



# NURSERY MARKETING: THE ULTIMATE GUIDE

Explore strategies, budgeting tips, common mistakes to avoid, and more.

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Nursery Management Software

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## Introduction

Getting your nursery name out to the market and then trusted doesn't come overnight. And there is a plethora of nursery marketing strategies available to us today that a lot, might actually be too much!

What you want to know is simple: "What works, and how do I do it?" Blossom has spoken with nursery marketing expert and CEO of Childcare Marketing, Ben Rolfe, to discuss what avenues are worth exploring for your individual business.

### Meet the nursery marketing expert: Ben Rolfe

Ben Rolfe, CEO of Childcare Marketing, is on a mission to support childcare businesses by offering affordable childcare marketing solutions.

Having founded various marketing companies throughout his years of experience, and with an MBA in business administration, Ben shares his invaluable insights and personal experience on getting your nursery marketing where you want it to be.



## Branding and marketing: what's the connection between the two?

Although they are not the same thing, branding and marketing work towards achieving a similar goal for your nursery business. That is, being well-known and trusted in the sector to secure a regular stream of customers.

The brand is basically the face of the business. Therefore it is essential that whatever logo, colours, name etc. you have chosen for your setting- is memorable, and clearly says that it's part of the community. And it is critical that you focus on brand continuity, together with brand awareness\* at the forefront of your business.

★ “The key problem that we see quite often is that a lot of providers undergo a drastic, full brand change. With a change in logo, and nursery name. The issue with this is that, immediately, all of the marketing efforts will need to change to focus on that new brand. This obviously impacts your business because, locally, your reputation would have been built upon your older brand.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



\*Brand awareness = the degree to which consumers recognise your product by its name. Ideally, with positive associations that distinguish you from your competitors.

Branding and marketing works together to get you that visibility within your target market. Marketing your nursery setting contributes to the overall success of your business by helping it to reach its goals.

★ “The one focus point really needs to be on visibility and if you’re not visible you’re not going to get enquiries, you’re not going to get applicants for your jobs and that’s obviously going to affect your business. So in terms of marketing it is essential for any EY business now and in the future as well.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



## How do I know what nursery marketing strategy is best for my business?

When it comes to your marketing strategy, the key focus needs to be that you have a marketing plan first. Without a marketing plan, it is very hard to draw a strategy that's going to be effective. Because this is the 'how' you're going to implement your plan in terms of effective strategies.

★ Ask yourself: what is my main aim now, and what is my main aim in 12 months' time?

This will shape what strategy you adopt, and how you go about it. If your main aim now is enquiry growth, for example, the strategy will need to be orientated and developed towards exactly that. Therefore, you would include things like paid advertising to attract parents, and you might include value-based content targeted towards parents.

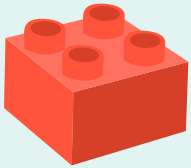


Your aim in 12 months' time

Alternatively, if your current main aim is recruitment, you'll be looking at adverts for applicants, and you'll also be prioritising value-based content for attracting applicants to your business. Knowing what marketing strategy is best for your business can only be determined by having all 3 of the building blocks of nursery marketing in place.

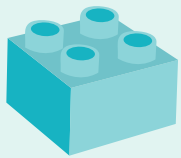
### The essential building blocks of nursery marketing

1



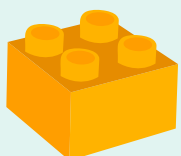
Building your foundation: a strong website and messaging detailing your ethos and aims.

2



Focusing your messaging. What are you actually wanting to say to potential customers?

3



Boosting this message. Exploring methods to get your message out there and build brand awareness.

For example, without having a strong website (building block 1) the method you take to get your message out there to attract people to your website (building block 3) will most likely not yield the results you were looking for. Therefore, it is critical to complete these 3 stages, or blocks, in order for your marketing efforts to have an overall success.

## Top 6 nursery marketing strategies:

- 1 Social media marketing
- 2 Paid advertising
- 3 SEO (Google, Bing, Search Engine Optimisation/ how you rank).
- 4 Local targeting- signage, posters, flyers etc.
- 5 Local events.
- 6 Delivering value across all channels- as a strategy.

★ “The key element is to have value in any and all marketing you do. Regardless of the channel. If there is no value in your marketing, it will be very difficult to gain momentum.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*

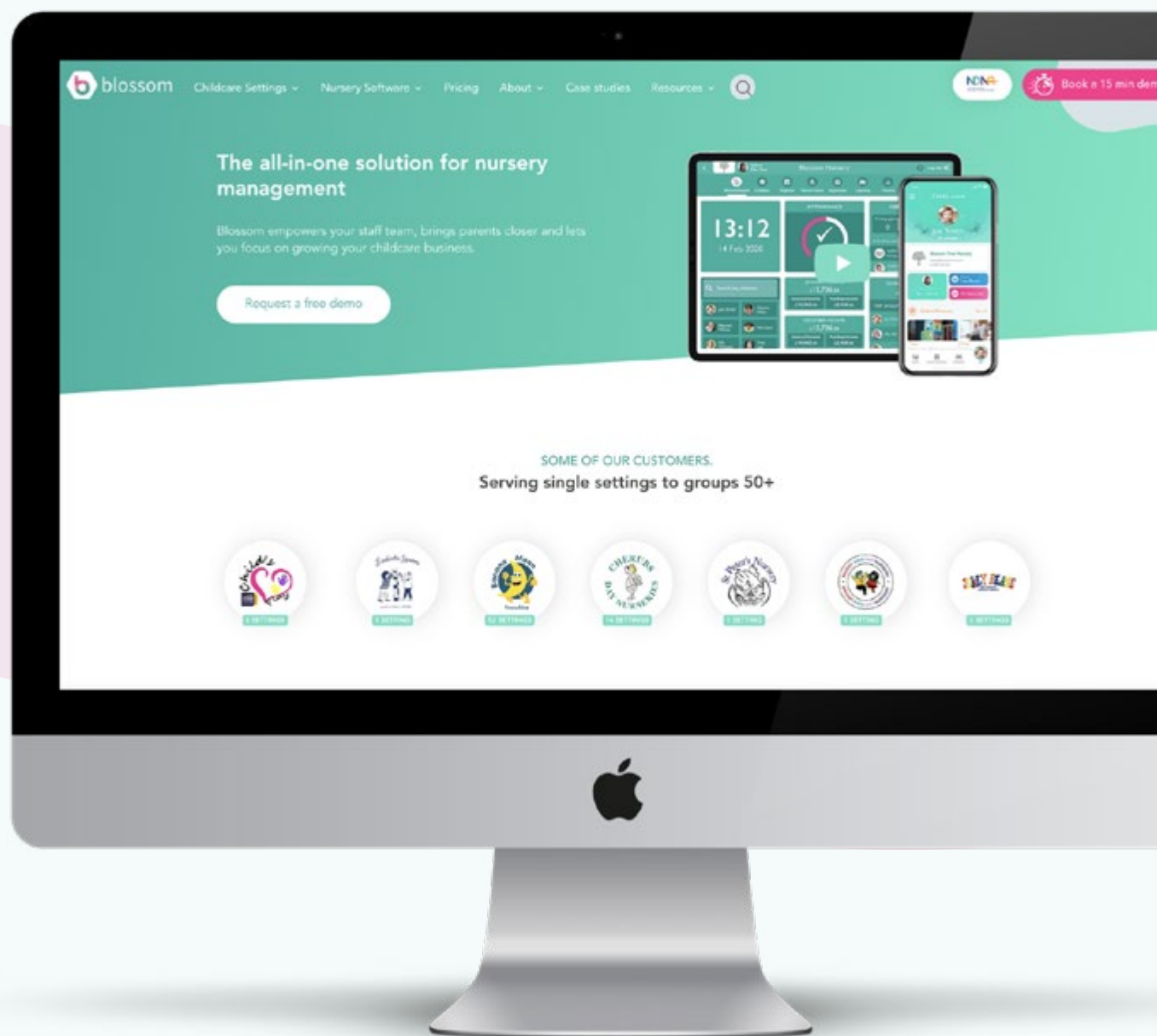




## Do you have an effective website?

It's well known that websites are the digital front office for any business and this applies to your nursery setting as well. With increasing generations of tech-savvy parents, chances are they would have visited your website before anything else.

★ Blossom has a beautiful, easy to navigate website. Where our message on providing outstanding nursery software is crisp and clear. Check it out!



## Basic rules for an optimised and beautiful website:



More information isn't always better. Think about how a text-heavy website is just unpleasant to look at, never mind confusing to understand.



Keep it simple. Don't over complicate the process and don't over complicate what you're trying to achieve.



Seek out expert advice. Website builders, such as Wix or GoDaddy are good for getting a website up and running quickly, but they're not good for optimisation. Which is where you'll see results.



Structure and design must be clean. How easily and natural the navigation of your site feels to visitors will be essential in boosting your conversions. If someone has to click 5 times to find what they're looking for, chances are, they'll leave after click number 2!



## Social media marketing: yay or nay?

Again when it comes to this strategy there is a variety of channels you can explore. The main idea here is not to put all your eggs in one basket. Generally, social media is not a huge place to obtain enquiries, but it is effective for brand awareness. And by posting regularly, it keeps your current parents happy as you're showcasing the incredible happenings of your nursery.

So if you think back to your main aim, if it is brand awareness, then social media should absolutely be a strategy to explore. But if you're aiming to get more enquiries, you should focus on your website, optimisation, and paid ads to then get more people on your site.

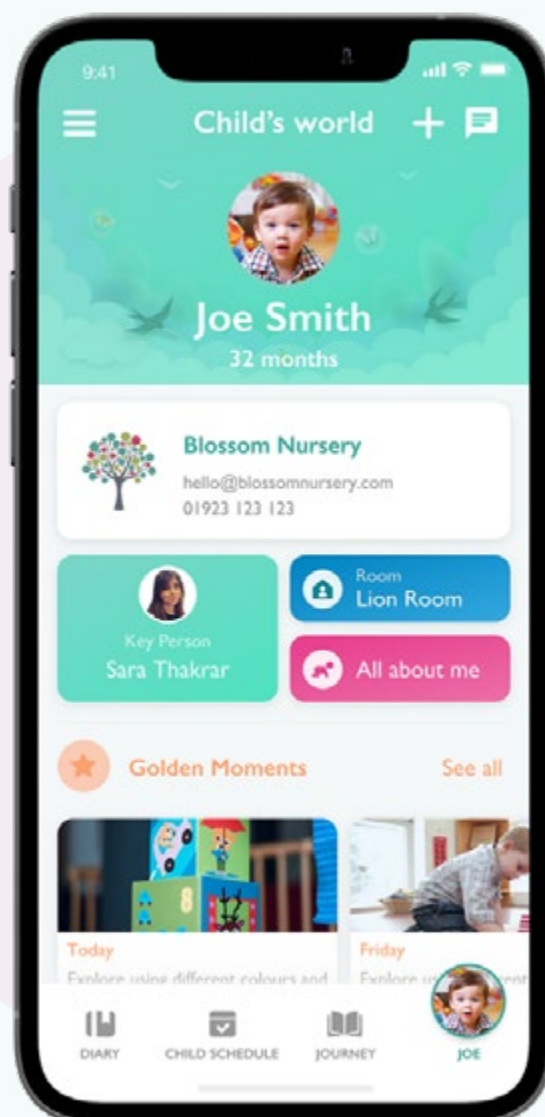


★ “As an organic channel, Google is your number one most-effective marketing strategy. At Childcare Marketing, we see about 80% of enquiries come from Google. In comparison to only around 5% that actually come from social media channels. This, of course, will differ if you’re implementing paid social media ads.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



Social media post idea: Share what nursery software you use at your setting to get more prospective parents to sign up. Parents love our digital diary where they receive heart-warming, regular updates of their child at nursery.



## Don't be off-put by confusing marketing jargon

Just because there is a variety of colourful marketing jargon out there today, doesn't mean you should avoid nursery marketing altogether. It's important that you have some marketing knowledge and understanding of the strategies you aim to use.

But by having a solid marketing plan in place, and then following this plan, you may be surprised to learn that you don't need to use a lot of the marketing jargon that we see. Unless, you are implementing a strategy that requires further support.

Paid advertising, for example, would be a struggle to set up and carry out successfully without having that industry knowledge. So always seek advice before jumping into anything- especially something that may lose you money.



Alternatively you would need to take the time to learn, and take it step by step. Instead of making a risky move and diving straight into everything, there are numerous, free online learning channels available where you can become familiar with these terms.

Plus there are incredible companies and marketing experts that already have that knowledge who can then support you and your goals.

★ “Most providers that come to us have tried it themselves and not been very successful – even after spending thousands of pounds. This is where expert advice helps support you to turn that around, and get results.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



## Has print marketing become redundant in our modern world?

With any marketing strategy, you've got to be effective with what you're doing and ensure it's valuable. In print media, it's tricky because in some areas, yes it does work, but it's also very untargeted and difficult to judge a measurable response to it.

Ask yourself: Am I measuring the success of my marketing?

★ "You've got to be able to track and measure the success of everything you do. If you're not tracking and measuring that success, the problem is you won't know what's effective for your business. And at the end of the day you won't be able to determine any return on investment."

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



## Measure, measure, then measure some more

You should be measuring your strategies all the time. Otherwise, how will you know what's working and what's not? Where you should allocate more budget to, and where you should stop? You should be able to draw the statistics of your strategies immediately, in order to determine how successful that campaign is being at that moment in time.

At Blossom, we know the importance of data and tracking your setting's progress. Our variety of reports available from FTE reports to key worker reports and more, helps take your nursery to the next level.

★ “As a nursery owner or manager, it's similar with resources. Is spending an extra £100 on a different brand of nappies improving client satisfaction? If not, then going back to the previous, cheaper brand would most likely be the call of action. It's the same with nursery marketing.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*





Furthermore, when it comes to signage and permanent structure, make sure that your brand awareness locally is as powerful as possible. When you start to explore more ad-hoc marketing strategies like flyers, before doing any campaign take into consideration:



How much time is this going to take?



How much is this going to cost?

It's also about the *how*. You may find you gain more success with flyers by placing them in local paediatric surgeries, as opposed to putting them through letter boxes, for example. It really depends on how you implement that method rather than the method itself.

★ “Flyering is not becoming redundant for nurseries. But it also is in terms of putting them through letter boxes, because of the time and effort that takes versus a paid ad. It’s a no brainer. But in terms of the placement, for example, village halls and paediatric surgeries, that’s where the opportunity really is.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



## Should I use an external marketing agency for my setting?

The advantages of choosing to use an external agency centre around having a team of people focusing on every element of your marketing. And a team who are experts in what they're doing. If you were to hire internally, there are immediate constraints that this one person is unlikely to be an expert in everything. And you might find that paying for a full time employee may even cost more than hiring an external team of specialists.

If you are an individual nursery, or a small nursery group, you may be asking: "Is this viable for me?"

For a small nursery owner, it's going to come down to cost. And it is likely to be more cost effective to outsource, while also getting a team of qualified experts.



For large groups, again it comes down to the skillset. You would have to make multiple full-time hires of employees to match what hiring an agency would provide. Not only this, you may also find that, by handing over your marketing efforts to a team of external professionals, stress and pressure on your leadership team will be reduced.

At the end of the day, hiring people to carry out your marketing efforts is obviously going to cost money—whichever route you decide to choose. But it's all about that return on investment of this money spent. And with an agency, it's easier to determine whether or not you are indeed getting a return on your investment.

For example, if you hired the agency to increase your enquiries and since hiring them your enquiries have actually increased, you can know it's working. If not, then you can quite easily cut the agency. Whereas if you've hired an internal employee, who isn't yielding results, it will be more demanding to go through the route of termination of employment in terms of recruitment policies and employment law.



## Budgeting: How much should you spend to see results?

When it comes down to budget, there are a few factors to consider. But it comes down to: *What do I need to achieve for my business, and how can I make sure that I'm achieving it with a return on investment?*

As a nursery owner or manager, the more you are able to spend, the more you increase your opportunities for results. However, it obviously depends on what your internal goals are and what else you need to achieve in order to be successful.

If you spend 90% of your budget on marketing to get more enquiries, for example, and you don't have any staff to then take care of these children, that quite obviously will be detrimental to your business and brand.



★ “By going back to what you set your current and 12 month goals as, this will help guide you to devise a marketing plan, and ultimately a marketing budget. As an example, a provider could spend anywhere between £500 to £2,000 p/m, depending on what their goals were. So it’s a really big range.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



It is important to realise that a marketing strategy will almost never work in isolation. Meaning, if you had a brilliant paid Google ad strategy, for example, but that ad then directs you to click on your website. And your website is messy, or the booking page doesn’t work- you won’t yield the results you aimed for.

★ “The key thing needs to be on, not necessarily being too focused on budgets, but instead, on every single element of the foundations of your marketing. And then you can start thinking about: if I spend £20 on paid ads, how many enquiries am I going to get and how many registrations will that achieve for me?”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



## Common mistakes nurseries make when it comes to marketing

We've already highlighted 2 common mistakes nurseries make when it comes to marketing:

- 1 Not starting with a solid foundation,
- 2 Diving straight in without research or expert advice,
- 3 But there is a third: not showing how you're different.

★ “The most common mistake we see nurseries make with their marketing is failing to differentiate themselves enough. As an example, the nursery down your road creates a new website. And you then react by also implementing a new website. You could have a really good ethos and aim, but now your website is appalling because you've gone and copied someone else's. Instead, you should be thinking internally about what makes you different.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*





## Let the journey begin!

Blossom's nursery software loves to talk about how different we are. Our customer service, features offered, and being created by Outstanding nurseries ourselves- we set ourselves apart from the sector. [Check us out!](#)

★ “Be different! Do what you need to do to get success. Don't stray away from that target. Think of it like you're running a race, if you start to look at other people, you're going to slow down. Focus on your message and your aims, and you're likely to win the race.”

*Ben Rolfe, Founder of Childcare Marketing.*



What makes your nursery different?