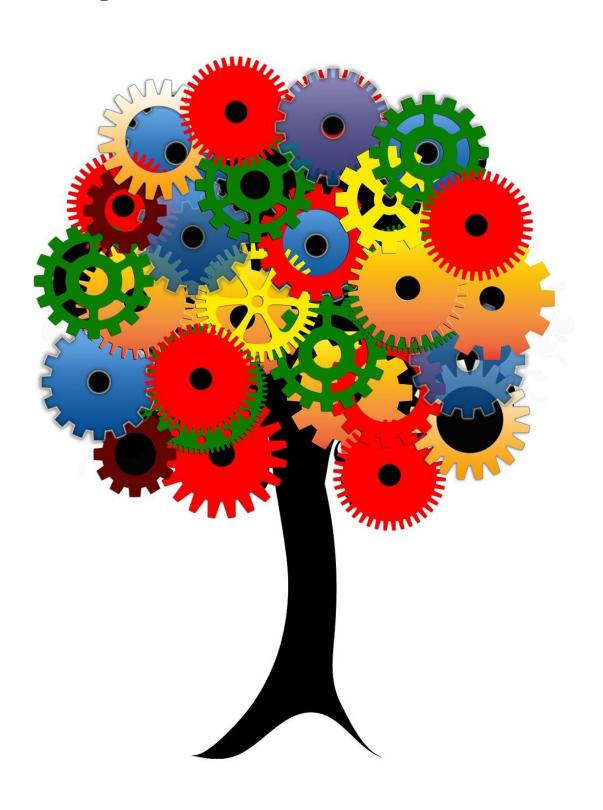# How to promote your software product:
useful tips from ISS Art

This guide is designed to help you launch and promote your software product successfully. The document covers the key points to remember when starting your product promotion. It also provides an overview of tools and resources which can be utilized to promote your project. We recommend that you read this guide to the end before starting your promotional activities.

Contents

1. What to consider when starting promotion

1.1. Identify your target audience

First and foremost, you need to understand whose needs your product is aimed to satisfy – you need to know your target audience. For example, if your newly developed project is an E-learning system, your potential customers will be students and teachers most likely. If it is a time-tracking system, it will be interesting for startup owners, heads of IT departments and businessman working with remote employees (software development teams, for example).

1.1. Adjust your message to meet your audience's needs

Ask yourself a question: why should a customer be interested in my product? Being cool is not enough here – in today's highly competitive market there are tons of cool projects already.

Focus on a particular problem that you customer faces, and identify how your product is likely to solve this problem. You need to show actual value to a user; otherwise, he won't have motivation to even try it.

If your newly developed document management system enables to reduce internal expenses by 20%, bring it into focus!

1.2. Don't forget about call-to-action

You've created a message telling clearly how good your software product is. But what's next? What do you expect from a user? To check your website, to sign up for a free trial, or to order your product right away? Make this point clear as well.

1.3. Choose proper communication channels

Once you know who your customer is, it is important to define which types of media he is likely to view. When it comes to software products, digital communication channels are likely to have more weight than traditional media (like printed advertising or TV ads).

However, exceptions are still possible – in case your software product audience pays more attention to traditional rather than digital media… Btw, can you come up with any examples of such products? :)

2. Tools and resources to promote your software product

Now let's look through the tools, techniques and resources that can be utilized to promote a software product successfully. Please note that you shouldn't necessarily use all the tools described below, but, at the same time, you shouldn't stop at just one of them. Which ones to choose? This will depend on your

goals, desired results, and your budget, of course. If your goals are short-term, then search and mobile advertising can be a good choice for you. If your goals are long-term, then blogs and press releases might be more suitable promotional resources.

2.1.   Crowdfunding

Today crowdfunding is not only a means of getting significant financial support for your project, but also an opportunity to get publicity for your product when it's even on early development stages. We're pretty sure you already know the most popular crowdfunding platforms, so there is no need to even name them. If you doubt, however, just google it, and you will see them on top positions of search results.

2.2.   Marketing materials

2.2.1. Website

Take care of your product website. Consider current web design trends – while flat design and long scrolling are still popular, you might want to try some newly emerging trends like hidden main menus. Although design is important, usability shouldn't be neglected. Make your site easy to navigate and user friendly. Ensure that the call-to action elements are visible and easy to reach. Do not forget about the conventions like blue links for URLs and a logo in the upper left corner of the page.

Of course it might be a good idea to develop your own unique design from scratch. However, this step has its obvious limitations: this is time and money consuming. This is where Twitter Bootstrap themes can help. You can find both paid and free themes.

First, it can save you enormous amount of time. With this tool a web developer doesn't need to spend much time writing code since Bootstrap libraries contain lots of readymade solutions. For those who need to launch a project quickly this is an optimal solution.

Second, it is highly customizable. Bootstrap design can be tailored exactly to the project requirements. A web developer can easily choose the elements which are required and skip those that are unwanted.

Third, it is responsive. The need to have a responsive website is getting more and more urgent, and Bootstrap solves these tasks successfully by adapting to any platform smoothly.

2.2.2. Explainer videos

If you want to represent your product in a fun and creative way, an explainer video might help you in it. You can place it on your website and/or send it to your customers. Don't forget to add it to your corporate YouTube channel as well – this will positively affect your ranking.

You can reach out to Explainify team who makes short, animated explainer videos that enable businesses to explain their services simply, effectively, and meaningfully by capturing their one-of-a-kind story.

Like they say, "It's hard to read the label from inside the bottle." In other words, it can be hard to take a holistic look at your organization from within, which in turn makes it very difficult to tell your story quickly and impactfully.

2.3.   Search advertising

Search advertising assumes placing ads on the pages with the search engine queries results. The major benefit of this method is targeting your ads to match the particular keywords entered on search engines. In addition, you can target your ads by location, age, gender, device type, browser characteristics, etc.

You can also choose the model which suits your commercial interests best: cost per thousand views (CPM), cost per click (CPC), or cost per action (CPA).

To prepare an effective ad, you'll need to conduct keywords research in order to estimate their popularity and the level of competition. The commercial text needs to be though out as well – don't forget about our advice from the beginning of this article (adjust the message to your audience and don't forget about call-to-action). Based on our experience, we recommend involving into this activity a professional who is aware of all the mechanisms of search advertising. Alternatively, you can do it yourself, but be sure to study all the information available before launching your campaign.

2.4.   Ad Networks

By ad networks we mean companies which connect advertisers to web sites that are willing to host advertisements. Ad networks aggregate ad space supply from publishers and match it with advertiser demand. Online ad networks enable targeting, tracking and reporting of impressions in ways not possible with offline alternatives.

Today online advertising can take various forms, including space on websites, in RSS feeds, on blogs, in IM applications, in e-mails, etc. Which option to choose will strongly depend on the product you are going to promote – where will it reach your potential customer most likely?

In addition to online ad networks, there are ad networks that focus on serving ads on the mobile web and within mobile apps.

2.5.   Mobile advertising

With today's popularity of mobile devices it's easier than ever to reach your audience through their smartphones or tablets. Therefore, mobile advertising is something you may want to consider. Most mobile advertising networks enable to target your ad based on specific locations, types of devices and even behavior patterns (like past actions, interests, etc.).

2.6.   Blogs

Blogs are another great source of promotion. Unlike advertising, blog posts usually don't sound too

commercial as long as they are likely to bring value to the readers – they tell them a story.

A good idea is to compile a list of blogs that are potentially interesting to your target audience. For instance, if you are working on a webinar platform, your potential customers might read blogs dedicated to E-learning questions.

Alternatively (or in addition to that) you can start your own blog. This is the path we've chosen, since our experience has allowed us to accumulate a lot of useful information that we are happy to share with our audience.

2.6.1. Guest post

You can reach out to blog owners and discuss the possibility of writing a guest post. Be sure to discuss the conditions of getting published: the topic that might be interesting to readers, the text length, the possibility to post back links, etc.

2.6.2. Product review

Another way of getting publicity for a product is to request a review on a specialized blog. To increase chances that your product will be reviewed, be sure to provide a reviewer with a demo. For example, if you've developed an arcade game for iOS platform, reach out to game review blogs and send them the promo codes in case it is a paid app.

2.6.3. Start your own blog

While working on your product, you've gained certain experience and valuable insights. Why not share this with others?

First, this will be interesting and useful content for your potential audience and this is exactly what they want. Second, this way you will get your first followers. Third, as your audience grows, you will get a chance to communicate with them further and notify them about your updates (these can be newsletters announcing new posts or important project updates).

2.7. Social networks

There is a variety of promotional tools in social networks: company pages creation, participation in themed groups, advertising – placing targeted banners, sponsored posts, etc. The most famous social networks are, of course, Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Also, don't forget about Reddit which is very popular in US. In case of the latter you'll need to choose subreddits that will be the most appropriate for covering your product.

2.8. Forums

You can also get in touch with your target audience on specialized forums. Introducing new project management software? Find project management forums and start your communication. Be sure to get acquainted with the forum rules before posting – this will prevent you from getting banned for the reasons unknown to you.

2.9. Q&A sites

Q&A platforms provide another great opportunity to spread a word about your product without looking promotional. Of course, your message needs to be relevant to the audience. Share your experience or tell them how you approached this or that issue while developing/or with the help of your product.

2.10. Press releases

To spread a word about your product you can utilize press release distribution services. This will help you get more publicity to your project and drive traffic to your website.
Popular press release distribution services include PR Newswire, PRWeb, 24-7 Press Release, and many others.

2.11. Viral techniques

You can go further with your promotion activities and apply some viral techniques. These can be stories, pictures, videos – whatever. The idea is that asset is so appealing to the audience that it has a potential to get shared by great number of people in their communications within a short period of time.

Not every marketing message has even a potential to become viral. Unfortunately, there is no universal advice on how to create a viral marketing program that would fit all the cases – most of the times it happens unexpectedly. If you manage to achieve this, however, consider yourself a guru ☺

--
We hope you will find our guide helpful in developing your promotional strategy. Do you know any tools, resources or techniques that we haven't covered? Do you have any questions left? Do not hesitate to contact us! We will be happy to help you or share our experience of using this or that experience (if we have any).

Email: info@issart.com

We wish you successful promotion!