

Five effective ways to market yourself as an online teacher

By Cecilia Nobre

Lots of teachers ask me how they can find new students. I'm going to share what works for me and, hopefully, some ideas will work for you too.

1). Set up a website

Build a website and showcase your teaching services effectively. Think about your core message: WHY should prospective students learn from me? WHAT problems do I solve concerning teaching? HOW will the students see their progress once they study with me? You can hire a professional, or you can build your own website with Weebly or Wix website builders. Another critical decision is to work with Search Engine Optimisation (SEO). Ideally, your web designer should be able to work with SEO as well. SEO is the simple activity of ensuring your website can be found on Google for words and phrases relevant to what the site is offering. Word of mouth plays an important role, but it's limited. After all, you're now teaching online, and your reach is endless (or almost!).

2). Be a Facebook expert

Another tool I like to use is the Facebook timeline and fan pages (though I think your Facebook timeline is more effective than fan pages). I know some may disagree and want to use social media with friends and family only, but from my experience, Facebook works wonders for those who wish to promote their business. You can share tips on pronunciation, grammar, links, successful students' stories, etc. You can also record part of a lesson and share it on your social media (remember to ask for permission from your student!). Sharing useful and relevant content with your contacts will raise your profile as a teacher and they will probably remember you when they need lessons or if a friend one day asks 'Hey, do you know any good English teachers you can recommend?'

3) Harness LinkedIn

LinkedIn is another useful tool to showcase yourself as a teacher – if you're mindful of what you post. You can share the same type of links and tips I have mentioned for Facebook. Make sure your email and website/blog are visible in your profile. It is also useful to advertise your services once a week or once a fortnight – as long as it's not overly salesy

or pushy – nobody likes that! Make your ad informative and useful to your contacts.

4). Master Instagram

Instagram has grown in popularity and it has more users than Facebook. If you're already on Instagram, using it to boost your business can be convenient. You can reach new students by posting relevant content, such as sharing tips on pronunciation, grammar, common mistakes students make, etc. You can use a variety of ways: posting a picture on their regular feeds, a video, or use Instagram Stories to have your videos or photos up there for 24 hours. It's an excellent tool for business when you engage your audience. Ask them questions, promote quizzes, share quotes in English, challenge the audience with a riddle ...

5). Email or message former students

Don't overlook the power of emailing and messaging. Once in a while, email your former students to share something interesting in the world of English learning, perhaps an article aimed at students, or just ask them how they are doing. You know your former students well so you're the best person to personalise the message and make them feel cared for, and special. It's essential to build and keep an excellent rapport with former students so that they can bring you new students, the good old school called 'word of mouth'. Tell your students you're now teaching online, show how passionate you are about this new approach to teaching and perhaps tell them you're available if they want to try online lessons.