

# Extending your reach for less: Growing visitor numbers with little or no budget

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No matter the industry or sector we work in, budgets are tight and reaching your audience can be difficult.

Some of us are supported by marketing and social media specialists who provide assistance and advice to develop strategies to build a broad reaching marketing plan and some of us will develop strategies with often very limited resources.

Today I am going to share low cost strategies that have worked for me and we will then have time to share strategies that have worked for you and see if together we can develop new ideas.

What I have learnt from necessity is that our marketing specialists can take care of the big picture, those of us at the coal face **need to think small**, we need to think local and we need to think about where our visitors come from, how could they hear about us and how can we reach them?

## **Communication is the key!**

A great start is to consider the following:

### **Think about your visitors, who are they and where do they come from? Where could they come from?**

- Are they travelling to reach your destination, where might they stop along the way?
- Are the majority of your visitors from your local community, are they telling friends and family of your site.

### **Who can tell them about you and your organisation?**

- Who knows what you offer, what you have on display or the wonderful tours that you run?
- Have they visited recently or visited at all, have they taken your tour?
- Are you located in a street with other businesses? Have they visited you? Do they know what you offer?

Your answers to these questions provide you with a great start to reaching more people.

### **Invite the masses!**

- Invite people to come and view your site or take your tour, deliver the invitations and include your business card and flyers.
- Offer more than one date and time to visit, start with the owners and staff from the businesses in your street, the visitor information centre staff, caravan park operators, hotel owners, café and restaurant owners, museums, retailers...anyone in the community who could be talking to others about visiting you. **Build your word of mouth referrals.**
- If they can't visit at the times you have offered just tell them they are welcome to call in at any time but continue to communicate with them.
- If you can offer refreshments please do! A cup of tea and a biscuit works wonders!

Don't be discouraged if only a few people take up your offer. Continue to build on the interactions that you do have.

### **Cross promote!**

- Initiate a conversation with business operators in your area and consider cross promotion. Council foyers and libraries are a good place to start but think creatively and you can create small displays that make terrific talking points.
- Perhaps you can display something for another venue and promote each other.
- Ensure your staff know what is happening in your town and region and encourage them to promote other sites.
- Ask family and friends to distribute your flyers to colleagues and friends, perhaps they can put a flyer on their staff notice board.
- Build relationships and develop word of mouth referrals.
- When you change your exhibition or tour, invite everyone to visit you again.

- Ask visitors how they heard about you. **This is crucial** to know if your strategy is working.

**CROSS PROMOTE OTHER SITES – DON'T BE AFRAID – THEY CAN BECOME YOUR CHAMPIONS**

**IT TAKES TIME BUT DON'T GIVE UP!! THE REWARDS ARE THERE**

I can guarantee that not all of my ideas produced the results I had hoped for, some have taken time to develop and some have really surprised me and motivated to do more. **Please believe in your ideas and don't give up.**