

NOCASOBE (North of Camden, South of Belfast) – helping you market your mid-coast business!

Check out www.nocasobe.com website – it is now live! Questions? info@nocasobe.com

NOCASOBE is a volunteer effort to support the marketing needs of small businesses in our region.

5 Marketing Tips – Finding Your Niche Markets

Some people focus their business on a broad range of clients while others find their special “niche” and narrow the potential client base to one group or similar demographics. No matter what your business is, there will be niche markets that you can serve. Auto repair – sports cars and international vehicles, trucks, one brand only, multiple brands, etc. A builder might do only new construction while another focuses on repairs and renovations. Artisans pick their medium and that alone may “speak” to a unique client-base. Lodging establishments may have a style and price-range that dictates their clients. Or, perhaps a niche market like travelers with pets. Think about your clients/guests/customers..... are they similar to one another or dramatically different. Is there a way you can target a special group or niche within the broader market and thus gain more business revenues? One season I targeted my marketing efforts to Pet-friendly travel and that summer we had over 350 dogs stay on our property! One year we targeted weddings and have gotten increased wedding business ever since (along with the dogs – they are still coming!). Don’t underestimate the power of focusing on a narrow group as your specialty. Niche markets are also places where you can “sell” your services and products. Can you produce or make a special item for weddings? Huge market!

1. **Brainstorm** with your staff and friends how you could best serve a niche market. For those in tourism, try marketing to:
 - a. Teams/Groups
 - b. Weddings
 - c. Reunions
 - d. Family Travel
 - e. Gay Travel
 - f. Pet Friendly
 - g. Singles, Couples, Partners
 - h. Holidays
 - i. Religious Groups

Also consider that there are buying clubs and barter groups where you can place your products or services in “exchange”. While you might not make cash, you may get something else that you needs just as much.

2. **Know the demographics of the region!** Did you ever consider that there are over 500 businesses in NOCASOBE – north of Camden and South of Belfast!? Can you believe it? So many people making their living through their businesses. Who are our clients? What are the demographics of the region?
 - a. Lincolntonville – Population around 2,200 with 50% males and 50% females. Median ag 47.5 years (older than the state median age of 38.6). Household income (median): approx.. \$50,000.

Average home value \$230,200. Races:

White alone - 2,007 (98.3%)

Hispanic - 17 (0.8%)

Two or more races - 8 (0.4%)

Asian alone - 4 (0.2%)

American Indian alone - 2 (0.10%)

Other race alone - 2 (0.10%)

Black alone - 1 (0.05%)

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander alone - 1 (0.05%)

- b. Islesboro – Population around 700 with slightly more females than males. The median age is 52.1 years. Median household income: \$46,778. Estimated property value was \$382, 532. Racial representation includes:

White alone - 591 (98.0%)

Hispanic - 8 (1.3%)

Two or more races - 2 (0.3%)

Black alone - 1 (0.2%)

Asian alone - 1 (0.2%)

- c. Northport – Population 1,600. Ratio of females to males: 819 to 776. Median age 47.8. Median income is around \$47,000. Typical house value: \$187,031. Races represented:

White alone - 1,300 (97.7%)

Two or more races - 14 (1.1%)

Asian alone - 8 (0.6%)

Hispanic - 6 (0.5%)

American Indian alone - 2 (0.2%)

Black alone - 1 (0.08%)

3. **Seasonal Markets** – as the season changes consider that your customer/clients may also change. As such, there may be “different strokes” for different folks. What may entice someone mid-winter to dine out, for example, may not be the same for a summer traveler. Offering specials and promotional features based on season can attract new people to your business. Whether it’s about food, the colors of paint, or the personal needs Summer, Fall, Winter and Spring can be very different.
4. **Find publications** that cater to the niche market you are trying to attract. Consider advertising with either a display or classified ad to “test the waters”. See if there is a professional association with a newsletter where advertising costs might be reduced from a magazine. From quilters to fisherman, single women travelers to hikers, motorcycle clubs to bird watchers, Cottage Living to Architectural Digest... these are opportunities to connect regionally and nationally to niche groups. A story about your business may be all it takes – write it up and send it like a Press Release to the targeted publication. Editors are always seeking to find fresh stories and new angles to meet their customer-base. How to start? Identify the potential niche market. Google newsletters or publications for that niche. Qualify the search further by specifying Maine. You should be able to have several choices within each niche you search. For example, if you have a lodging business and you decide to identify Pet Friendly as your niche, you will discover Downeast Dog News, Pet Friendly websites, etc. A Press

Release or story about your hotel sent to these publications and also to area veterinarians might help increase your recognition as a hotel that accepts pets (or just dogs if that's the case). If you do marine and boat services you might advertise in both newspapers and magazines for the sailing community.

5. **Consider having a booth at a local or regional business expo or art show** (if an artist/artisan). Create a display that clearly shows your services, products, work, and capabilities – identify niche groups so that as people come by your booth they immediately make the connection BEFORE you have to tell them/sell them – make it visual! Tactile displays, photos, 3-dimensional display of art, etc. all have a way of connecting to the viewer's individual likes and needs. When I go to an artisan or craft fair it doesn't take me long to shop because I look for connections (whether it happens consciously or subconsciously). I don't look at everything. I look for things in color families, styles, materials that fit my interests and needs. You want to not overwhelm people but you need to find those "hooks" that will cause people to notice your work.

NOCASOBE website and marketing efforts are coordinated by Dr. Jane Liedtke, a retired university professor and corporate consultant who owns Bay Leaf Cottages & Bistro in Lincolnville. With the help of interns from Illinois State University and the University of Southern Maine the data and information for the website was generated and maintained. Funds received from businesses who upgrade their listing or advertise are used to support the website basic operating costs. Any excess funds will go to the Northport Food Pantry to help families in need within the NOCASOBE region.