



# Business Advice Area

## Marketing, attracting and keeping customers

Advice in this area aims to help businesses develop effective marketing strategies, and to ensure that they provide the right product/service at the right price, in the right place, at the right time.

The advice could be used for market research, targeting existing and potential customers, using social media to extend your reach into new markets, developing pricing strategies and closing sales.

### What are the benefits of taking advice in this area?

Marketing allows businesses to assess the environment that they are operating in and develop plans to make the most of opportunities and avoid threats so they can attract and keep customers. Without marketing businesses cannot get close to customers and satisfy their needs. And if they don't, a competitor will.

Marketing and sales experts can provide a wide range of advice about how to research your existing and potential customers; gain insight from your business and customer data; develop or improve new products or services to meet customer needs; put together communications plans aimed at your target audience; and put in place processes to help you close a sale.

### What activities will Growth Vouchers fund?

- Analysis of your market, including your competitors, opportunities and threats
- Customer analysis: Who are they? What do they need? How can you reach them?
- Advice on how to satisfy customer needs profitably
- Help to divide your customers into groups and target them effectively
- Advice on how to develop a brand and improve your competitive edge
- Help to innovate around new products and ensure these are marketed to the appropriate audiences
- Help to make your communications planning more effective and integrated across your business
- Analysis of your sales strategy

## What activities won't a Growth Voucher fund?

Growth Vouchers subsidise strategic advice, so can't be used to pay for activities such as designing specific marketing campaigns, copywriting, carrying out market research or training.

## What should I look out for when choosing an advisor in this topic?

- Are they a chartered marketer or a full member of a recognised institute which has an independent customer complaints handling process (such as the Chartered Institute of Marketing - MCIM)
- Do they have three years experience of working in, or advising, small businesses (with references)?
- Do they have professional indemnity insurance?
- Do they have professional qualifications in a relevant discipline?
- How do they keep their knowledge up to date?
- Do they have access to market research, best practice guides, etc?
- Will they transfer the skills to you as they go or will you need to go back to them each time?

## What are typical charges?

While it's difficult to define exact rates, marketing consultants tend to charge upwards of £250 per day, and some experienced marketing consultants from big firms may charge a few thousand pounds a day. However price isn't necessarily an indication of quality so it's important to shop around. Try and get at least three detailed, costed quotations and check background and experience.