MARKETING & SELF-PROMOTION

It takes time and effort to build and maintain a client base. Most successful freelancers agree that the bulk of their income is generated from repeat business, so it is important to put as much effort into keeping your clients as you do to acquire new ones. This entails learning how to promote and market yourself and your work in a manner that is professional and strategic. The good news is that you have some control over the promotion of your work. The bad news is that you must be willing to do the leg work that may pull you away from your creative work. However, you do not have to do everything all at once. First, develop a marketing plan, a time frame and realistic objectives, and decide what you will do yourself and what you may want to pay others to do. Choose one method to implement at a time and learn to do it well. Consistency is key. Here is a short list of strategies to consider:

**Website**—Build and populate a website that clearly demonstrates what you do. Then make sure to add relevant keywords on your website so that people interested in your work can find you online.

**Video**—Post online videos of you working, of your product, or whatever you are selling and/or promoting. People want to support people they know—and if they watch you on a video, it personalizes their connection to you.

**Social Media**—Connect with like-minded people and create a space for your fans to find you through Instagram, Snapchat, Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and/or other sites for social networking. Remember that you should be selective about which social media sites are most relevant to the type of work or lifestyle brand you represent. It is important to stay up to date and post frequently, so use only the sites you are most comfortable with and maintain consistency. Also, be sure to use sound judgment and remain professional at all times.

**E-newsletter**—Build up a list of friends, family, fans, current and past clients, and art professionals. With their permission, send out a quarterly or monthly e-newsletter with news about current projects you are working on. Be sure to be respectful of people’s inboxes, and try to send updates at a reasonable frequency (for example, once every month, or every other month).

**Business Cards**—Hand your business cards to people you meet, and make sure they know what you do. Let them know that you are available to connect.

**Networking**—Get out and meet people! Go to trade shows, networking events, and community events. People like to do business with people they know.

**Trade Shows**—Similar to networking, trade shows give you added exposure by allowing you to set up a booth showing your art or products. Every industry has numerous trade shows that you can attend. Some local examples include Unique, LA Art Show, and Photo LA.

**Post Your Portfolio**—Online databases are a great way to share your work. Try posting your portfolio on CalArts CommonSpace or use sites like Behance to promote yourself. Be sure to include examples of your most recent work and your contact information.

**Teach a Class**—Give something of value to your local community, show off your knowledge, and gain a few new customers by teaching a class. Share your knowledge and you will become known as the expert in your field.

**Volunteer**—A great way to meet people is to volunteer at events or with your local arts organizations. Individuals organizing these programs are often well-known leaders so working alongside them can help you get connected to the community.