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Food For Thought

"To invent, you need a good imagination and a pile of junk."

[Thomas Edison](#)

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Will Work For Food

Mark's Tips and Tricks

7 Low-Cost Marketing Tips

1. Make customers feel special. People respond to recognition. Tully's, for example, encourages baristas to learn the names of cafe regulars. A great marketer also makes it easy for customers to reach a competent person when they need help with a product or ask questions. Adequate customer support is often your first opportunity to garner loyalty among paying clients.

2. Cultivate an electronic mailing list. In the mutable days of "new media," it is easy to forget how effective a direct mailer or e-newsletter can be. Invite customers and clients to open your mail with special offers or other useful information.

3. Distribute business cards worth keeping.

The design, paper style and weight of your card is very important. A quality card leaves a lasting impression. Remember, that card will remain in your customer's hands, long after you leave.

4. Improve visibility at trade shows and conferences. It helps to be a (friendly) regular with sticky giveaways. Be selective: trade shows can be costly. (see my past newsletter about trade show giveaways [here](#))

5. Become an expert in your field. Why not give advice away? As familiarity with your name grows, so too will familiarity with your associated brand. Blogging, and getting involved with a relevant blogging community, makes this easy. Encourage syndication of useful content. (you are welcome to view my blog [here](#))

6. Mix business with pleasure... and charity. Don't underestimate the viral power of hosting a charity baseball game in your community. Involving yourself in a breast cancer walk or charity auction.

7. Maintain relationships with repeat customers. It costs less to retain a client, however disgruntled or inactive, than it does to acquire a new one. Send personal messages and offer opportunities to improve their experience with you.

How Old Is Too Old? Is My Computer Destined For Meltdown?

Five+ years may seem like a lifetime to own one computer, but how often do you replace your computer, and is it really necessary?

One thing to be wary of in an older computer is a driver that is more than 5 years old

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The CPU, motherboard, RAM and PSU can all be a potential culprit when experiencing computer issues, but if/when your computer does experience a problem, it's likely to be hard drive failure.

Just as with any older piece of electronic equipment, one often wonders if the item is just too old and is headed for eminent breakdown.

As with an older car, you may after time experience some issues, but there's a good chance that they may be fixed with some simple upgrades.

Here's my tips for living and working with an older computer:

- Backup regularly, so if things do go wrong, you're prepared
- Clean dust out from inside your computer. Dust build-up causes overheating and overheating leads to failures
- Remove programs you no longer use or backup files and remove copies from your hard drive. Freeing up space can help lagging computers run faster

If you experience any of the following problems with your computer, it's time to think about upgrading:

- If your computer develops problems, and the cost of repairs is higher than that of buying a new computer
- If your computer cannot support the software you need.

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