

Creating awareness

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When you create awareness for your brand, you increase your chances of generating leads — not to mention sales. Creating awareness sounds difficult, but it doesn't have to be.

But how do you create awareness for your brand? And what does that awareness do for your lead-generation efforts? We're going to explore the answers to those questions today.

First, though, let's define your brand. It's the combined effect of the unique qualities that define your business and make it special. That's it.

A brand doesn't have to be Coca-Cola or Apple. It doesn't have to be a household name. In fact, your business gets branded whether you create that brand or not. People will see what you put out into the world, then make assumptions about your brand based on what they observe.

But you want to control your brand, right? That's why brand awareness has become so important.

What is brand awareness?

Many people think that brand awareness means shouting as loudly as you can into the void. That doesn't work. In fact, it usually backfires.

Building brand awareness involves strategically aligning your business with your values, beliefs, and personality. Without those variables in place, you're likely to come across as disorganized and out of touch.

So, put down the megaphone and relax. To create awareness, you need to know yourself and your business. That's it.

Brand awareness is the result of putting your brand in front of as many people as possible.

Have you ever seen a product in a television commercial, then spotted it on the shelf at a local store? Maybe you bought it. That's brand awareness. You saw the product advertised, then got the opportunity to buy it.

You can generate brand awareness in a variety of ways, but we'll get into that more later. What you need to know now is that you have to spread the word far and wide. Of course, brand awareness alone doesn't necessarily benefit your business. If everyone knows about you, that's great, but you want sales to go with the awareness.

How can you generate leads through brand awareness?

Leads are the precursor to sales. A lead hasn't yet decided to buy, but is brand-aware and considering your product for a future purchase.

This is a key time in the sales cycle. You don't want to accidentally turn off your lead and send him or her running to the competition. Instead, you want to nurture the lead and convince the prospect to buy.

Believe it or not, brand awareness can help generate those leads in the first place. More importantly, it can also help you nurture them down the sales funnel.

Let's say you create online courses that teach people how to learn a foreign language. There's lots of competition, from the local community college to well-known programs like Rosetta Stone. In other words, you need brand awareness to make yourself known and to convince prospects you're the best game in town.

To do that, you might make numerous touchpoints with your prospects. A typical list of touchpoints might look like this:

- Reading one of your [blog posts](#)
- Attending your latest [webinar](#)
- Subscribing to your [email list](#)
- Buying your course

That's actually a pretty short list of touchpoints. For some products, customers might encounter the brand many more times before deciding to buy. However, each of these touchpoints helps build brand awareness. So how do you create awareness to generate leads?

Improve brand recognition

When people recognize your brand — whether it's your logo, your business name, your name, or some other related mark — they'll be more likely to remember it when they want to buy something you sell. Think of it as a number's game.

There's a reason why we talk about "household names" — and not just when it comes to celebrities. Just about everyone recognizes brands like Coca-Cola, Apple, Ford, and Nabisco. Why? They have great brand awareness. Those brands also do billions of dollars in revenue each year. While your brand might not get as big as Ford's you can still strive for better brand recognition so you generate more leads.

Generate word-of-mouth advertising

As people get to know your brand, they'll talk about it with their friends. They might recommend your products to people they know.

That's great news. When your brand generates leads organically, you don't have to worry about paying out of pocket for advertising and marketing. You get cash without having to spend.

Besides, word-of-mouth advertising is better than any Facebook Ad. People trust personal recommendations more than they trust advertising messages.

Keep in mind that word-of-mouth advertising has changed over the last several years. We're not just talking about a brand mention between friends as they chat over coffee. Bloggers, influencers, and other online personalities can spread the word much faster.

Retarget your prospects with ads

It's not an either-or proposition. You might have great organic marketing pipelines set up, but you can increase your leads through targeted advertising.

Retargeting, which we'll discuss in more depth later, involves showing ads to people who have already interacted with your brand. For instance, a customer visits one of your blog posts from a Google search. That afternoon, he logs into his Facebook account and sees a paid offer on the screen.

It's a great way to generate leads without spending a ton of cash. As you create awareness through brand recognition, your lead-generation strategy becomes more effective.

Gain attention from the media

Earned media — something else we'll cover in more depth later — can be your best friend when it comes to generating leads. Like personal recommendations, media mentions can sway consumers far more efficiently than any advertisement.

You've probably followed a media recommendation before. For instance, maybe you check Consumer Reports when you want to buy a new washing machine or lawn mower.

Earned media can come from editorial pieces, consumer advocacy articles, and other pieces of content in journalistic publications. You can also create press releases designed to convince journalists to pick them up.

What are the best ways to build brand awareness?



Let's take a look at 19 ways to create awareness and generate leads for your brand. You can use all of them or just a handful depending on the time you can devote to marketing. However, don't overburden yourself. If you try to take on too much at once, your efforts will likely fall flat. Quality should always trump quantity.

1. Initiate a referral program

Referrals, as mentioned above, are great ways to generate leads. When someone you know recommends a product, you feel obligated to at least check it out. You might not buy right away. However, if the desire for the product crops up in the future, you'll know just where to look.

Referral programs are great marketing strategies because they incentivize word-of-mouth advertising. Instead of just asking people to spread the word, you offer some type of reward, such as a discount off a future purchase.

These programs work best when you reward both parties in the transaction. In other words, both the person who makes the referral and the new customer receive some type of reward for the effort.

2. Publish impressive guest content

You might have heard that you can generate leads by guest posting on other people's blogs. However, the strategy also works in reverse.

Maybe there's a semi-popular blogger who writes about topics related to the products you sell. You ask her to create a post for your blog in exchange for a link back to her website. That's great for the blogger, but it also helps you. After the post goes live, she will likely link to it from her own website. You get referral traffic, brand awareness, and potential leads.

Guest post exchange programs can work extremely well. The other blogger writes a post for your blog, and you create one for theirs.

3. Create infographics

We're becoming an increasingly visual society. People like to consume information as quickly as possible, and while text-based content performs well, it's most effective when you balance it out with visual content, too.

Infographics are relatively easy to create, especially with free tools like [Canva](#). You can collect data points and other interesting information from around the web (or conduct your own study), then arrange it in a visually pleasing way.

You can generate leads and more brand awareness with infographics because other people will embed your images on their sites. Brand your infographics to make sure it's obvious where they originated. You should also ask people to include a link when they publish your image on their sites.

4. Experiment with freemium with credit

Nothing really comes for free, right? At least, it shouldn't — not when you want to create awareness for your brand.

You might create a worksheet, calculator, form, or some other document. People can download the value-packed item for free, but it will contain your personal branding: logo, web address, and so on. However, if people want to remove those identifying marks, they can pay a small fee. You don't get brand awareness anymore, but you pocket the cash.

Freemium-with-credit deals work extremely well. You see it all the time with websites. People will put out a new WordPress theme, for instance, that website owners can download and use for free. They have to retain the creator's branding, though, unless they pay.

5. Pursue local partnerships

As a Knowledge Commerce professional, you might occasionally feel lonely. You're spending a lot of time by yourself, marketing your company and creating new [online courses](#).

Partnering with other professionals in your industry can help chase away the loneliness. It's also great for creating awareness. When you partner with someone else, you expose each other's brands to your respective audiences. Sure, there might be some overlap, but you'll get your products in front of new consumers' eyes.

Maybe you could create an informational product together, or perhaps you'll do a YouTube conversation and post it online. Use your imagination!

6. Run social media contests

Contests are another great way to create awareness and generate leads for your brand. People love to compete, especially when there are free prizes in the offering.

Give away a free month of access to your [membership site](#), for instance, or a free upgrade to one of your premium courses. Whatever gift you choose, make sure it's related to your industry — and preferably created by you.

7. Start with a social focus

Some people love social media. Others find it confusing. Wherever you fall on the spectrum, don't discount it entirely.

A social focus for your brand can vastly improve brand awareness. After all, you want to venture beyond your owned properties to get your content in front of new people.

But don't just post links to your latest blog posts on social media. Interact. Join conversations. Leave positive reviews of your favorite products.

Social interaction is very similar online as it is in real life. If you attend a party and never leave the snack table, you probably won't get much social interaction out of your time. However, if you introduce yourself to new people and mingle, more partygoers will know your name.

8. Publish content on LinkedIn

Particularly for B2B Knowledge Commerce businesses, [LinkedIn](#) is an underrated tool. While you should be active on LinkedIn as far as your profile and social interaction, you might also want to create awareness by publishing unique content there.

The LinkedIn content engine allows the people who follow you to see your work. You can create great interactions this way, especially if you comment on other people's articles.

The same goes for other social publication sites, such as [Medium](#). You can create fresh content for these platforms or repurpose content you've already published on your own site.

9. Tell magnetic stories

Storytelling is an underrated art. If you're good at spinning magnetic yarns, you can keep people coming back for more. Additionally, good storytelling makes you more memorable. Stir consumers' emotions with your stories so they think of you when they need a product you sell.

10. Develop your unique personality

Think about some of your favorite media personalities. What draws you to them? Why do you continue to seek them out?

People with unique personalities are like magnets. They attract attention everywhere they go. If you showcase your own unique personality, you'll create more awareness and become more memorable. You don't have to be fake or emulate someone you like. Let your own qualities shine through.

11. Create a podcast

Like video and infographics, audio content has become extremely popular. Top podcasts get millions of listeners every time they publish new episodes.

You don't have to worry about scaling up to those numbers. However, producing a regular podcast will create another way for people to consume your content.

Plus, just like with video, you can show off that personality we talked about earlier. Your voice, mannerisms, and way of speaking will shine through, captivating listeners and generating fresh leads.

12. Try PPC advertising

Pay-per-click (PPC) advertising has become more competitive, but that doesn't mean it isn't worth your consideration. And despite the name, clicks aren't the only things that matter.

People might see your ad and not click. They still saw your brand name and offer. If they remember it later, they might seek you out.

In that way, you can generate leads without paying for them. Of course, you'll have to pay for the people who do click, so make sure you have a top-notch [landing page](#) and a great offer for them when they arrive at your site.

13. Use remarketing campaigns

We already touched on this, so we'll be brief.

Think of remarketing as a way to lure back customers who bounced. They weren't ready to convert then, but maybe they are now.

The trick with remarketing is to present a can't-miss offer. It could be a discount, a free bonus, or something else you cook up. Just make it as enticing as possible.

14. Start a paid social advertising campaign

Paid social can work just as well as PPC. It's a way to push your content in front of people who don't already follow you.

Again, some people won't click or convert. That's okay. You're still using the platform to create awareness. Plus, you never know when those non-converters will come back to your site and check out your products in the future.

15. Take advantage of controversy

It sounds insidious, right? Maybe even a little tacky. But when approached the right way, controversy can create awareness for your brand faster than any other strategy.

You just have to avoid stepping on your own tongue and ruining your brand. It's a fine line to walk.

Below, we'll show you an example of controversial content done right. For now, though, it's important to realize that everyone says something controversial from time to time.

Maybe you create a piece of editorial content in which you espouse an unpopular opinion. You believe in it, though, and you want others to know it.

Or perhaps there's some sort of scandal occurring in your industry. Lend your voice to the issue to not only make yourself heard, but also to create awareness.

16. Pursue influencer marketing

Influencers have become their own form of currency. They have dedicated followings, which means that lots of consumers listen to what they have to say.

At one time, influencers were celebrities. They signed multi-million-dollar endorsement deals — and still do — to represent an already successful brand.

Today, though, influencers are everywhere, and in every industry. Some have follower counts in the thousands, while others have reached the six and seven figures. Regardless, they can help speed up your goal to create awareness for your brand.

17. Gain access to earned media

Earned media refers to any media attention that comes not from paid ads or other incentives, but from good-old-fashioned hard work. A journalist uses your product, for instance, and recommends it to her readership.

You can get earned media through product reviews, press releases, and dozens of other methods.

One relatively easy way to gain earned media is to sign up for [HARO](#) (which stands for "Help a Reporter Out"). It's a website that connects journalists with industry experts.

You sign up for the list, then receive a daily digest full of requests for quotes. If you're chosen, you'll get featured in the associated publication.

18. Produce shareable video content

Video gets bigger every day. It makes sense. Many people are visually oriented, which means they learn better when they can see what's going on.

You might create a tutorial, record a [webinar](#), or create some other type of video for your audience. But you want it to be shareable.

Make it short, sweet, and to the point. You might include some controversy for extra measure, but only if it makes sense in context.

19. Brand everything you release to the public

This might seem obvious, but entrepreneurs often forget. If you publish something on the Internet, send something out in an email, or otherwise make something available, brand it.

This includes your products, [email marketing](#) newsletters, free downloads, and more. Include your logo and web address at a minimum so people know where to find you.

Examples of outstanding brand awareness campaigns

Several companies have churned out amazing brand awareness campaigns. We're going to look at two of the most creative examples. Perhaps you can borrow their techniques to create awareness for your brand.

We'll start with [Goodyear](#). The tire company decided in 2015 to [capitalize on what digital marketers call "micro-moments."](#) These are minor touchpoints with the customer, such as a click on a Google search results entry.



Goodyear focused its [content marketing strategy](#) on mobile first, which is becoming increasingly important, and started targeting specific searches in the buyer's journey, such as these:

- **Knowledge Moments:** Customers searching for information about tires, such as how to change a flat or what size they need for their particular vehicles.
- **Shopping Moments:** Customers want to find the nearest shop that sells tires. Goodyear focused on making its brand appear first.
- **DIY Moments:** Goodyear correctly ascertained that we're living in a DIY culture, so it targeted much of its content toward people who want to service their cars themselves.

Next, let's look at a different form of brand awareness. The New York Times, leveraging the controversy angle we discussed above, confronted political issues with a timely and hard-hitting video that went viral:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gY0Fd350GE>

Some people might not agree with what the Times has to say. That's all right. The point is that the company has expanded his brand awareness by creating a video that ignites emotions and highlights the political divide in the United States.

Using brand awareness to boost your business

Have you started to create awareness about your brand? Do you have a plan in place to generate leads through increased brand awareness?

The article above will either get you started or help make sure you're on the right track.

Start by implementing a referral program, publishing guest content from great minds, and creating infographics. Consider setting up a freemium alternative to regular paid products, then run social media contests — perhaps with local partners.

You can publish content on LinkedIn, share magnetic stores, and use your unique personality to draw new prospects into your orbit. Podcasting, paid advertising, controversy, and widespread branding can all help you reach your goals.

Goodyear and the New York Times offer excellent examples of brand awareness done right, but you can come up with your own strategy. Get creative.

References

- [1] <https://kajabi.com/blog/create-awareness>