






14 Promotions to Help You Reach Your Business Goals



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 - **Offer free advice:** Give consultations to email list subscribers.
 - **Create a newsletter:** Inspire customers with DIY product ideas and useful tips.
 - **Co-promote with a partner:** Offer incentives to people who sign up for both email lists.
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 - **Hand out free samples:** Place them at the counter for instant feedback.
 - **Give a discount with full purchase:** Understand demand for new products while protecting your bottom line.
 - **Host an event:** Showcase products and services you're considering in a live environment.



Introduction

For many businesses, promotions can be a powerful way to capture customers' attention, create excitement, and encourage more sales.

But before planning any promotions, small businesses should first think through what they are looking to achieve, and define their promotional tactics with those goals in mind. Without taking this crucial first step, businesses risk investing time, money, creativity, and energy into ideas – perhaps even great ideas – that don't yield the desired end result.

Defining clear goals also helps business owners evaluate the success of the promotion so they can make changes on the next go-around or drop the promotion altogether. Remember – not all promotions require slashing prices, so consider your goals and promotion ideas carefully to help minimize your expenses.

Here are a few common business goals and promotion ideas that can help you reach them



Goal One:
Get Brand New
Customers

Goal One: Get Brand New Customers

New customer acquisition is one of the most important activities a business can undertake. Increasing the number of people who interact with your products or services grows your base of possible customers and helps make it easier to hit your revenue goals.

Offering new customers a deal on their first purchase can be a tactic well worth it for their potential lifetime value.

Consider these promotions:



Launch a friends and family deal.

In a Nielsen Report, **74% of consumers** identified word-of-mouth promotion as a key influencer in their purchasing decisions. The opinions of trusted family members and friends are even more effective in persuading customers to purchase products or services. Consider a promotion that rewards your current customers, and even your staff, for bringing a friend through your doors. For Clover customers, apps like **Digital Word of Mouth** let customers share information with family and friends easily, and can help automate word-of-mouth marketing.



Offer a loss leader.

If you have an in-demand item, or too much stock of a particular one, consider offering it at a deep discount – one per customer or new customers only – to get them in the door. Large retail stores do this all the time, and typically make up the difference in “lost” profit by cross-selling customers other impulse buys, or getting their contact information to market to them later. Our **customer relationship management app** lets businesses easily identify customers by segments, including new versus returning customers, if you want to be selective about who receives offers.



Partner with another company.

Find a business that complements yours, and help promote each other. For example, hair salons and nail salons can be a good match, because clients of one business are likely to be interested in the services provided by the other. Cross-promotion can be as simple as leaving business cards or flyers in their waiting area, posting signs, or offering a deal where the customer gets a discount for purchasing from both businesses.

A woman with dark hair styled in braids, wearing a light pink sleeveless top, is smiling and adjusting the front of her top. She is in a retail environment, with another person in a white shirt visible in the background. A wooden table with a polka-dot box and small potted plants is also visible. A green rectangular box is overlaid on the bottom right of the image, containing the text "Goal Two: Increase Customer Loyalty".

Goal Two: Increase Customer Loyalty

Goal Two: Increase Customer Loyalty

Even businesses with limited budgets can increase sales by promoting customer loyalty. Personalizing products and services is one way to generate loyal customers, especially with Generation K and millennials. Consider that nearly **50% of Generation K (those born between 1995 and 2002)** and over **65% of millennial** consumers say a loyalty program makes them feel special.

Consider these promotions:



Hold an exclusive event.

Member-only or customer appreciation events are a great way to bring in your best customers without cutting prices. They incorporate both the idea of personalized, exclusive offers and add in the fun factor.

Restaurants and cafes could offer a candle-lit date night with good music; retail stores could offer seasonal product demonstrations along with coffee or other refreshments; food trucks might offer an exclusive invitation-only meetup at an undisclosed location. Consider what your customers would appreciate and make it appealing.



Host sale previews.

If you're going to have a sale, invite your loyal customers the day before and honor the sale prices. They get first dibs on discounted items, can help you spread the event traffic over more than one day, and feel like they're a part of an exclusive group – which is what customer loyalty is all about.

Goal Three:

Grow Your Social Media Following



Goal Three: Grow Your Social Media Following

Social media can be a great way to effectively promote a business because it's essentially a digital form of word-of-mouth marketing. Customers who share your promotions or marketing messages are in effect endorsing them and spreading the word to their networks. On average, people spend more than **two hours per day** on social media, and this number is likely to grow as the number of internet users and social media followers increases.

Consider these promotions:



Try a poll.

The key to making your social content go viral is to create content that people will want to share. A salon, for example, could encourage customers to poll their friends and family about what hair length or color they should try next, or which celebrity's style they should mimic. They could then follow the poll up with branded before-and-after makeover photos. The virality of a contest can bring more visibility to your brand and encourage potential customers to follow you.



Have a contest.

Contests need not be complicated to work well. Perhaps you host a seasonal contest where customers post photos of themselves using your products to enter a drawing for a gift card or other goodies. Or, ask customers to suggest a new flavor or product, and give naming rights to the winner. With Clover apps like **iValu8 Customer Engage**, you can create contests and promote them on your receipts and via social media.



Support a cause.

With the number of "socialpreneurs" and "cause capitalists" on the rise, finding new and creative ways to support local causes can be a great way to gain social media traction. Customers are more likely to promote content (and purchase products) they feel good about. Apps like **Donate at Checkout** can also make the logistics of business and customer giving easy to execute.

Goal Four:

Expand Your Email List



Goal Four: Expand Your Email List

Even with the growth of social media, email is still one of the best ways to maintain engagement with your customers. According to a study by Pew Research, over **70% of millennials** prefer to receive business communications from email.

The effectiveness of email marketing makes growing your email list a smart promotional goal.

Consider these promotions:



Offer free advice.

Whether choosing the perfect haircut to frame their face or selecting the perfect outfit for an important occasion, consider offering people who sign up for your email list a free one-on-one consultation (to use within a limited time) to help them through purchasing decisions. This type of promotion is especially useful for appointment-based businesses and those with a relatively low volume of customers. If the promotion is successful, you might even identify an additional revenue stream for your business.



Create a newsletter.

Monthly newsletters are a great way to engage with customers. Articles could be about what foods to pair with your products, special do-it-yourself projects customers can undertake using your goods, or simply about topics you think your customers would be interested in. Newsletters are also a great way to announce new products or services, sales, and events.



Co-promote the business with a partner.

If you decide to partner with another local business, ask if they will bundle an offer with you and email it to their list in exchange for you doing the same. Make opting into your list part of the promotion.



Goal Five: Test a New Product or Service

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New products that take off can become money makers that help smaller shops differentiate from big box stores. Businesses should test products ahead of time to help boost their chances of success.

You can do this by carefully testing new products with small promotions before planning a major new product launch.

Consider these promotions:



Hand out free samples.

When ringing up a sale, offer a sample of a new product or menu item. Not only does this reward customers who are making a purchase, it can also offer you valuable information about product prospects on the spot.



Give a discount with full purchase.

Rather than cutting your prices outright, experiment with offering a deal on a new product with the purchase of a full-priced item. This will make it easier to get it into customers' hands, receive feedback, and maybe even promote word-of-mouth marketing.



Host an event.

Once a product shows promise, try a bigger launch. Announce new products with an event such as a pre-fixe tasting menu, which lets you bundle new menu items with familiar fare, or a fashion show, which can help you present a fully styled visual for your latest merchandise.

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