

**ideal** directories

Launch your BIG idea today!



# 100 WAYS TO MARKET YOUR ONLINE DIRECTORY

## In this eBook you will learn how to:

- ✓ Maximize your local marketing efforts
- ✓ Find FREE ways to market your directory website
- ✓ Network with local professionals in your area
- ✓ Build credibility and earn the trust of advertisers
- ✓ Drive traffic to your site and sell more listings!

- 1 Focus on your local market.**  
Even if your goal is to expand to nearby areas, It's much easier to focus your marketing efforts on a smaller geographic area to start, rather than trying to appeal to the masses.
- 2 Find a good domain name for your directory website.**  
Make sure it's catchy, easy to remember, and easy to spell. You can purchase your domain name from here: <http://www.cheapneasydomains.com/>



Need help choosing a domain name for your site?  
[Click here](#) for some tips and suggestions.

- 3 Pay attention to SEO (Search Engine Optimization).**  
Be sure to edit the meta tags, including the title tag, description and keywords for each page. Crafting the right SEO terms for your directory website will lay the foundation for your search engine optimization and help drive relevant traffic to your site.
- 4 Submit your directory website to search engines.**  
It's very important to submit your directory website to major search engines like Google, Yahoo and others, so they can index your site and start including it in search results. You can do that from your Dashboard with just 1 click using our "Search Engine Submission Tool."
- 5 Write a press release to announce the launch of your directory website.**  
We offer an easy-to-follow template that promotes your site and points out the benefits that your directory website offers to both local consumers and local businesses. Be sure to include a link to your business directory domain in the article. Many PR services may even offer to help you distribute your press release to media outlets in print and across the web.
- 6 Utilize social media.**  
Social media is an effective and free way to promote your directory business. Create a Facebook Page, Twitter Account, Instagram, etc. for your business directory website. Use it to promote your brand, feature your advertisers, post relevant content and connect with local consumers.
- 7 Join a local Chamber of Commerce.**  
This not only gives you the opportunity to rub shoulders with local business owners and sell them advertising on your directory website, but joining a Chamber of Commerce also gives you credibility as a fellow business owner in your community.

- 8 Offer a free trial.**  
If you get a lot of pushback, consider giving an advertiser a free listing for a limited time. This can help earn their trust and prove the value of your services.
- 9 Utilize email marketing.**  
Email marketing is a great way to stay in touch with customers, inform them about updates and new listings on your site, and get them to visit your site more often.
- 10 Start a blog.**  
Adding a blog can be a great way to generate additional traffic to your site. Be sure to write about things relevant to your directory and that interest both your visitors and your advertisers.
- 11 Hit up the local cafe, supermarket or diner.**  
Many local shops and eateries will have a community events bulletin board where you can post a flyer or promotional piece for your local directory website.
- 12 Design a memorable logo for your directory.**  
Your logo is the core of your brand. It's not only eye-candy for your visitors but it makes your site look professional and earn the trust of potential advertisers. Learn more about the impact and importance of professional logos [here](#).
- 13 Create a captivating headline.**  
It's the first thing site visitors will see when they visit the homepage of your directory website. Make sure it's relevant, clear, and speaks to your site visitors.
- 14 Use a high-quality hero image.**  
Your directory comes pre-populated with a high-quality hero image already, but if you want to swap it out with your own, make sure it's not blurry and accurately reflects your brand, local market, and message. Consider a photo of your local town, a local landmark or something that captures the local community.
- 15 Don't delay your launch.**  
You're only postponing your own success. Marketing and building traffic to your directory website takes time. Focus on launching your site quickly so you can start spreading the word and building your business.
- 16 Be persistent and consistent with sales.**  
Remember that sales is a numbers game. The more businesses you talk to, the more sales you will make. That means with more effort comes better results. The most successful directory owners make sales a top priority.



Struggling with sales? Check out these [tips](#) for hiring your own sales rep.

- 17 Invest in a Google AdWords campaign to increase traffic to your directory website.**

AdWords utilizes pay-per-click technology to display your ad on relevant searches on the internet. You pay every time someone clicks on your ad and visits your website.
- 18 Participate in community events.**

Look for upcoming events and sponsorship opportunities in your town or city, so you can build awareness and get your brand in front of local consumers.
- 19 Send out postcards to local businesses.**

Postcards can include screenshots of your directory, pricing, and a link, to encourage recipients to visit your site and sign up to be listed on your business directory site.
- 20 Run a print advertisement in your local paper.**

Many local newspapers have a high readership from both residents and business owners who live in the community. This can be a cost effective way to reach the masses.
- 21 Start a Facebook Ad campaign.**

With nearly 2 billion active users, Facebook is a great way to promote your directory website and target local consumers and businesses.
- 22 Go door-to-door to local businesses.**

This might be the most effective way to meet potential advertisers, build trust and sell listings on your directory website. Be sure to pass out business cards and marketing material along the way.
- 23 Design a brochure or flyer.**

Use our [template](#) to highlight the main features, benefits and reasons to advertise on your directory website. Pass these out at local networking events or when you go door-to-door to local businesses.
- 24 Offer a price discount for yearly payments.**

This will encourage advertisers to sign up for the year, letting you lock in customers, which gives you more cash flow to run your business.
- 25 Add additional custom pages with relevant content.**

The more relevant content you have on your directory website, the better your site will rank in search results, increasing traffic to your directory site.
- 26 Create bumper stickers and window decals with your directory logo and URL.**

Hand them out to businesses who advertise on your directory website so they can put them on their storefront windows and company vehicles.

- 27 Give away branded promotional products.**

Everything from pens, mugs, mouse pads, and more can be customized with your directory name and/or logo. Look for items that are relevant to your directory and target market.
- 28 “Link up” with other websites.**

Work with the owners of other websites that are in your area or that serve a similar audience, and ask for them to provide a link to your directory website from their website. (You may offer to link back to their website as a thank you.)
- 29 Sponsor a local sports team.**

This can be a very cost effective way to promote your directory in your area. One of the major benefits commonly offered is that your directory name will be featured on uniforms. This makes you a valuable community member and builds brand awareness.
- 30 Host a local seminar or workshop.**

Invite local business owners to a local library, diner, or even your office to educate them about ways to promote their business locally (and be sure to plug your directory website as one of your suggestions).
- 31 Ask your advertisers for referrals.**

It can be as simple as “Do you know any other business owners in the area who might be interested in being listed on our directory?” You just need to ask.
- 32 Be a people person.**

Some of the best marketers are people who feel comfortable talking and networking. Be pleasant, polite, professional and personable and more people will enjoy working with you.
- 33 Be patient with sales.**

Take your success seriously. Directory sites are not money trees; you need to work for it. Go out there and sell listings, banner ads and sponsorships to local businesses. Then you can reap the rewards.
- 34 Make it easy for businesses to contact you.**

Make sure your phone number and email address are on your directory website – especially the advertising page. And make sure you pick up the phone and reply to emails in a timely manner.
- 35 Create a video.**

It can be an explainer video, customer testimonial or just a commercial to promote your directory website. Post it to YouTube and social media for maximum exposure.

- 36 Ask for testimonials and reviews.**  
Customer reviews are extremely persuasive. If your directory website advertisers are happy, ask them for a testimonial that you can share with other potential advertisers. You can even use it in your marketing and brochures.
- 37 Provide awesome customer service.**  
Make sure you are available and responsive to both site visitors and advertisers so you keep them happy and coming back for more.
- 38 Create custom apparel branded for your directory website.**  
Imprint your directory logo on hats, tote bags and t-shirts. Your loyal family, friends and even customers will be happy to wear them, and can become free brand promoters.
- 39 Offer complementary products and services.**  
Expand your business and revenue potential by offering other services that your advertisers may need, like business cards, website design, social media marketing, business consulting and more. Once you gain their trust with one service, it will be easier to sell them other things they may need.



Looking for an easy way to build websites for your clients? Check out [SiteSwan Website Builder](#).

- 40 Run a contest or giveaway.**  
This is a great way to incentivize visitors to come to your directory site. Promote it via email and on social media. Consider giving away a gift card for a participating advertiser.
- 41 Always increase value for your directory website visitors and advertisers.**  
This can be in the form of a free banner ad, a mention on social media, or offering to manage their listing for them. The more you can increase the value, the longer you can keep them as a client.
- 42 Hand out business cards.**  
Business cards are inexpensive and easy to produce, so get a bunch printed and hand them out to local businesses and residents. You can use our [template](#) or design your own.
- 43 Identify your ideal site visitor demographics and cater to them.**  
Are they men or women? Young or old? Think about what kind of content they would like or expect to see on your directory website and make sure you provide that.

- 44 Identify your ideal advertisers.**  
Which businesses or [industries](#) would be most interested in advertising on your business directory website? Focus on those businesses first when selling listings.
- 45 Tweet about your advertisers.**  
Talk about how great they are or mention their current coupon or offer. They will love the extra promotion and you can link to their profile page to push traffic to your directory site.
- 46 Actively promote your directory on Facebook.**  
Be sure to post regularly and include a link to your directory site. Here are some [helpful tips](#).
- 47 Network with local businesses on LinkedIn.**  
Create a profile and align yourself with other business owners and professionals who might be interested in advertising on your directory.
- 48 Plan your next holiday promotion.**  
Use the holidays to create clever [promotions](#) like Black Friday specials that can boost signups by offering a discounted rate on all listing packages.
- 49 Throw in extras.**  
Offer added incentives to attract premium advertisers. For example, you can offer a free banner ad or social media mention for any business that prepays for the year on any of your premium listing plans.
- 50 Hire a free intern.**  
Connect with a local college or university and add your company to their list of internship opportunities. Or, simply post the opportunity on Craigslist. Look for students with an interest in sales or marketing to help you promote your directory, reach out to local businesses and even manage your directory site or social media account.
- 51 Advertise where your customers are.**  
Look for unique opportunities to promote your directory. For example, if you run a directory website geared for parents and families, look for Facebook parenting forums/groups to join or even day care centers where you can advertise your site.
- 52 Up-sell existing advertisers.**  
If someone is already signed up for a basic listing plan, reach out to them and try to get them to upgrade to a premium plan or banner ad by explaining the benefits. It's always easier to sell to your existing customers than to acquire new ones.

- 53 Help businesses improve their profile pages.**  
The profile page is the heart of a business listing and they are what visitors will explore most. A well-designed and fully-populated profile page will help keep site visitors on your directory site longer.
- 54 Tell your family and friends.**  
And tell them to tell their friends too! Not only will this help build traffic to your site, but you'll be surprised how many business owners are in your circle of family and friends who might want to become your next advertiser.
- 55 Hire a commissioned sales rep.**  
Have them call and visit local businesses to sell listings on your directory website and give them a percentage of each sale. Here are some [tips](#) to help you get started.
- 56 Encourage your directory site visitors to share your site with others.**  
Social media in particular makes it easy for your users to share a link to your directory site with other people in their network.
- 57 Stop sweating the small stuff.**  
Your directory site is always a work in progress and will never be "perfect." Focus on the things and features you need and have access to, not just those that you want.
- 58 Don't give up.**  
Don't expect to get rich in your first month. Slow and steady wins the race. Most of those who fail, do so simply because they give up too quickly.
- 59 When it comes to content, focus on the directory site visitors first - not advertisers.**  
If your priority is to make your directory a resource for local consumers, then advertisers will want to be featured on it.
- 60 Launch multiple directory sites.**  
Instead of trying to hit it out of the park with a single directory, launch multiple directories, allowing you to generate smaller chunks of revenue from each that add up to your revenue goals.
- 61 Use the Claim Listing feature.**  
Activate the [Claim Listing](#) feature on listings that you manually add, and contact businesses to encourage them to claim their listing to take advantage of all the benefits your site offers.



- 62 Become a community resource.** Create listings for landmarks, parks, and public places...even museums and libraries to help build traffic and to give back to the community.
- 63 Create an infographic that highlights the purpose and benefits of advertising on your directory site.**  
Infographics are a great way to convey your message in a simple manner with visual enhancements. Use some of our sales and marketing [resources](#) for content ideas.
- 64 Create a “Best of...” page on your directory.**  
Highlight the top businesses in each category. You can even charge businesses extra for being listed on this page.
- 65 Get vehicle magnets with your directory brand.**  
Slap a magnetic sign on your personal vehicle to build brand awareness as you drive around town.
- 66 Encourage your advertisers to update their profile page often.**  
Remind them that adding new photos, menus, and coupons will help keep their customers coming back for more.
- 67 Add seasonal content to your directory site including holiday greetings.**  
It helps show your visitors and advertisers that you are actively involved in running your directory, and it makes it feel more current.
- 68 Visit your advertisers with a camera to take high-quality photos to add to their profile.**  
This will not only make your site look better, but it will build their trust and loyalty, and lock them in as lifelong advertisers. You can even offer this as a premium service and charge extra for it.
- 69 Look through newspapers, shopper guides, and coupon magazines to find potential customers.**  
Any business that is currently advertising in one of these sources could be interested in advertising on your directory website as well.
- 70 Explore a co-branding opportunity with local Chambers of Commerce.**  
Create a special plan just for chamber members at a discounted price. Our [Coupon Code](#) feature is an easy way to do this.

- 71 Offer logo design to your customers.**  
In the same way that your business directory needs a logo, so do your advertisers. Selling them on a logo benefits their brand...plus, the more logos you feature on your directory site, the better it looks.
- 72 Get a Google MyBusiness listing for your directory business.**  
Registering your business with Google can greatly improve search results for your directory website, driving more traffic to it.
- 73 Encourage users to visit your site from ANY type of device, promoting its beautiful, easy-to-use mobile layout.**  
No matter where people are searching for businesses, they can use your business directory for a great user experience.
- 74 Come up with a good telemarketing script.**  
Phone sales are very effective for directory website sales. Having a well-written script will make the process much smoother and more effective.



Need help coming up with a script? Check out our template [here](#).

- 75 Differentiate yourself from the competition.**  
Are there other directories out there that serve your target audience? Don't worry – competition is OK. Simply find ways to stand out from the crowd and highlight what makes your directory website different and better.
- 76 Have fun – don't get stressed out.**  
Stay positive...a slow start is perfectly normal. Make sure you're having fun running your business directory website. The more fun and happy you are, the more people will want to work with you.
- 77 Offer competitive pricing and show the value.**  
Don't overprice your advertising plans, especially in the beginning. You can always raise prices later as the traffic to your site increases, and your advertisers are getting better results.
- 78 Measure your results and make necessary changes.**  
Use the Statistics that are built into your Ideal Directories dashboard to see audience and advertiser trends over time. This will help you determine which of your marketing efforts are working best and where your opportunities are.

- 79 Find a business partner.** Two minds are better than one! Find someone who has the same passion for running a business directory website as you, and who is willing to work just as hard as you. Look for someone who has a complementary set of skills and can help with sales and marketing.
- 80 Attend a tradeshow.** Your potential advertisers may be congregating all in one place, like a wedding vendor trade show or local restaurant event, for example. Show up, introduce yourself, and hand out business cards and brochures for your directory website.
- 81 Offer occasional discounts and price promotions to boost sign-ups.** Everyone likes to save money! Plan and market your promotions to maximize their effectiveness. Our [Coupon Code feature](#) makes it easy to offer limited-time discounts.
- 82 Launch multiple directory sites to build your brand.** If you have a niche – either an area, or a key term - apply that to other directories to build a network of sites. (Example: Tulsa Restaurants, Tulsa Weddings, Tulsa Kids, etc. can all be niche directory websites under the “Tulsa” brand.)
- 83 Add your own banner ads to push advertisers to the Sign Up page.** Design banner ads that speak to potential advertisers, and that point out the benefits of advertising on your directory site. Link them to your Advertising page to make it easy for them to choose a Plan and sign up.
- 84 Set goals.** Do the math and figure out how big the pool of potential advertisers for your directory website is, and figure out how many you need to meet your revenue goals. Expect to start slow and pick up speed progressively.
- 85 Don't just build a directory - build a brand.** The name of your directory website could possibly branch off into many other things, like another service, a lifestyle brand, a product selection, or something even bigger.
- 86 Offer exclusivity.** Offering exclusivity or limiting availability can be a very successful sales technique when executed correctly. With this technique, you can offer certain businesses to be the exclusive advertiser within their industry or limit availability so that there is only a certain number of spots available for each category.
- 87 Charge premium prices.** You don't have to be the cheapest business directory site to offer the best value. Sometimes the more expensive you are, the more attractive you will become. Be confident in your brand and your results and charge accordingly.

- 88 Invest in a toll free number and answering service.**  
For the ultimate in professionalism and customer support, get an 800 or 888 or 844 number and put it on your site. Then, get an answering service to pick up the phone 24/7 to take messages for you.
- 89 Don't make too many changes at once.**  
It's wise to measure the changes you make to your directory website and the business model one at a time so you can properly determine what's working and what's not.
- 90 Be fast, nimble and willing to evolve.**  
As a small operation, you can turn on a dime with your branding, strategy, pricing, etc., which is something that the big-name directory websites cannot do. Pay attention to industry trends and identify opportunities you may have as the business landscape changes.
- 91 Think long-term.**  
Not everything you do will have instantaneous results but it could have substantial long-term potential. Even if you grow at a very moderate pace, think about what your business will look like in 2, 5 or even 10 years from now if you keep at it. The more seeds you sow today will grow into something wonderful later.
- 92 Don't overcomplicate things.**  
Stick to the basics and focus on selling listings to local businesses using the tools you have. It's a proven and practical business model that works.
- 93 It's never too early to start selling!**  
Some people actually delay the launch of their directory website simply to offer "pre-launch" discounts! Create excitement and intrigue advertisers to get in on something before it even officially launches.
- 94 Offer Multiple Pricing Plans.**  
Giving advertisers 3 options is the best way to help them realize the benefits and the value of their decision. Everyone likes having options.
- 95 Focus on your first members.**  
Sales is often like dominos – once you close the first few, the rest start falling into place...especially when you can leverage existing relationships to forge new ones.
- 96 Tap into your personal network.**  
Start selling listings on your directory website to family and friends first. Prove the model with people you know and save the time you'll spend getting to know people.

- 97 Focus on benefits - not features.**  
People don't buy features, they buy benefits. Make sure you clearly highlight all the benefits people get from advertising on your business directory, including the exposure, the search engine traffic, and the presence among other reputable local businesses.
- 98 Follow up with leads.**  
Just because someone doesn't immediately agree to advertise on your business directory website today, doesn't mean you should write them off. Schedule a time to follow up, or simply reach out every few days or weeks depending on their situation. Don't forget!
- 99 Share performance metrics with your advertisers.**  
Be proud of the traffic you get to your directory website, and broadcast that to the world! Any traffic you're getting is valuable to your advertisers, so share it confidently.
- 100 Add sample listings.**  
Pre-populating your directory website with sample listings will make your site look established and appeal to more advertisers (not to mention help get search results). Start by adding listings for some well-known businesses in your area, then approach their competitors and explain how they're losing market share if they don't buy a listing on your site also.

And one for good luck...

- 101 Sell yourself.**  
When a business owner signs up with you, most times they're buying into YOU, and not your site. If you come off as being attentive, considerate, engaging, and professional, it may be much easier to close a deal regardless of what your directory website can do for them.