

# Over 50 ways to market a doula business

[www.LeannaMae.org](http://www.LeannaMae.org)

Finding clients, getting hired, and having a steady business is one of the biggest challenges for doulas, new and seasoned. I want doulas to succeed. I want every city and every small town to have access to several doulas. I want this community of birthworkers to thrive. I truly do. That's why I'm sharing this with you. This list is everything I know of to promote doula services. If you have anything to add to it that you'd like to contribute to readers, please contact me via my website [www.LeannaMae.org](http://www.LeannaMae.org) and I will update this PDF.

Let's break this down into 5 areas.

- ❖ Exposure: letting people know you and your services exist
- ❖ Engagement: talking to people about what you do
- ❖ Connection: getting hired
- ❖ Reviews and recommendations
- ❖ Networking with other birth workers

Considering that marketing can be quite expensive, there are money required rankings at the beginning of each marketing method.

(\$) - free

(\$\$) - low cost

(\$\$\$) - it's going to take some money

(\$\$\$\$) - expect at least \$100 investment

There is space below each category for you to write out any other ideas you have to promote your services.

## Exposure

*letting people know you and your services exist*

People need to know that you offer services. Put your name out there. Help people understand what a doula is. Make it as easy as possible for people to find your information.

- ❖ (\$\$) A website is a must. No business looks professional without a website. This is your face to the world before someone meets you in person. Your website represents you. Put some effort into it. It needs all the necessary information including a way to contact you. Blog: What should you have on your doula website? @ <http://www.leannamae.org/the-scroll/what-should-you-have-on-your-doula-website>
- ❖ (\$) Blog – This is a good way to draw attention to your website, show the world that you’ve got some knowledge on you, and get a few shares on social media.
- ❖ (\$) Social media is a necessary part of marketing any business in the modern world. Posting about your services on Facebook is not enough on its own to generate steady business, but you may get a few clients this way. Every little bit helps. Most of all, your social media makes your business look legitimate to those who don’t know you, allows people to see Facebook reviews, and gives people a vibe of your personality as a potential support person to bring into their birth.
  - ◆ Tip: Consider separating your personal social media from your professional. Keep your personal profile private or keep in mind that people may be searching for you on Facebook to judge how professional you are.
  - ◆ Facebook ~ It’s pretty necessary.
    - Have a Facebook page for your business and keep it active. Tip: You can like other pages as your page. Then your page will have its own news feed. It’s a quick and easy way to find content to post on your page.
    - Promotional images are needed. Pictures get shared more than posts that are only words. Post pictures related to pregnancy, birth, having babies, etc... Also post business flyers, pictures of you working (with client’s permission), or pictures of you with a little bit about you/what you do as a doula.
    - Infographics get shared quickly.
    - Memes and funny pictures are shared often.

- Tip: Put your website on any image that you make. It will direct people to your site and give proper credit if someone copies a picture. You can also put your name and titles (doula, lactation specialist) near your website.
- Join Facebook groups for local communities and especially local parents. If there are any birth or baby related groups in your service area, join them.
- Running a Facebook group for expectant moms and parents of babies in your service area is a good way to get your name out there.
- Contests and giveaways are wildly popular on Facebook. That's sure to grow your page and increase your exposure.
- ◆ Instagram is also very popular. Post your promotional images, pictures of you working, infographics, etc.... You can also do giveaways on Instagram. If you use this platform, utilize hashtags to grow your following.
- ◆ YouTube is an excellent way to get exposure. Make videos about what doulas do or answering frequently asked questions. Show the behind the scenes of what you do during a birth.
- ◆ Podcasts are popular as well.
- ❖ (\$\$) Get business cards.
  - ◆ Give some out to family and friends who you know will share them.
  - ◆ Tack them up on community message boards.
  - ◆ Are there any maternity stores or baby boutiques in your area? They may be willing to let you leave business cards.
  - ◆ Local pregnancy resource centers (pro-life centers) may allow doulas who share their values to leave their business cards.
  - ◆ OB offices and midwives may be willing to have your cards out. Meet them first.
  - ◆ Bring business cards with you when you attend births.
  - ◆ Are there any cafes or community places in your service area that allow people to leave business cards? Stop by.
- ❖ (\$\$) List yourself on doula directories.
- ❖ (\$) Add your business on google maps.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) You can run ads on several different social media platforms.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) You can buy ad space on popular websites or in their emails.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) Good old fashioned advertisements in local papers, magazines, and any products for moms may help increase your exposure.

- ❖ (\$\$) Send letters in the mail to local childbirth educators, midwives, OB offices, birthing centers, and hospital labor and delivery units. Get your name out there as a doula. Some places may allow you to drop off business cards.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) Bring gift baskets to local maternity units with some candy for the staff. Drop a few business cards in there. Introduce yourself.
- ❖ (\$\$\$\$) During nurses week send some gifts to your local hospital's maternity unit as a thank you from the doula.
- ❖ (\$\$) You can also reach out to local pregnancy resource centers, shelters, rehabs, etc... and let them know about your services. Some may not have the budget for a doula, but there are a lot of people who use community resources who do have the money to hire a doula.
- ❖ (\$\$\$\$) Attend rallies and events for maternal-infant health care.
- ❖ (\$) If you are a mom, attend parenting events.
- ❖ (\$) If you have young kids, play groups and mommy meet-ups are a good way to meet people.
  - ◆ Pregnancy and birth support groups
  - ◆ Breastfeeding support groups
  - ◆ Baby related groups for specific things such as babywearing or cloth diapering
  - ◆ Play groups for families with young kids
  - ◆ Your church may have fellowship groups or small groups. If not, maybe you could start a small group meeting at church for families having a baby.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) Wear promotional items such as a t-shirt that says "doula" or a tote bag.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) Use your car to advertise your business with car magnets and static clings.
- ❖ (\$\$) When you do events, have them listed in the newspaper and any local websites that list events in your area.
- ❖ (\$\$) Sometimes parents will invite their doula to their baby shower. Come wearing your doula shirt with business cards in tow.

## Engagement

*talking to people about what you do*

Okay, so people know you're a doula. Now how do you actually talk to people about it? Engage people in conversations about birth and what doulas do.

❖ Communication tips:

- ◆ Be confident! Know your value. Own it. You are a birthworker. You are a professional. You have a business. Be confident in who you are, what you do, what you have to offer, and the prices that you've set it at. Nobody wants to hire someone who is a nervous wreck that seems unsure of what to do and is apologetic about their prices.
- ◆ Keep the focus on the potential client and their experience. Talk about them. Worries? Fears? Joys? Listen. Validate. Let them be heard. Make an emotional connection.
- ◆ Explain what doula services include, gently clarify any confusion, and maybe give them a short demonstration of 2 or 3 support techniques. Don't give away much info for free. You need them to need to hire you for your knowledge and skills.
- ◆ Don't info dump. I know we are birth nerds and we can talk about all things birthy all day long. Some folks can be overwhelmed by our passion for this topic.
- ◆ Save the rants for another day. I know. I know. Evidence based practices and obstetrics are a hot topic for you. The day you meet a pregnant woman is not the day to go on a passionate rant about 'the system'.
- ◆ Never be negative about their birth choices, chosen doctor or midwife, or chosen birth location. You want to give them the feeling that you are there to support them and educate them on their options, not correct their choices.
- ◆ It's okay to set boundaries with how much time you spend answering questions, how much you're willing to help someone before hire, how much you share about you and your personal birth experiences (not all doulas have kids and not all that do had an empowering, natural birth), and who you are interested in taking as a client.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) Host a meet the doula event.
- ❖ (\$\$\$) Host a fundraiser for something baby related and make sure people know it's also a welcome avenue to meet and greet the doula. For

example, throw a community baby shower to donate baby items to a local crisis pregnancy center or charity.

- ❖ (\$\$) Do a doula reunion every 2 or 3 years. Invite all your former doula clients to get together. Have a picnic at the park. Engage in conversation with former clients. They may have another little one on the way or know someone who does.
- ❖ (\$\$) Be a speaker at local childbirth classes explaining what doulas do.
- ❖ (\$\$) Give a presentation in your community about the career field of doulas and birth work.
- ❖ (\$\$\$\$) Set up as a vendor at baby fairs and any vendor event where there will be a lot of families. Have an information table with activities or games. Here are some ideas.
  - ◆ Baby fairs
  - ◆ Homeschooling expos
  - ◆ Farmer's markets
  - ◆ Festivals
  - ◆ County fairs
  - ◆ Small town parades
  - ◆ Christmas bazaars
  - ◆ Church events
  - ◆ Crafting events
  - ◆ Flea markets
  - ◆ Community yard sales
- ❖ Offer multiple services related to birth work. If you teach childbirth education classes, you are already engaging your students. Make sure they know you're available for doula services too. Many doulas are also trained in lactation support. What can you add to your birth work services?
- ❖ List out areas, events, and activities that often have a lot of young families. How can you engage them?
- ❖ Identify your target audience. Create a plan of how to connect with them.
- ❖ Meet new people. Make small talk. Be friendly. Go places and do things. I'm talking to you my fellow introverts. You've got to engage with people if you are going to offer services to people.

## **Connection** *getting hired*

- ❖ **(\$\$)** Offer a free consultation at no obligation.
- ❖ Be prepared. Have an answer to frequently asked questions from parents to doula during an interview.
- ❖ During your consultation, also interview the parents and show an interest in customizing your care to fit their needs. Demonstrate some of the ways that you can care for them.
- ❖ Be authentic. Be the genuine you. If you're a good fit, great. If it doesn't work out, that could lead to something better.
- ❖ Be confident in your work and what you have to offer. Nobody wants to hire someone that seems desperate for clients.
- ❖ **(\$\$)** Have a welcome folder to give to new clients.
- ❖ Mention resources for your clients. Do you have anything such as handouts that you reserve exclusively for clients?
- ❖ Your fees are your fees. There are people who can afford you and people who cannot. You may be interested in offering fees on a sliding scale to those who qualify. You may also want to offer discounts to select people such as repeat clients, active military families, crisis pregnancies, etc.... Or you may prefer to have set fees that are equal for everyone. Do what you need to do to sustain your business and meet your household's financial needs. Doulas deserve a living wage.
- ❖ Instead of doing a holiday discount, you can offer a holiday gift. Looking for a doula? Hire for Mother's Day (with date range specified) and enter to win a gift card for a massage or this gift basket, etc... This encourages people to sign that contract now.
- ❖ If you have their email address, send a follow up email a few days later.
- ❖ **(\$\$\$\$)** Add to your credentials and trainings. Clients are often more interested in hiring someone who has more education.

## Reviews and recommendations

Word of mouth is by far the most influential marketing tool. Are people recommending you? How do you get people to recommend you???

- ❖ Getting recommended by current and recent clients:
  - ◆ (\$\$) Give clients a feedback form to email to you at their convenience.
  - ◆ (\$\$) At the closure of your services, give them a sheet with ways they can leave a review. They can add some stars to your social media page for your doula services. They can write a short review for your website possibly with a photo of the baby or family. They can do a guest blog on your website if they like to write. Video testimonials are also an option.
  - ◆ (\$\$) Give clients a magnet for their fridge so they'll have your information in easy access when they want to recommend it.
  - ◆ (\$\$) Send thank you cards to your clients after services have ended.
  - ◆ (\$\$) Send a yearly Christmas card to all your clients.
- ❖ Options for people who are not clients:
  - ◆ We all hope our family and friends share our small businesses and recommend us to everyone they know. Let them know a few ways they can do this. Of course, talking to people in person or over the phone is a great way to recommend a local business. Social media is an excellent way they can help you out.
  - ◆ Offer a referral bonus. For example, \$25 goes to the person who referred a client after that client signs the contract.

## **Networking with other birth workers**

- ❖ **(\$\$)** Meet up with local doulas and childbirth educators. Go out for coffee. Get involved with the community of birth workers in your service area.
- ❖ Find your tribe. We each have our own unique way of doing things and our own philosophies. Find doulas and other birth workers who have similar values and perspectives.
- ❖ Refer to each other when your month is full or a client would be better suited for a different doula.
- ❖ If you are a birth doula, get to know some postpartum doulas. You can refer to each other.
- ❖ If you have birth photographers in your area, perhaps you can refer to each other. The photographer doesn't have to specialize in birth. They could specialize in maternity or newborn photos.
- ❖ Join organizations for birth professionals.
- ❖ Attend continuing education workshops and seminars. You never know who you'll meet. It's always nice to meet people who have a similar passion.

You certainly don't have to do all of these things. Pick the things in your current budget that you want to try. Create a marketing plan. List out what you want to do this season (example, promotion plans for spring of 2019). Take action. Don't give up. You are needed. It's hard to get your business flowing steady and it's even harder getting your foot in the door, but keep walking this path. Doors will open. Opportunities will come your way.

Make your plan.

Put it into action.

Go doula.

Be amazing.

Be confident.

Be determined.

Now get out there, make connections, and work your dream job.