to the airport you would pass a series of very simple signs on the side of the road. They encouraged you to relocate to Boston and read: "If You", "Lived Here", "You Would", "Be Home Now".

Burma-Shave became an outdoor advertising icon by delivering a catchy message with a punchline in the dawn of the car culture.

Sequencing signs are most effective on secondary roads, where traffic moves slower than on the interstates. A simple series of about six roadside signs like the corrugated plastic yards sign discussed above placed only about 25-50 yards apart can create a unique marketing message.

Since traffic counts on these roads are often lower, they are not the domain of the big outdoor advertising agencies.

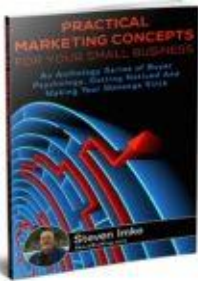
Permission to erect a series of corrugated plastic yard signs can often come from a single landowner and be far cheaper than standard outdoor advertising.

## Bumper Stickers Promotion for Brand Awareness

Ever notice that on the trunk of most vehicles is a decal or emblem identifying the dealership where the vehicle was originally purchased? For the life of the vehicle, the dealership's brand is viewed by thousands and thousands of drivers as they wait at stop lights and stop signs or walk through parking lots.

Some time back I remember a radio station that gave away bumper stickers. Each day they sent out someone from the station to an undisclosed location, whose job it was to look for one of the bumper stickers. If they located your vehicle with the sticker you won a prize. Drivers were eager to secure one of the stickers so they might be the next winner.

I consider this one of the most brilliant marketing ideas I have ever seen since it created a desire for a person to actually promote the radio station. Imagine you owned a tire store or oil change center and you offered vehicles with your bumper sticker promoting your brand a discount on their next purchase. You could create an army of potential marketers driving around town promoting your business every day.



This post was derived from a few excerpts from the book "**Practical Marketing Concepts For Your Small Business**". Buy the complete book at [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com).

**BUY NOW**

Practical Marketing Concepts For Your Small Business is a wisdom-packed book that was written for the budget conscious entrepreneur looking to better market their products or services.

The book is divided into 9 chapters that look at:

- How to identify and target viable customers
- Tactics to get noticed in an ocean of interruption marketing
- The attitude and behaviors of various target demographics

- The buyer psychology including behavioral economics and emotional appeals
- Dozens of free and low-cost ways to achieve greater brand awareness
- Tactics to make your message more memorable and sticky
- Common pricing mistakes that can kill a sale
- Ways to leverage economic gyrations and current events to improve sales
- General marketing and sales advice to help make better marketing decisions

As a serial entrepreneur and mentor to thousands of small businesses, the author has distilled a lifetime of business marketing content that every entrepreneur should consider applying to their business.

**Practical Marketing Concepts For Your Small Business** is a concise and easy to read guide packed with solid advice delivered in small bites that the reader can use to make incremental improvements to their marketing efforts.