



Article posted by [Allyson Stewart-Allen](#), for [International Marketing Partners](#).
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USA: Menu of marketing tactics

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Challenge 1: Create awareness with very low budget

There are several ways you might create awareness with a limited amount of investment. These can include the use of:

- issue driven (commercial), authoritative newsletters/ papers sent to current and potential clients
- email shots
- speaking engagements
- publishing articles in journals read by your target clients
- networking, including through meaningful professional bodies
- attendance at trade shows with the support of UKTI's Tradeshow Access Programme (TAP) and/or your industry trade association
- themed round tables/lunches/special events at your offices (these should be driven by some burning commercial issues you share or understand are at work in your target client base)
- distribution of your corporate literature as widely as possible

Some of the resources you're likely to require in order to achieve these activities include:

- obtaining lists of email addresses for your target prospects and current customers as well as licenses for email newsletter software (such as Constant Contact or MailChimp)
- contacts you or your colleagues have cultivated in
 - the trade and quality press
 - conference organisations
 - transatlantic business networks, such as the British American Business Council (www.babc.org)
 - alumni and expat associations
 - social media networks (e.g. LinkedIn)
- an ongoing/rolling list of 'hot' issues in your industry sector to drive the publication of issue papers and round table lunches, to serve as the platform for your spin-off events
- time to manage and carefully plan your campaigns

Challenge 2: Stretching the budget

The options available to you are vast, each with its associated level of risk, rewards and management time. You might consider:

- Strategic alliances/joint ventures/joint marketing agreements which allow you to provide 'add on' or complementary products or services with companies you believe to be competitors in other areas
- The 'virtual' organisation, created by employing the specialists (often referred to as 'associates' in this context) which your business requires on a project by- project basis

- Barter/service exchange

Challenge 3: Awareness for no spend

There are even ways to raise awareness of your activities, and the benefits to your customers or clients, that do not cost your organisation in cash terms.

For example, you may consider entering a US contest or applying for industry awards, both of which provide vast public relations opportunities (the chance to tell your customers of some noteworthy achievements).

UK Trade & Investment can provide a wide range of export support, and this can be accessed through their website www.uktradeinvest.gov.uk.

Many organisations rely on the securing of high profile investors or board directors to help them spread the word. Most directly, your firm can generate press releases regularly and fairly frequently for the US trade and quality business media or by hiring a local public relations firm that have relationships with journalists and business leaders. (There is always a market for stories which inform their audiences creatively, as well as promote your activities).

Some of the resources you may require include:

- Contacts within trade associations or banks
- Knowledge and training in how to write effective press releases.
- Time for completing grant or award applications.
- Research/development activities in order to launch a new product/service.
- Press contacts to place your releases or help sell your news story.

Developing a plan for regular communication with your US customers/clients is a good way to gain feedback from them which can be incorporated into your promotional and marketing objectives and campaigns. The marketing, or promotion, of your company's expertise in the US should be fun and enjoyable, since you're more likely to hear compliments than criticism from your customers (or they wouldn't be customers!). So bear in mind when marketing your company in the US:

- Be creative. The sky's the limit. The object is to think as laterally as possible, to consider as many types of distribution points and customer bases as possible.
- Know your true unique selling points vis-à-vis your competitors. This way, you've identified your niche, and can position yourself effectively within it (as you've defined one which hopefully has few, if any, other players within it!). This may require tailoring your marketing materials for different audiences.
- Promote benefits, not features. Make sure what you're selling the customer can answer their question "What's in it for me?"
- Cultivate contacts across as wide a net as possible. This may include journalists, clients/customers, suppliers, former colleagues, fellow alumni, expat, and or professional bodies like trade and government associations.
- Develop a strategy for your communications approaches which always assesses the payback to you, your organisation and your customers/clients.

Challenge 4: Using Social Media as a strategic tool

Of course you might already know of American's increased reliance on social networks, the most business-friendly being LinkedIn and Facebook. Finding common connections is what excites the extrovert tendencies of US business professionals, so having your company and personal profiles in these virtual networks gives you credibility. It also helps overcome the significant physical distance since online information is accessible on demand.

You might consider:

- Creating a company Facebook page and keep in touch with those who "like" your products and services

- Crafting LinkedIn profiles for the key officers in your organisation, inviting those Americans you meet at trade shows or other face-to-face events to connect with you
- Starting a special interest group on LinkedIn to invite customers, prospects and others to join it for sharing your company's latest products and services or observations on the industry sector and trends
- Holding regular webcasts on your company's latest products and services or points of view on the trends affecting the industry
- Using Twitter to promote new products, services, client wins, innovations since Americans value anything new or improved
- Starting a company blog with stories featuring your very happy US customers/clients and their enthusiasm for what you and your organisation have to offer
- Growing the numbers of websites that include links to that of your organisation and web pages about your products/services, press releases and latest developments

And, last but not least...

Follow-up! By telephone not by fax or email – the personal touch is important. Since most of your competitors do not follow-up, you have a natural advantage in creating an ongoing dialogue with your customers!

This is an extract from Marketing in the USA by Allyson Stewart-Alan. To read the full document, please click here <http://opentoexport.com/article/marketing-in-the-usa/>



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