

# Emma Thompson

## *Marketing on a Shoestring*

What's a cash-strapped entrepreneur to do to market their business? Fear not. If you're willing to put in some time there are always ways and means to shout about what you do - even for the price of a pizza – as Brad of 4Networking would say! Here's just a selection.

1. **Pull a stunt** – have you heard about the women who owned an underwear shop who walked through town in a bodice distributing fliers?! Could you set up a market stall in a park like the guys from Innocent and ask people to rate smoothies and tell you whether to set up in business or not? Would you dare to camp outside Richard Branson's house if you were looking for a sponsor - like Hamish Stevenson of Fast Track did? You are only limited by the extent of your creativity and your mindset.
2. **Go large** – existing clients are the best so is there a new exciting product you can offer them? If not, then think about developing one – have customers asked you recently if you could do something and you've had to say no? If yes, shout about it – drop them a line to entice them – *have you heard about the latest thing to hit the headlines?* Or use lumpy mail. Don't know what a lumpy mail is? Postcards are out – unusual gifts are in.
3. **Focus on the headlines** - why not find out what your target audience is reading about by visiting syndication, publishing house or white paper sites and write articles on the top three themes. One client wanted to know the hot topics for software purchasers. I managed to find the top priorities for CIOs so they knew what messages would win sales.
4. **Give away tips** – how about “three things to do when your computer dies” or “five mortgage mistakes to avoid?” Even better, is there somebody who has already got a regular slot in a magazine and wants to farm out the writing in return for your name on the bye-line?
5. **Barter** – What do you need right now and who do you know who could help? What could you offer them in return? My first website was developed by Smart Studio (my own words of course) and, in return, I helped his fiancé secure the role she always wanted by helping her with her application and interview technique.
6. **Get net savvy** – there are plenty of FREE channels – but chose wisely. You want those with good rankings and proven return on investment. Research has identified the best currently are:

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[Free-Press-Release.com](#) – Pagerank 5/ Alexa 3,547 – Not a great looking site, but it has high traffic and a good Alexa ranking. Also, you can place your banners on the press release submitted, pointing to your site. Only the paid service has better ranking and SEO benefits. Easy press release distribution for free, more features for paid accounts.

[PRLog.org](#) – Pagerank 5 / Alexa 16,551 – Ordinary and functional looking website, but it delivers results. Free distribution to Google News and other search engines. Allows inbound links and is optimized well for the search engines. Press releases can be scheduled.

[E-zine articles.com](#) outstrips any other free article upload site for combined Google and Alexa rankings.

7. [Make it easy to try and buy](#) – learn about the latest grants. It might just tip the balance. J4bgrants or Business Link are useful sources of information. I know of one company that makes its living that way. It offers business planning on a cost neutral basis by getting grants to pay for every stage of the consultant's time. If you could have a consultant free of charge – wouldn't you say yes?

So there you have it – one tip for every day of the week.

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