

Client: Hamilton Bradshaw
Source: Evening Standard (Main)
Date: 10 June 2013
Page: 49
Reach: 699338
Size: 131cm2
Value: 8212.39



HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

Achieving net gains for an online business



James Caan

Dear James,

What are the most cost-effective ways to market an online business?
Teresa

MARKETING is an absolutely fundamental part of any business. If nobody knows about what you do, your customer base will be very limited. The key is to look at that customer base and understand the best ways you can reach out to them.

As you are an online business, the internet is your key marketing portal. It provides many cost-effective methods but you still have to use it correctly. Most firms now have some sort of online presence, but many fail to review it on a regular basis.

Your website is your shop window – and you should constantly ask yourself whether you have the best shop window on the High Street. Once people get to your website, you need to keep them engaged. Your site should be aesthetically pleasing while at the same time promoting your unique selling points.

Don't be afraid to ask for testimonials to put on your website. If your service is good, people will be more than happy to provide a few lines, and this can help you develop a customer-friendly brand.

Social media are also excellent forms of marketing, as they allow you to interact with your customers on a much more tailored basis. Gone are the days of scatter-gun approaches –

now you can make the right people aware of your brand.

I have always found networking is still one of the best forms of marketing. Join up to local business groups, and also trade specific ones. Word of mouth is still a hugely important tool, and who better to talk about your business than you?

■ *For the full article and news of James Caan's free app, go to standard.co.uk/askjames. His book, *Start Your Business in 7 Days*, is out now.*