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HAMILTON BRADSHAW
Investing in people with passion

Graphic studio's best bet to build scale is other start-ups

Ask James



James Caan

Dear James

WHAT'S your best marketing advice for a small graphic design start-up such as mine?

Oli Cheetham

ONE of the first steps you should take is to drive more traffic to your website. Many clients, especially in this industry, will want to look at a portfolio and find out about how you work. Your website is obviously a place where they can see all this, so consider starting a blog about graphic design that drives traffic to your site. Also use social media to promote your work and take people to your site. In addition, there are specific sites such as Behance which allow you to showcase your work to a wider audience.

At the moment, your website shows off your work but there are no recommendations or testimonials. Speak to your current customer base and see if you can get these from them. Whether it's on your website, LinkedIn or in client pitches, you want others to know that you are a trusted business and have delivered top-quality work. This is how the best brands are built up, by constantly being seen as trustworthy and of a high calibre.

As you are still a small business, you need to allocate your marketing funds carefully. Instead of going after more established clients, target start-ups. Businesses that are in their very early stages and need design work done will very rarely hire big design firms – and you as a smaller company can position yourself as being more flexible, personal and

cost effective.

Finally, you may want to consider

adding other creative elements to your business. For example, as well as graphic design, can you offer copywriting? This builds up your brand and income streams; however be sure you and your team have the skill set and budget for this.

■ *For more tips and advice, download James Caan's free Business Secrets app on iTunes and Android.*