

3 Cost-Effective Ways to Increase Brand Awareness

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What's your business's biggest problem? It's not money. It's not your pricing. And it's definitely not the economy. The answer is almost always obscurity.

If I don't know you, you've automatically lost my business. How can I buy your products, invest in your company or fund your next venture if I don't know who you are? I guarantee it won't happen.

If you want to grow your business, you need to make attention your number one priority. It's why networking is a thing. It's why beggars make announcements on the New York subway. It's why **CEOs** go on road shows to raise capital. If you get people's attention, and generate awareness, you have a chance at earning their business.

It's such a simple concept but it's difficult to master. In fact, most companies are painfully bad at getting attention.

Our generation has developed ninja-like reflexes to swat away popups, and close out of mobile ads with lightning speed, yet businesses are spending more and more on mobile **advertising** every year. Car passengers (and drivers) spend most of their time on their smartphones, yet companies continue to buy billboard space. We DVR shows for the sole purpose of skipping commercials so what do companies do? They spend \$200 billion on television commercials this year alone. Genius.

What do these methods for getting attention have in common? They're expensive, impersonal and don't provide any real value to the customer. A company that spends money on a mobile ad prioritizes getting in front of my face whether I like it or not.

It's a lazy way to get attention, but it's not the only way.

The best way to get attention is by actually being helpful and doing something positive for your customers. It requires more effort, but it's far more cost effective and can help you build a loyal base of **brand** advocates in the process.

There are a three ways to provide real value to consumers. You can educate them, entertain

them or deliver 'wow' experiences.

1.

Educate them.

[Ties.com](#) sells ties - skinny ties, bow ties, novelty ties. They're an ecommerce store with a love for ties. Simple, right?

So how can [ties.com](#) provide increased value? By learning their customers' questions about ties and taking the time to answer them in a super helpful way.

A quick peek at Google's Keyword Planner suggests that people search "how to tie a tie" 550,000 times each month. That's a huge opportunity.

So it's no wonder that [ties.com](#) decided to build a fantastically comprehensive [tie-knotting guide](#) that shows you exactly how to tie the most popular tie knots with helpful videos, descriptions and associated graphic instructions included. It's [10X](#) better than anything else out there on tying knot instructions.

In fact, their answer is so good that when you search "how to tie a tie," Google rewards [ties.com](#) by showing their answer in the knowledge graph at the top of the page. That means more customers get their questions answered, and it means increased traffic and sales on the ties.com website.

The tie-knotting guide did so well that ties.com started the [Man Academy](#), with all sorts of additional manly knowledge for the style-conscious gentleman. They have a complete guide to bowties, the ultimate guide to the tie bar and even a guide on how to lace your dress shoes like a pro.

The most important lesson here? Find out your customers' questions, and make your answers 10X better than the answers that are already out there. Remember, you're trying to provide value, not get lost in the noise.

2.

Entertain them.

Depending on your industry, your target audience may not want to be educated with blog content, and that's okay. If people come to you to feel good or escape from their responsibilities, entertainment may be the most effective way to provide more value.

I love dogs, so let's use [BarkBox](#) as an example.

BarkBox is a monthly subscription surprise of dog toys, treats and goodies for your best friend. If

the company's main goal was to teach other people how to build their own DIY dog toys or bake their own dog treats, then educational content would make a lot of sense.

But I reckon most BarkBox fans just want to have fun with their dogs, and share dog stories with their friends. That's probably why BarkBox decided to entertain - rather than educate -- its customers to build more value for them.

They built a blog called [BarkPost](#), which is kind of like BuzzFeed for dog lovers. You can find your fix of hilarious videos, heart-wrenching stories or cute photo montages depending on your mood. And according to [BuzzSumo](#), BarkPost's top-performing articles have earned more than 600,000 shares and engagements. Not bad.

The Bark & Co crew uses other free tools at their disposal, such as **social** media platforms, to entertain their audience and fans even more. BarkBox has posted nearly 5,000 times on Instagram, earning them 1.2 million followers in the process.

Sure, BarkBox already had a following. But it takes work to maintain that relationship by providing value on a consistent basis.

The strategy works the same way across the board. Successful photographers showcase their work for free on Instagram. Dance troupes share their dances on Youtube. And startups piggyback off the latest pop cultural references on Facebook to be funny, and stay relevant. By entertaining your target audience, you get valuable attention, and keep yourself top of mind when the time comes to make a purchase.

3.

Deliver 'wow' experiences.

A new salad spot called [Sweetgreen](#) opened near work recently so I gave it a try. Its ingredients are tasty - try the pesto vinaigrette -- and the price is right. But what really clinched the deal for me was their online ordering and pickup policy.

First of all, the online ordering process is a joy to use. The interface is enticing and mobile-friendly, and you can watch your price and calorie count go up or down as you add or delete ingredients. It's intuitive and simple.

All there's left to do is choose a pick up time. When you arrive, you completely bypass the line, and grab your salad off a shelf. That's it.

It's a simple move, but that respect for my time has made me a **brand** advocate. I value the freedom so much that I've made it a lunch ritual and persuaded coworkers to follow suit.

That's the best part about wow experiences. The more you wow others, the less you have to promote because others will do the promoting for you. Sweetgreen shows up on my Instagram

feed all the time now thanks to their great food and the way they made me feel. Heck, it even got me writing about them in my articles.

Don't you think that's way more impressive than getting an impression from a mobile ad? Kudos to you, Sweetgreen.

Businesses fail everyday because of obscurity. If you're not generating awareness, you're not even giving customers a chance to engage with you and your product or service.

Whether you're educating or entertaining, [consistency is key](#). One viral piece of content is nice, but you'll get lost in the noise if you don't continue to deliver value again and again. Answer my question once, I go home happy. But answer my questions again and again, and you become a trusted, reliable source of information.

Rather than shoving your product down people's throats, try providing so much value that they practically beg you for your business.

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