
EXPLODE YOUR BRAND

**Using Digital to Lead Your
Industry**

by Dave MacKenzie

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The Beginner's Guide into the Digital Marketing Revolution

Marketing is necessary for businesses to sell and promote their products or services successfully. Today's marketing strategies differ due to various company goals. However, it's essential to focus on your customers and the best places where you can find them. These days, the most common places people visit are social media networks, websites, blogs, and search engines. That's why you need to develop your digital marketing strategy and, in the process, revolutionize your business.

Even though we're living in a digital era, some companies stick their head in the sand and do their best to avoid any type of change. They sabotage all their years of hard work and risk losing their loyal customers.

*If you're not growing your online presence, you're
going out of business.*

Digital marketing can encompass a variety of phrases, concepts, techniques, and strategies. It can be intimidating, but you don't have to be a genius to make it work for you.

To get started in this adventure, we're going to cover the contents of digital marketing. To be successful, you need to understand its heart, mindset, automation, the myriad of possibilities, outsourcing, how to match offline and online strategies, and self-publishing.

In this chapter, we'll define and share insights on the roadmap of digital marketing:

- Losing the Doubt
- Think Like an Online Guru
- Partner Online & Offline Marketing
- The Benefits of Online Marketing
- How to Delegate Effectively
- Action Plan
- The Six Interconnected Steps to Digital Marketing Success
- Goals & Expectations
- Understanding Your Initial Results
- Reasonable Income Expectations
- Specific Strategies for Success

Losing the Doubt

Before you can even implement your digital strategy, you need to have the confidence to pull it off. Online marketing allows you to customize your strategy for a better outcome. You may feel like you just don't have the skills or knowledge to pull it off, but they can be learned and applied, and they'll be provided to you throughout this book.

What you need to remember is the fact that your customers use the Internet and if you aren't present there, they are going to go to your competition. This applies regardless of your industry, business, or specialty area.

Think Like an Online Guru

Before you can find success as an online marketer, you need to learn how to think and feel like one. Once you do, you will find the process much more natural. You don't need to reinvent the wheel.

The same principles of offline marketing apply to online marketing. You need to pinpoint your target markets and get to know them. You need to understand their interests, needs, and what motivates them to purchase your product. When you find out these details, you can create an offer they are most likely going to accept and purchase.

One of the most significant areas I'll talk about is how people use most of their time on search engines to find the solution to their problem. When you've been searching for something, you've probably noticed the different types of results, the ones that say "sponsored" and the ones that always pop up on top. It is done through a variety of strategies that I'll explain later.

While search engines are great for finding specific information, people are using social networks to find out the best places to visit and delicious food to taste. You can easily use social networking tools to build a group of followers and a niche community. Word spreads when you do this and soon

you will have new customers signing up for your newsletters and visiting your website.

Partner Online and Offline Marketing

No matter how comfortable you get with online marketing, don't toss offline marketing tools aside. To maximize exposure to your target market, you need to be engaged in both. You can use them together to promote the same product or service and double your response. Here are some easy ways you can pair them together for a great response:

- Social networking event to invite customers to a grand opening
- PPC (Pay Per Click) ad to test an ad or headline before shelling out the dough for a print ad
- A print ad that drives people to your website for an online-only deal

This list consists of ideas for the offline/online partnerships you can create. Online marketing means adding to your revenue. There are three basic ways to make money online:

- Sell a service or product (or a combination of both)
- Promote the products and services of other people and earning a commission (affiliate sales)
- Get paid for your web traffic

If you're new to the world of digital marketing, you may only feel comfortable with the first method of making money online; however, the other two can bring outstanding results. Affiliate marketing and different marketing strategies will be

covered in-depth in later chapters to help you learn how to maximize these tactics.

The Benefits of Digital Marketing

Benefit #1: Automated Results

One of the most attractive things about digital marketing is that once you have something in place, you can let it run by itself. With that said, you do need to continue to test it for the best results as well as keep new offers available to draw in new customers. Many small business owners have the misconception that they can only work with customers in person and, sometimes, over the phone. This simply isn't true. With the constant growth of the online consumer world, consumers feel very comfortable working with professionals via email or a social media network.

If you are a service-based business, you can operate a significant portion of your business online. Even a product-based company can take orders, generate new leads, and offer customer service online while still building personal customer relationships. Online marketing and selling also allow you to expand your business. If you can ship your product, the opportunities are unlimited.

The key automated strategies can be used through automatic lead generation. To do this, you have to set up a simple website specifically for the reason of qualifying leads. Let's use chiropractic services as an example. Your website would offer a special offer, such as 25% off your first visit. This

offer is surrounded by a process where they plug in their email and other information to prequalify them. Also, utilize questions like:

- Are you currently experiencing pain?
- How long have you been experiencing this pain?
- Where is your pain located?

Expand these questions and you'll know more about the clients before they even show up for their appointment. Once you receive a submission through your site, review the answers to the questions, and make a list of products and services to recommend. Call the qualified lead with all the information you have and arrange an appointment to fit their needs. Use an upsell approach and you will have a client who will stay with you for a long time. This makes the cost of acquiring new clients smaller and the return on that investment even better.

Benefit #2: Self E-Publishing

The reality of the online world is that the content is most important. When you have quality content, you have the opportunity to make money off of your knowledge alone. You'll learn more in the next chapters about content and how its optimization can bring in more customers, sales, and free advertising.

Publishing your knowledge and content can be done in a variety of ways, including blogs, article submission sites, social media outlets, newsletters, and e-books, or information products. A blog is one of the best ways to start this process. You can post daily or three times a week. Regardless of how

often you publish, you need to offer insightful, exciting content. This insight can come in the form of articles, tips and tricks, or small business operations advice.

Keeping on with the chiropractic business, a great series of blog posts could be about different types of pain and the potential damage. Here are some examples:

- Chiropractic Services for Deep Knee Pain
- Can a Chiropractor Help My Pregnancy Pain?
- Is Chiropractic Care Safe During Pregnancy?
- Can I Just Ignore Pelvic Pain?

These types of pain are all questions or topics of interest for your target market. You can likely answer these questions in your sleep and only spend a short amount of time blogging about them. Each post should have a positive opinion of your industry and services. You can work a small area into the end of the blog post about how you have helped clients find relief from the specific problem you're addressing. You can also offer a deal for new clients with the concerns you address in the post.

This e-publishing approach helps you build trust with potential clients, current clients, potential business networking opportunities, and future clients. You have the chance to prove you're an expert in your field and show clients you care about their needs. You can expand your knowledge into a full e-book or special report to sell or offer it as a free bonus for a higher valued package.

After you have an established website and have started some lead generation, you can venture into the world of e-publishing and you will have a pre-set customer base. An

online course is also a great way to share your knowledge without feeling the pressure to write a book. It is a great way to get the attention of other small business owners. You can gear separate products toward each group and benefit from both target markets.

For an example of how to pull in other small business owners and share your knowledge with them, you can put together an e-book and simple course. The e-book can be independently priced at \$35. You start by driving traffic to the sales page of the e-book. When customers purchase the e-book, you redirect them to a thank you page where they are offered the course at a great price of \$499 (or price it monthly). You offer them weekly e-lessons delivered to their inbox with information and resources they can use to improve their small business. You only have to put together these documents and programs once, but they will continue to make you money for a long time.

How to Delegate Effectively

If the thought of sitting down and writing courses and e-books feels overwhelming, delegate or outsource the tasks. Find a writer with experience writing this style of information products and work with him to gain your desired results. Not only do you save your time and sanity, but for a reasonable price, you have your project done and for sale much faster.

In-House online marketing delegation can be vital to your success. If you have employees who are familiar with the areas of online marketing that you want to use to grow your business,

put them to work. Work with your team to take advantage of the skills everyone has to offer for the best results. Your employees will appreciate being included in the process and you (and they) will find more value in their place in the company.

Figure out what part of the online marketing you do best or most enjoy and find ways to delegate the rest. When considering outsourcing, ensure you're getting the most bang for your buck. This may mean shopping around for a digital marketing agency that also has experience in SEO and web optimization.

Action Plan

Set Some Goals: It's time to sit down with a pen and paper and set some goals. Goal setting can be as easy as building a website to as complex as building a 5,000 subscriber database and selling 100 e-products in the next month. Regardless of your goals, you need to write them down and see them visually before you can accomplish them.

Start Writing: Since you know you'll be writing regularly, it's a good idea to get into the habit of writing every week. This can be a purge of ideas into a spiral-bound book or a well-written blog post. Take this time to explore your strengths as a business owner, as well as your business, products, services, and industry. All of these ideas can later be looked at for potential information products and blog posts.

Create a List of Resources: It's essential to have a playbook of resources to look at and reference when needed. These lists should involve:

- Employees you can delegate to with their skill listed
- People who can provide services to you
- Recommendations from colleagues and others

Know Your Competition: You need to know your competition and know what works and doesn't work for them. This is essential. You want to be competitive, but you also want to be committed to your own set of values. A quick Google search of your competition can tell you a lot about them, including their customer reviews. Figure out what online marketing techniques are working for them. These strategies may work out for you too.

The Six Interconnected Steps to Digital Marketing Success

Before you can even venture into the digital marketing world, there are six essential steps you need for success. Once you complete them, you are ready to create a plan of action for digital marketing success and see the results happen without worrying about backtracking later in the process.

1. Define Your Target Market

Ideally, you will have already completed this **task**. Knowing your target market is essential to saving you time and money in your marketing process. To help define who exactly your

target market is, you need to take a look at who your past customers are, the area around your business, and the digital marketing possibilities for this market.

Once you have a list of who your current customers are, you can think of the reason why they are your customers. These reasons and the attributes of these customers will show you a target market and how to approach it.

2. Write it Down

Take a few moments to write a paragraph or two about who you will be targeting with your digital marketing. Write down which emotional buying behavior triggers them to make a purchase. Also, conduct research and find out what consumers need and expect from your brand. This way, you can focus on the interests and needs of your customers.

3. Identify Value Proposition

Why do your customers choose your business for the services you provide? This is an important question to answer! You need to know what makes you unique from your competition. Is it the services you offer? Your products? If you have a hard time identifying these factors, ask several customers. Offer a gift card for a brief five-minute survey and you'll have the answers you need to identify what is working and what isn't.

4. Create Key Messages

Your key messages are the messages you convey when you put together a marketing strategy, online or offline. To put together your key messages, you need to make a list of the benefits you offer that your competitors do not. You can make this list with the information you already have and add in further research from your competitive landscape. Once you have this information, you will be able to use it to build your strategies in PPC (Pay Per Click), your blog, or other avenues of digital marketing.

5. Scope Out the Competition

The more you know about your competition, the more you can put together a better marketing plan. The most obvious list includes what your competitors offer for services and products. You also need to know:

- Where they advertise?
- What are their strengths?
- What are their weaknesses?
- How do you stack up against them?
- In what ways do they market that you should?
- In what areas do they lack that you could ethically take advantage of?

You may also take a look at the advertising platforms they use and in some cases, and with the right software, even see the details of their advertising campaigns the results they produce. Make a note of these resources to check them out later.

6. Check Out Your Digital Market

Research can feel like a lot of work. Still, it's essential to understand better marketing opportunities, your competitors, and how you need to put together a successful digital marketing campaign.

Use search engines with keywords for your business and observe the results. One great way to do this is to use the Google Keyword Tool and generate a list of keywords (with their usage numbers) to find what keywords are the most effective. This way, you'll get information about the most popular search terms around the topic and how other businesses use them. Keywords are invaluable when putting together a digital marketing campaign.

Goals & Expectations

Dreams are great, but expectations and realistic goals are even better. It can be easy to get ahead of yourself with a new marketing plan by aiming for the stars in a short time on a tight budget. Start with a specific set of goals you want to accomplish during your first phase:

- Announce a new product, service, team member, or location
- Bring in new customers
- Show current customers more support
- Become the local leader in the products and services you offer
- Improve company image and branding while becoming more visible

You don't have to rest on one goal; you can bundle goals as long as you don't advertise too many areas of your business at once. Overwhelming information can be too confusing to your target market and customers.

Understanding Your Initial Results

Once you have goals and reasonable expectations, it's essential to understand what's going to happen when you start seeing results. You need to plan for customer growth so you can confidently handle the new customer load. By this time you'll be fully aware of the benefits of digital marketing and you'll free up the time to manage the growth that will happen to your business.

Digital marketing means:

- Less hands-on management and more automated marketing
- Fluidity in your advertising means you can start and stop campaigns when you need to
- Hands-on involvements mean you know what's going on and can make changes as needed
- Boosted ROI's compared to offline advertising attempts
- Less cost than traditional marketing methods

Reasonable Income Expectations

We've talked about setting reasonable expectations for accomplishing your goals and how to adjust those goals as they

change. Let's also take a minute to talk about the financial expectations of running a digital marketing campaign. If you set a goal of increasing your sales by 100% and you've gone ahead and leased that new sports car you've always wanted, you may be setting yourself up for a disappointment.

Keep your goals in line with your experience, plan, and expectations to come out successful every time.

Specific Strategies for Success

When you're ready to embark on your digital marketing adventure, you will need to know some key strategies to find success. These strategies will help you realize your goals and meet them without wasting time and money.

Lead Generation

Lead generation is the process of identifying potential customers (leads) through marketing efforts or referral programs. This is a great strategy to use in digital marketing because you can often see faster results than in traditional marketing. There are a few things you need to consider before launching into lead generation.

- What are you willing to spend per lead to acquire them?
- What products or services do you want to pitch to your leads?
- What regional area do you want to target first?
- How will you control lead costs by controlling the number of leads per month?

- How will you ensure that you only pay for qualified leads to utilize lead generation intelligently?

Basic lead generation can be anything from a referral program to a digital ad or a social media pitch. Lead generation uses the same tactics as other forms of marketing. Set a budget and always test and measure your methods. You've found success when your campaign moves from merely generating leads to converting those leads to loyal shoppers. This way, you know you have a winning strategy.

Lead Capture: What do you do once you capture a lead?

This is the stage when your lead is generated, but before you make the sale. In digital marketing, this is after you've received a notice your ad was clicked on, but before you've made a sale.

You can capture leads through a landing page, via phone, or your official company website. If you are working to achieve a high volume of leads or you don't want the leads to go through your company site, it may be a good idea to use a landing page. A landing page is exclusively designed to bring in new leads for the specific products or services you're promoting. You will need to have sales copy that highlights the benefits and how your product or service meets the needs of your clients. The text should be written from an emotional angle that invokes the reader to click for more information.

Once you have the new leads' contact information, it's time to contact them and convert them into buying customers. Once you gain the trust of your leads, you need to ensure you treat

them with respect and maintain that trust throughout the entire buying process.

Lead Nurturing

Lead nurturing is the process of building a relationship with your new lead. This relationship will determine whether you convert them to a buying customer or scare them away. If a lead walks away with a wrong impression of you, you can be assured they will tell everyone they know. This jeopardizes future leads.

Some leads are ready to buy and make quick decisions on the spot. Others need an extra push to help them feel comfortable in the buying process. The most frequent cases where this occurs are:

- With big-ticket items or services
- When repeat business is a large factor
- When your list is growing too fast to manage

All of these areas may require a bit more finesse than ready-to-buy customers. You want to give all your customers a positive experience to get them back again and to encourage positive reviews. You can put together a simple lead nurturing program that is consistent and works. Use the same formula with each lead and you will have new customers who love coming back again and again. For example:

Day 1: The day the lead first opts into your landing page.

Day 1: You send a welcome email to your lead.

Day 4: You send a recent customer success story to your lead via email.

Day 8: Send your lead (via email) an article about something interesting that connects well to a product or service you offer. This allows you to showcase your product without actually mentioning it or including sales copy.

Day 12: Send them a “checking in” email to ask how they're doing.

Day 15: Email them a discount on one of your products, services, or a combination offer.

Day 16: This is the day your lead calls you to make a purchase or an appointment. BAM! You have just converted your lead into a paying customer.

It may look and feel like a long period of wooing, but you can automate most of this process through the use of an autoresponder or a good tracking system, so you have reminders when you need to email someone. This timeline can be longer or shorter depending on what you are selling, the price tag involved, or the personality of the buyer.

Regardless of the period and what you're selling, nurturing is essential to increase sales, customers, and grow your business.

Put Together an Action Plan

Here's the best part of putting together an effective digital marketing plan. We can take everything we've talked about in this chapter and put it together in an action plan you can use and revise. Let's use the example with a hair salon and put together a sample action plan to help you create a better perspective.

Amanda's Hot Locks –
Beautiful Hair for Everyone

Primary Goal: To become the leading hair salon in the metro area.

Objective One: Increase current customer repeat business

- Run a contest or a deal to capture customer contact information, including name, address, and mobile number.
- Follow up with an email coupon to say thank you for entering or opting in.
- Start a monthly newsletter about styling and hair care tips.
- Come up with new ideas by offering a customer survey and implementing appropriate changes.
- Offer a discount for booking before they leave a current appointment.

Objective Two: Build a commercial contact base

- Put together a partnership plan and contact businesses around town to partner with.
 - Include partnership opportunities in the PPC campaign.
-

- Create and build a LinkedIn profile to network with other professionals in your area.

These objectives can be different for your business, but you see how defining a goal and a plan to meet that goal can keep you on track for success. Make sure to keep your goals and action plan clear. Modify as needed and live by your calendar to stay on course.

Work Within a Budget

So, what is the right amount to spend?

In the first year, it can be a bit of a hit and miss. After the first year, you'll start to see results and will be able to know where you should focus your marketing efforts to get the most out of your investments. For now, look at the strategies you intend to use (check your action plan) and think of the cost related to them.

E-newsletter: This is essentially the cost of the database/autoresponder service you have, which can be anywhere from \$10-\$50 per month, depending on the size of your database.

A Website with digital booking and payment gateway: This section of a website can get pricey when you need to bring in a web designer to handle the project and potentially manage your site.

You can set your budget in a realm that feels comfortable and you'll still get a lot of marketing power out of it. Regardless of the tactics that you're using, it's essential to set a budget and find ways to stay within that budget while still working to grow your business effectively.

In this chapter, we covered quite a bit of information, but it all works together to help you through the roadmap of an effective digital marketing campaign. Go back and reuse the information here to better define your target market, goals, and objectives as needed.

Artificial Intelligence: Advancing Small Business Through Technology

With the rapid advancement and development of artificial intelligence (AI), many small businesses, such as those in the IT and financial sectors, have realized that its use in day-to-day business can bring additional benefits to both the service user and the company.

Artificial intelligence is a technology that has an extremely high potential to influence the marketplace. Although artificial intelligence has been present in academia for over half a century, only recent technological, business, and social conditions, which have never been more favorable for the development of artificial intelligence, have influenced the mass adoption of this technology.

The human brain, at least superficially, inspires each design of artificial intelligence because it imitates the social aspect of intelligence. Even though the power of AI for small businesses is continuing to grow, some are worried about the complexity of this technology and imagine it to be something that cannot be controlled.

Artificial intelligence has existed for many years, but current technological advances have limited its application. At first, AI was too expensive and complicated for most businesses. Not every company could afford it. Today, however, artificial intelligence has also become an affordable technology for small business owners. The truth is that AI is already a part of our lives. Examples of AI are recommendations of movies and books, map websites and apps, and a smartphone voice.

People tend to trust artificial intelligence more as time passes. Industry icons such as Bill Gates and Elon Musk are closely associated with it. They also expressed their concern that AI could end the human race if used carelessly. On the other hand, we cannot say that we have reached the point where we consider AI as a threat. The goal for the development of artificial intelligence is to support the advancement of society and increase the efficiency of businesses. Small businesses can especially count on the help of AI.

Even though you are already using AI to improve your business, you perhaps do not understand all of the advantages it offers. It is not here to replace your workers; its purpose is to help your staff become more efficient. For example, artificial intelligence plays an increasingly important role in the hospitality industry, primarily because of its ability to perform human functions (such as room bookings) at any time of the day. It means that hotel owners can save significant money, eliminate human error, and potentially provide superior service. In particular, customer service is a vital part of the tourism industry as hotels build their brand based on quality customer service.

With artificial intelligence, the possibilities for enhancing this aspect are almost endless, ranging from increased personalization to personalized recommendations. For example, AI determines from your searches where you like to travel and then suggests hotels or tour packages that you might find appealing. One of the critical challenges in customer service is answering customer questions quickly, and artificial intelligence now provides an additional opportunity to solve this problem. Furthermore, AI systems can assist with tasks such as data analysis and data collection that can effectively "learn" and adapt to customer interaction.

Why is AI Important?

Artificial intelligence is becoming more and more prevalent in everyday life, from switching spreadsheets from paper to one-click Excel to automated driving. It facilitates an accelerated lifestyle. As it makes life easier in some routine tasks, businesses are implementing AI tools to produce better results. The synergy of artificial intelligence and the team of employees leads to the improvement of sales and brand recognition. People are not even aware of how much artificial intelligence is present in their lives.

Small businesses can use AI applications for a multitude of repetitive tasks. For example, in many cases, a website visitor's questions can be answered by a "bot" that can respond to various inquiries. Even startups with few customers should not delay the implementation of AI applications because they can set themselves up to handle tasks faster and more effectively.

Most of these AI applications are available to consumers too, so it would be negligent for businesses not to seize the opportunities with which they are presented. Also, they do not need to worry about the budget because most of them are free or offer a high return on investment.

Another new (but relevant) term is *Machine Learning* (ML). In the last few years, machine learning has become much more effective and widely available than ever before. Machine learning is an entirely different approach to creating and developing software. It can be used to help build client avatars or optimize engagements by preferences, times of day, or days of the week. *The machine learns from examples.* We have learned to build systems that understand how to perform tasks independently.

Whether it is about the analysis or monitoring of the preferences of consumers by tracking social media, the application of machine learning in business allows the collection of data from various sources. In the end, enterprises analyze everything, and this gives them crucial business insights. The use of artificial intelligence and machine learning enables small businesses to address the lack of skilled resources and labor.

How to Integrate AI and ML

Small businesses can take advantage of machine learning and artificial intelligence in a variety of business tasks, including product development, marketing, and customer support. Small businesses require a measured and planned

approach to enabling AI in their company. This should not be a knee-jerk reaction resulting in a rapid process and accelerated implementation.

Machine learning tools help small businesses with automation. An example of a system that can process large volumes of data is Google TensorFlow. It is especially beneficial for companies in the finance, healthcare, and manufacturing industries. TensorFlow is Google's open-source and powerful artificial intelligence software, which powers many services and initiatives from Google. The end goal is to train a computer system to detect and decipher patterns and correlations.

There are so many advantages with machine learning integrating into businesses, especially small businesses. These tools can help you track your customers' behavior online. You can track actions like online shopping history, types of online transactions, and your customers' digital footprints. Machine learning tools can customize your customer service with the capability of natural language processing.

ML will make recommendations for the relevant products for small e-commerce shops based on learning tools from customers who ordered before. These tools can also enhance security operations by monitoring users while using different security algorithms to identify viruses and potential threats. You can also improve SEO (Search Engine Optimization) with the ML tools by Google that will eventually bring you more customers and purchases.

As AI develops more and more and plays a role in business, there is a need for a redesign (i.e., upgrade) of tasks, business processes, and ultimately, business models.

Machine learning is one of the areas of low artificial intelligence because it does not understand what you say but merely associates symbols and meaning and identifies patterns. The big difference is that the computer only recognizes patterns in the data, instead of having a programmer interpret the data.

AI in E-Commerce

Selling and shopping online became part of our everyday routine. The biggest companies controlled the online market while small businesses only observed. The situation has changed considerably because now everyone has access to information about how to sell online.

Artificial intelligence is improving every day and its performance is benefiting customers and their purchasing preferences. It is making the online shopping process a lot easier and faster, which is crucial for small businesses. Sometimes it is easier to have fewer expenses at the beginning and that is entirely possible with AI.

AI is helping with product classification which improves efficiency. Customers have a preference to purchase products from businesses that use augmented reality. **Augmented Reality** is *an interactive experience that takes real-world objects and enhances them with a customized, personalized experience*. AI with augmented reality gives businesses an advantage over the competition.

It has always been a necessity to differentiate your business from that of your competitors. Many businesses sell through their online shops. You will certainly benefit and gain more

customers if you use artificial intelligence with augmented reality to let your customers experience your products.

For example, furniture businesses are using augmented reality with AI to provide their customers with a virtual sense of the particular sofa in the arrangement of a room.



Picture 1. Augmented reality with artificial intelligence for furniture businesses (Freepik, available at: <https://bit.ly/3aNnuAX>)

Logistics

An area that all small businesses need to manage is logistics. The development of artificial intelligence has led to a more precise delivery procedure without any human involvement.

The quantity of products and services depends on the amount of data because data is an essential resource in the world. AI can assist in predicting orders. Successful online retailers have detailed and accurate customer data necessary for the delivery of products.

Due to the development of artificial intelligence, customers get a more custom-made experience. AI focuses on automating

the purchase process so that businesses can save time and money.

An example of a business that implemented artificial intelligence in its logistics field is Amazon. They invented a smart speaker called Alexa which is quite simple to use. It can answer questions about shipments, packages, and other details.

Customer Service

Customer Relationship Management (CRM) collects consumer data through traditional communication channels. The main goal is to advance the purchase process. AI business models focus on consumer reviews from emails, phones, and social media, then accordingly adapt their marketing and sales activities.

With the development of artificial intelligence, the overall customer experience has changed. AI mechanized chatbots are a new way of assisting in the customer journey and the purchase process. They can manage many customers at the same time and can establish a chat with potential clients.

When you turn on chatbots, you do not need any additional workers in this field. This way, you can save time and money, which are crucial for your small business. If you compare all the advantages of AI chatbots versus the disadvantages, there is little competition.

Many online businesses that are selling their services or products have embraced chatbots. Chatbots handle questions from potential customers all day and night. They do not need a

pause or sleep mode. Small businesses achieve outstanding success because they can give customer service right away.

These chatbots appear like a popup on the website. If your business is one of those where you are not sure if you can afford to hire a customer support team, it is the right decision to start a chatbot. This way, you can handle marketing, shipments, and every other business area where your attention is crucial.

Email Marketing

If you are promoting your business in any way, you already know that one way of getting customers to learn more about your offers is via email marketing. Marketing is improving every day with artificial intelligence. Businesses are always trying to make the most out of their budget for marketing campaigns. Email marketing is one of the suitable investments for your business promotion.

You cannot deny that your inbox is full of emails that start with some type of headline that seems interesting to read. These emails are mostly coming from businesses that included artificial intelligence in their email marketing.

Many companies are using email marketing in their business strategies. However, not everybody includes artificial intelligence. If you are not currently implementing AI in your email marketing, now is the right time. It is never too late to invest in technology. Those who start seeing this opportunity earlier are going to get better results much faster.

There are several email-marketing platforms that you can consider using. One of them is MailChimp, which allows you

to connect it with your webstore. This way, you can explore the details and information about your customers. It also helps with grouping them in different categories by age, gender, location, occupation, and more. AI makes it easier for you to categorize them automatically.

Automatized email marketing campaigns are essential because each campaign can have a different target audience. For example, if you are organizing a business event in a specific city, there is no point in targeting people outside of that city. These email marketing campaigns are implemented depending on gender, age, purchase history, and many more factors.

Artificial intelligence can help you with email marketing in many other ways. For example, if a new user subscribes to your newsletters, he will automatically get a welcome email from an AI-supported platform. This way, you can promote any other activity in your business and stay in contact with your customers. If a user makes a specific click on your website, software will be triggered to respond to him. You can rest assured that email automation will not fail you ... if you set it up correctly. It can only benefit your business, especially if you are at the beginning.

Now, the more exciting thing is how to set up a successful email marketing strategy.

The Purpose of Submitting Newsletters

Before you start collecting your newsletter subscribers, you need to know why you are emailing people.

Answer these questions before you begin:

Who will read my emails?

What kind of newsletters should I send?

Sending successful emails is like a race. If you start running all of a sudden, you will probably finish the race, but if you prepare well for the race, you will probably finish with better results.

To start, set your SMART goals. SMART is an acronym (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, Time-bound), meaning that plans must be accurate, and results must be measurable and achievable.

Here are some examples of the purpose of sending emails:

- Media outlets send emails to increase traffic.
- Supermarket chains are sending emails to sell as many goods as possible and to attract customers with special offers.
- Small businesses send emails to build relationships with potential clients.
- Clothing and footwear stores send emails and include coupons and discounts with specific calls to action to drive more sales.
- Bloggers send emails to build a connection with their readers.

Of course, if you have an online store, you can combine goals; you just need to know what you want to achieve with every newsletter you submit.

You Have to Define the Target Audience.

Everyone has a different audience, and it is essential to define it so that you know who you are talking to. For example:

- If you sell cosmetics, then most of the time you are addressing women from 25 to 50 years old,
- If you are a sneaker store, then your target audience is 18-35,
- If you are selling toys, then you are talking to parents,
- If you are selling luxury wristwatches, then you are looking for fashion-conscious, high-income earners.

The more you know the people you write to, the better your communication will be. Letters have always been a form of communication that builds a deeper relationship of trust. Well, it can be built by your email marketing too. Establishing rapport and creating multiple touchpoints with a customer can help convert the relationship from that of a single purchaser to a lifetime client.

Competition

Imagine that you can ethically spy on your competition. Artificial intelligence can help you to observe your competition's social media, websites, and any other digital platforms that they own.

There is a software named Crayon (www.crayon.co) that helps all businesses analyze their competition in order to create a successful response and digital strategy to compete in that industry. Crayon's software-driven competitive intelligence

platform allows you to capture, analyze, and act on your competitors' every move. With this tool, you can track their entire digital footprint and attempt to avoid making the same mistakes they did. Also, you can get inspired by their successful moves and try to implement them in your own business strategy.

While “spying” is frowned upon in many business situations, it is encouraged in the digital marketing space. It's an acceptable procedure to keep an eye on your competition because they can make a decision that could affect your business. You save time and money if understand your market and can analyze the successful practices of other businesses in your industry.

Artificial intelligence is improving every day and you cannot deny that it is beneficial for your business. Think of this way—if you do not use AI, your competition definitely will. Perhaps they are already using it. Especially for small businesses, it is vital to always strive for improvement and efficiency.

AI for Success

Artificial intelligence today plays a crucial role in the development of businesses. For small businesses, this type of technology plays an important role, especially when thinking about its future.

These innovations can improve the performance, efficiency, and productivity of a business. AI Technology systems can work all day, every day, without exhaustion. These are services

that are active 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Data and artificial intelligence can help solve many business problems.

Modern businesses use various web technologies, e-commerce solutions, mobile applications, cloud technologies, and other optimization methods. Big data technologies and advanced analytics are also increasingly used. Machine learning and artificial intelligence are finding their place in the business as well. Some technologies like Virtual Reality and Blockchain are showing potential but have not yet found broader commercial application.

Business investments in digital transformation are increasing every year. Businesses are increasingly looking for solutions that change existing business models or focus on improving internal efficiency and productivity.

The realization that artificial intelligence does not have to be intelligent in the general sense, but smart enough to solve problems increases its value for small businesses. It has made a significant shift from academic research to the application of techniques developed in artificial intelligence, so today, there are indeed numerous examples of the use of intelligent systems.

With the development of artificial intelligence, small businesses have a chance to build effective strategies without the need to hire someone. This way, they are saving money and time while AI is meeting the need the business owner wishes to address. Customers will become more satisfied with your services and products, and your business will grow.

Keep in mind that you are already using artificial intelligence outside of your business, so why not upgrade your

business possibilities with smart tools that are developed to make certain business tasks more manageable? Those businesses that work with AI will know which tools work the best and which do not. If you have not started the integration of AI into your business, start now. Better now than later when your competitors may have exerted their dominance over you beyond recovery. Businesses that invest in artificial intelligence and machine learning *now* will benefit *the most* in the future.

Building a Solid Foundation for Success

Online presence is crucial for businesses because most potential customers search for a specific product online. If your brand isn't available in their search engine or social media feed, you're going to miss a potential sale. It is important to invest in the quality of your brand, online appearance, and promotion. Customers are going to appreciate it, and they'll leave a positive review, eventually bringing more customers to your business. This way, you're building a solid foundation for success.

An online presence leads to a successful digital marketing strategy. There are many methods for having an online presence today, but some are more successful than others. In this chapter, we'll talk about the most common forms of online presence and some other not-so-common ways to make a splash in the online marketing world.

In this chapter, we're going to talk about:

- The Importance of Website Design
- Putting Together a Smart Conversion Strategy
- Social Media
- Blogs
- Professional Networking
- Forums
- Article Submission Sites

- Testing & Measuring for Long Term Benefits
- Deciding Upon Your Most Popular Content?
- Lead to Sales Ratio

The Importance of Website Design

Your website is the window into your company and provides an accurate picture of what you have to offer. It is also the place you can take orders, service requests, schedule your appointments, and offer a simple form where users can contact you. While your website should show off what you have to offer, you cannot rely solely on your website to do all the work of generating leads. A website can be as simple or dynamic as you want. Often, the best path for you to take is to bring someone on board who can turn your vision into a reality.

There are vital elements that every website should have. These include:

- Welcome/landing page
- About Us page
- FAQs
- Private statement/terms of service
- List of products/services
- Contact us page
- Testimonials
- Portfolio (if applicable)
- Opt-in box or form

Other features to consider:

- Affiliate Ads

- Video
- Online Store
- Opt-In (for newsletter or blog subscription)

Once these are in place, you have the opportunity to gather the data of your leads, offer the information about your business, and give customers information about yourself and how to contact you. Once landing on your site, the first pages your leads may look is the **About Us** page. Then they will often drift over to your FAQs and product listing.

The Components of a Website

There are three main components of a website that are needed to be cohesive and help keep things flowing smoothly. If you are intimidated by any of these areas, you should hire a web developer. The three areas are:

Website template

A template is a preview of your site's overall design and how it will look to the visiting user. Each page should reflect the type of company you represent. Many services offer business template sites that can be customized to fit your individual needs. If you have no idea how to build a webpage, this is a great place to start.

Hosting

A web host is a company that provides the space you need to be present on the World Wide Web. You pay a monthly, quarterly, or yearly fee to host your site on a third party's server. There are thousands of hosts available and it can seem somewhat overwhelming when trying to find the right one.

Again, your web designer can probably advise you on which service might best suit your circumstances.

Standard website hosting can cost between \$10-\$50 per month, but depending on the size and details of your site, it may cost even more.

Maintenance & Updates

A website is not a 'set it and forget it' situation. You need to keep customers coming back to your site through constant maintenance and updating. Maintenance includes verifying links and ensuring that the logistics of your website are working. Updating includes adding new pictures to your online portfolio, advertising specials to increase lead conversion, and adjusting both your products, services, and promotional copy.

Website Building Options

There are four basic options when it comes to building your website. The key is to avoid stressing yourself out and wasting your time. Choose the option that benefits you the most. The four options include:

DIY all the Way: You can choose to build your own site. To do this, you need to be an expert in web site programming and design. It can take a lot of time and tweaking to get it right. You need to determine the value of your time to see if this is the way to go. You may find there are other tasks you can be doing and pay someone else to build your site for the best outcome for your business.

DIY with the Help of a Template: Another option is to start with a template, and then do the rest yourself. It includes placing content, images, videos, other media, menus, etc. This can be a reasonable option when you consider some low-cost sites that offer templates. Many of them also have “wizards” that can efficiently help you through the entire process. This may be a good option if you are on a tight budget and just don't have the extra cash to hire a web developer.

Hire a Site Builder to Build from a Template: You can choose the template you like and hire a web designer to upload and place content for you. It is a great way to be involved in the appearance of the site without worrying about the outcome. It can also save you some money by starting the web design with a template instead of from scratch.

Hire a Site Builder to Build from Scratch: This option requires an extremely talented web designer who can start from scratch, and completely design the customized site you want. It can be a bit expensive because you will need them to take care of all elements and programming. Depending on the complexity of your site, it can also take some time.

Put Together a Smart Conversion Strategy

Once you have people on your site, you need to convert them into solid leads and paying customers. That is determined by understanding what the purpose of your website is.

- Do you want people to purchase from your online store?
- Do you want them to call to book an appointment?

- Do you want them to opt-in to your newsletter?

You can put together a specific action plan to accomplish any or all of these goals. You can use your website to generate leads and portray your business, so you'll need strategies to convert visitors into paying customers.

These strategies include:

- Landing pages
- Open dialogue
- Coupons
- Videos
- Build your database
- Close the sale

Landing Pages

Your landing page is the first page customers are taken to when they type in your web address or click on a link. This can be an official company website or a **squeeze page** for a specific product or service. Regardless of what you use your landing page for, you need to be very clear on what CTA (call to action) you want them to take, and then offer them easy navigation to get through that process. The benefits of a landing page are that they can be simple to navigate, and yet provide relevant information since your page will be directly linked to an ad.

The importance of being clear and having a CTA on your website is essential for landing pages. Not only do you need to tell them why and what to do, but more importantly you need to give them all the reasons to do so.

Open Dialogue

You can create an open dialogue with your customer by opening the means of communication. If you consider most forms of advertising, the conversation is very one-sided. This is where online marketing breaks through the mold and allows you to interact with your customers. There are a variety of ways you can open the dialogue with your customers. For instance, you can utilize **live chat** options. A lot of companies are now using this fun feature. If you're considering a live chat function on your website, let the pros set it up for you. They'll know exactly the proper etiquette to use when chatting with potential customers.

Coupons

Customers like to save money and will gladly accept coupons allowing them to pay a lower price. Two basic offerings work best—a percentage off their immediate order, or the potential to get something for free.

What many small business owners don't realize is they can easily do this without cutting into their profit. Think of the products or services you have that cost you close to nothing. Maybe you have products sitting around that are not selling. With a coupon, you can easily give these away (the loss of profit has already happened) and increase your profit through additional purchases. Quite simply, when you offer a coupon or freebie you can end up making more money.

The 6 Big Reasons You Should Be Using Coupons:

1. They are easy to track and measure.

2. They entice potential customers away from competitors.
3. They often have a ripple effect.
4. They help build online traffic when offered online.
5. They easily attract new potential customers to your business.
6. They can help expand your market voice.

Online Videos

Videos are becoming more and more useful as consumers search out new ways to learn about businesses and their offerings. People's online attention span is short, and a video is a great way to convey information in a quick, concise way.

The benefits of a video are:

- They show you are a real person
- They're very affordable to create
- You can use them to demonstrate products or services
- You can record and share special events or projects you're involved in
- They can show your incredible staff in action

Don't forget to ask for **video testimonials** from clients which can easily take your Raving Fans page to the next level.

Before you can shoot and post a video, there are a few things you need to take into consideration:

- Visualize the finished product in your mind.
- Will you shoot by hand or on a tripod?
- Be familiar with the camera and all the functions it has to offer.

- Use slow, determined movements.
- Avoid quick zooms and pans.
- Have an editing plan before you start.

If you have no idea where to start, consider working with a professional. If you're worried about the cost, consider contacting the media department of your local high school or college. You can often get the video made and edited for free as part of a school project for the student.

Build Your Database

Your database is your business' lifeline. Without a record of customers and their spending habits, you have no idea how and where to market. You can put a few critical elements in place to help build your database to collect customer information: **online forms** and **virtual phone services**.

Online forms are easy to set up and use. If you use a template service to build your website, there is a feature to add a form. You can use this feature and customize the information to capture. Remember to keep it simple and avoid asking for too much information. All you need to capture (to get started) is a name, phone number, and email address.

A virtual phone service is a service that works with your online system to capture customer information without you sitting by the phone all day. You are assigned a toll-free number (always a good move to put customers at ease about contacting you), and the customer simply calls in. Once the customer or lead is on the line, they can leave a message. The great thing about the virtual phone service system is that it tracks all the information you need to contact the customer- even if they

don't leave a message! Your phone tracker will supply you with the phone number of the caller and a date/time stamp for when they called. You can also have all the calls that come to your site automatically sent to your mobile to avoid missing an opportunity to convert the lead.

Convert the Lead

Of course, all the elements you put into place when wooing a customer comes down to this: Can you convert the lead, or will they walk away? If you've put into place some of the great tools we've mentioned, the closing should be fairly seamless. However, sometimes there are indecisive customers which may require you to take the time to listen and address their concerns.

Once you've converted them into a customer, the wooing isn't over. Next, you need to thank them for their business through an email and/or a personal phone call within seven days of the sale. Also, make sure you add them to your newsletter database. Once they're included in the autoresponder, you can put together campaigns for different areas of your company based on the individual customer's buying habits. Finally, make sure you follow through and become available to your customers. Always checking and answering your emails, phone, and voicemail is just good business practice.

Social Media

Social media and networking sites have exploded to the point where users spend most of their time on them. The most popular online brands include Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube—all of which have a social media aspect to them.

This is an excellent advantage for a small business owner who wants to utilize these free (and low-cost PPC) advertising platforms.

Don't let the vastness of the social media world scare you. You can easily reach out locally to bring in new customers and emerge nationally and even globally to constantly expand your business. Using and optimizing a social networking profile is an excellent way to run contests, promotions, and encourage new customers to contact you.

Blogs

Having a blog not only increases your online presence, but it also gives you a platform where you can share your knowledge and announce important events to readers. To gain good readership, you need to blog about relevant topics in your industry. Also, choose affiliates, ads, and blog partners carefully, so you can portray the right image you want and the reputation you're working to build. A blog can be set up similar to a website where readers can ask questions, learn about you and your company and take part in special promotions you're offering. You may even want many of the same pages and

features you already have on your website. They should include:

- About Us/Me Page
- Contact Form
- Publicize other online presence arenas
- Showcase networking and professional groups you're part of
- Certifications you have

There are many other features you can include on your blog. A blog design is wide open to any format you want to use. Similar to a website in design, you can add videos, photos, aesthetics, and other features.

Professional Networking

Aside from the usual social networking opportunities, there are professional networking sites like LinkedIn, that allow you the chance to meet other business owners and freelancers. It is a great way to find new clients and partners. When you work with a partnering business, you have the opportunity to draw in new clients for both of you, and positively promote both companies.

Some businesses offer real-life events and seminars, while others provide networking in specific areas of the world. The key is to find the right networking opportunity for your business and participate in it.

Forums

Aside from professional networking sites, there are millions of forums. Forums are a great way to meet people in a specific niche or industry. They are much more defined than networking sites and will connect you with other business owners in your exact target area. You'll find many have already experienced the same problems, rewards, hardships, and successes. Also, consider finding forums for specific software and equipment you use. That is a great way to maximize the use of the tools you already have.

Article Submissions Sites

An article submission site (like Ezine Articles) is a site where you can write informative articles about your industry to build a positive reputation as a professional in your area of expertise. Before you think you don't have the time to write articles, consider outsourcing as an option. Find a skilled writer to work with, and they can provide the content you need based on keywords that will draw traffic to your profile. Your profile then has links to your website, blog, and social networking pages to help direct leads where you need them.

Consider an article submission profile as an extension of your online marketing branch and a way to show that you know what you're talking about in your industry.

These are just a few of the ways you can create an online presence and spread the word about your small business. As you work your way into the online marketing world, you'll

continue to discover other tips and tricks you can use to build a more significant online presence. You will also learn how to fine-tune your profiles to maximize lead generation, conversions, and sales.

Test & Measure for Long Term Benefits

All of the online marketing strategies in the world don't mean a thing if you don't take the time to notice what works and change what doesn't. There are a variety of ways you can do this that are simple to use and understand. You may (or may not) have heard the term web analytics. Essentially it means analyzing what's going on with your website, blog, etc. This data can help monitor the number of visits to your site daily, weekly, monthly, and over the lifetime. It can tell you where those people are coming from, which makes it an excellent tool to know which ads are working.

You are going to use this information to fine-tune your online marketing strategy to boost more visits, increase conversions, and gain more sales. There are a few terms you should be familiar with in the world of web analytics.

Visits: How many times your website is visited. This number has an effect or correlation with almost everything else you'll learn here.

Unique Visitors: These are visitors from different computers. So, while the visits include repeat visits from the same user or computer, unique visitors track the visits that come from different computers.

Page View: This is when a page is viewed on the monitor of a visitor.

Page Views per Visit: This is an average number of pages that are viewed divided by the number of visits. This helps you determine how long users are on your site, which, of course, is a good thing. The longer they stay, the more likely they are to take action.

Time/Date Stamps: This tells you when your users are on your site. This can be vital information to know when your best days and times are to publish or advertise.

Referrers: These are other sites that provide links to your site. This helps you to see where your users are coming from. It also provides a networking opportunity. When you know a user has come through a referrer, contact them and thank them for the link.

Search Engines: This shows you when users are finding your site through search engines. It allows you to analyze if a PPC campaign is working or not. If it's not, you'll know so you can pull it immediately and stop wasting your money.

Search Terms: These are the terms your users are putting into the search engine that find your site. These are essential to maximizing PPC campaigns. You need to target the search terms that are bringing in the most traffic.

Conversion Rate: This is generally a percentage of visitors that took action on your site. It can be in the form of filling out and submitting an online form, placing an order, subscribing to a newsletter, or sending an email.

What is Your Most Popular Content?

Another area we're going to talk about is the content your customers are most interested in on your site. The first place to consider this is on your home page and your landing page. These are the two most visited pages on your website and need to include the best content and information. Bounce rate and time on the site are two of the best indicators of which content is working on your website and what isn't. The bounce rate tells us how many visitors are leaving before they look around.

Content on your social media needs to be of similar quality as it is on your website. Use specific colors, fonts, and any other element that customers can instantly connect with your business. You need to let them remember your products because of your brand and marketing strategy.

Lead to Sales Ratio

This is a method where you compare leads you get to the actual sales you close. It can be a significant number to track and find many ways to improve. Of course, you want to close as many sales as possible, and knowing your LTS Ratio will help you see where improvements can be made. Let's look at some possible monthly results to give you an idea of how this works.

- ✓ Cost of a monthly email newsletter: \$250
- ✓ Click through rate: 50
- ✓ Leads generated: 25
- ✓ Cost per lead: \$10

- ✓ Lead conversion rate: 50%
- ✓ Sales generated: 5
- ✓ Lead-to-sales ratio: 10%

Let's face it, 10 % could look a whole lot better. But now you have all the information to see where the numbers need to be improved. You need more click-throughs and leads. This is where testing and measuring comes in. Try changing subtle things in your marketing strategy and website to see when your numbers increase and when they decrease. The key is only to make one or two small changes at a time so you can track those specific changes.

In this chapter, we went through a lot of information on how to build a solid foundation for successful digital marketing. By having a good handle on the numbers and what your website needs to include, you won't ever have to backtrack. Because, in the world of marketing, "wasted time is wasted money".

Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM)

Customer relationship marketing harmonizes business plans, consumer data, and data technology to accomplish business objectives.

Businesses that ask their clients to answer thought-provoking questions get valuable information that their competitors don't have access to.

It has become an inevitable part of many business strategies to make a customer feel valued.

In this chapter, we'll cover:

- What is Customer Relationship Marketing?
- Goals and Objectives of CRM
- CRM Done Right
- Do you need CRM?
- Why Small Businesses need CRM?
- Relationship Marketing and Tactical Elements
- 'One to One' Marketing
- 'Face to Face' Contacts with Customers
- Event Management & Relationship Marketing
- Trust and Loyalty

What is Customer Relationship Marketing?

Customer Relationship Marketing (CRM) is a marketing strategy that aims to create long-term consumer connections. It ensures that businesses can easily reach new customers and maintain a positive attitude toward their loyal customers.

This kind of marketing strategy meets the customer's needs and desires. With the help of technology, CRM develops the final marketing plan.

Businesses implement this kind of scenario using digital tools and personalized marketing to connect with their buyers. This connection results in success because buyers prefer to buy from people that they know and like.

Goals and Objectives of CRM

The main goal of Customer Relationship Marketing is to collect marketing research data inside and outside of the company.

Businesses use this data to better understand customer's needs, wishes, interests, and behaviors.

This allows sales and marketing managers and other employees that converse openly with customers to adapt to their needs and requirements. Getting to know more about their needs can result in better customer service and more loyal customers.

Customers tend to be fascinated if companies know some information about them. CRM helps businesses to retain their shoppers and develop trust between them.

There are three new priorities if you want to reduce costs. 1) Hire quality employees for your customer service because they represent your business. 2) Don't make them wait for their answer; your customer service should be able to provide quality answers immediately in a helpful conversation. 3) Companies active on numerous social networks tend to get more customers because they're easy to approach.

Your business should be able to make close partner relationships with customers and trust connections, which can help you understand the data and adjust your offer to meet the customers' needs and wants. It is essential to get to know your customers and their needs. You should also be familiar with their opinions about your brand.

Businesses need to be in continuous contact if they want to build stable connections with customers and understand their needs.

CRM Done Right

CRM gives successful results only when it integrates into the company's business and business informatics systems.

Many businesses acknowledge CRM as an essential strategy to get to know the targeted audience and possess an advantage over their competition.

Companies that have developed a CRM:

- Are growing almost 60% faster than the competition without a developed CRM.
- Are expanding their market by 6% per year.
- Charge 10% more for their products.
- Achieve a return on investment (ROI) of 12%
- Increasing customer loyalty by 5% can result in a 25% - 85% increase in profitability.

A survey conducted in 2006 in the EU confirmed that companies that do not have a developed CRM:

- On average, they lose 50% of their clients every five years.
- About 65% of all lost clients left due to unsatisfactory service and communication
- The cost of acquiring a new client is five times higher than the price of retaining an old one.

Do You Need CRM?

CRM focuses not only on raw sales and making a profit but also on forming quality and long-term relationships with your customers. Let's say you already have a company and a certain number of customers or users. Is there a chance you will neglect their desires and needs in time and allow them to leave you, or will you nurture your relationship and motivate them to stay with your business?

The data and information obtained during your marketing research are invaluable to create a long-term and prosperous relationship with the client.

A concrete example of this is when you, as a user, tried to contact a company that provides you with a particular service and does not have information about you in their system. For example, you were connected to a kind lady from the customer service to whom you had to introduce yourself, explain the details of your problem, and present all the difficulties you have had in the past when using their services. She will listen to you and tell you that she will redirect the call to the department that deals with those issues.

The next thing that happens is that you listen to a long on-hold message or music, after which a person answers, to whom you must retell everything over and over again. And that's usually not the end of it.

On the other hand, you have companies that already have access to all critical information based on the phone number you are calling from, like your name and surname, the type of contract you signed, along with access to records of purchases from the previous period.

An example of a CRM can be periodic calls or notifications from a dentist, who will remind you of your routine annual checkup.

With a good CRM system, you get a satisfied client with whom you will achieve long-term cooperation. A happy customer will continue to use your services or buy your products in the future. More importantly, they will also recommend your company to their friends.

Why Do Small Businesses Need CRM?

Although you are the owner of a small business with only a few employees, you must keep records of all interactions with your customers.

Often, believing that this is enough, smaller companies rely on more straightforward storage of valuable information. At best, they enter data about consumers' wishes, problems, or requests in Excel spreadsheets. Still, they often print them on notebook sheets or simply keep them in their heads.

Also, consumer inquiries often come through different platforms - phones, emails, or social networks; all of which lead to the scattering of information or its complete loss.

Without a central platform with data on consumer interactions, there is always a chance that valuable information will be lost or misinterpreted. It further leads to customer dissatisfaction and, ultimately, to their loss as customers.

If you spontaneously manage to make good use of the information obtained when communicating with your clients - thus gaining their favor, word will spread quickly. That word of mouth leads to new clients, increased workload, new employees. Soon you have a large, hectic team struggling with a sea of essential data.

Not having an efficient CRM system ultimately leads to you having more administrative headaches and fewer sales in the future.

Therefore, information obtained from communication and building relationships with the client is crucial for future cooperation's direction and success. Why then allow this vital

information to be wasted when analyzing and using it can improve relationships, business, sales, and increase profit?

Know Everything About Your Customers

Marketing based on customer interactions is a specially developed concept. This business strategy intends to create and maintain long-term and profitable ties with consumers.

Today's marketing professionals must know their clients or customers in detail.

For a company to apply the CRM concept, it must continuously "get to know" its consumers by collecting data about them and storing it in an easily available database.

Since the database, by its nature, contains sets of various information about existing or potential customers - demographic and psychographic data of consumers, information about their habits, expectations, satisfaction, previous purchases, etc., it is necessary to update it regularly.

Based on the data collected in this way, companies can more quickly and reliably create an offer and improve after-sales services.

Relationship Marketing and Tactical Elements

Establish direct contacts with customers by following these tactics:

- build a database

- develop a customer-oriented system

The more you know about your customers, the easier it is to identify new perspectives and increase customer satisfaction. Knowledge or information about an individual customer is the foundation of managing customer relations.

According to experts, CRM is a "process of information management" about individual consumers, ensuring their loyalty in the long run.

This possibility of communication with various target groups would not be possible without the Internet's development, which enabled direct contact with consumers in real-time.

The result of (information) technology has enabled the collection of consumer data to be mostly automated, which significantly accelerates and reduces the cost of collecting and using information.

Consumer Relationship Marketing also contributes to building a company's trust with end-users. Through a two-way relationship and direct communication, regular consumers can influence the company's offers directly.

With this market research data, your business can influence consumer choice in the buying process.

An excellent example of marketing relationships with consumers in practice can be seen in Nespresso coffee's increasingly popular concept, which allows easy home preparation of espresso or cappuccino from aluminum capsules.

Even though there is still no official representative office in some countries, Nespresso provides coffee lovers around the world with a rarely seen variety of offers. It is reflected in the various flavors, aroma, strengths of coffee, and suitable packaging of ampoules devices that are extremely easy to use. Plus, points of sale that look more like luxury boutiques than "cafes."

The choice of the popular Hollywood actor Brad Pitt to be the global "brand ambassador" of this company is also considered a successful marketing move. Without any desire to make (hidden) advertising for the company, it must be added that Nespresso, with its improved online offer and accompanying service, shows how additional value is created for users in the extremely dynamic coffee market.

'One to One' Marketing

'One to one' marketing is known as Personalized marketing. Personalization of interaction with customers contributes to increasing customer loyalty levels and a higher return on marketing investment.

- It's called one-on-one (1:1) marketing.
- Form of differentiation of products and services:
 - distinguish products and services
 - unique product and service to offer for each customer.

One to one marketing is a CRM strategy that highlights personalized interaction with consumers. Personalization of

business is thought to contribute to increased customer loyalty and a higher marketing ROI.

Customizing the marketing mix to an individual customer is the basis of 1:1 marketing. There are two forms of 1:1 marketing: personalization and adjustment.

Adaptation of the promotional message to the individual is enabled by new technologies: computers, databases, robotics, and direct communication media. However, these "tools" are still insufficiently used in business practice. But that does not mean that they should not be introduced.

Personalized marketing is a result of the evolution of personalization. It is the outcome of a combination of business needs and customer demand. Initially, personalization was just a customer's name on a catalog or flyer followed by personalized packaging. Today, it is possible to fully customize the product to customer preferences using a 3D printer.

Personalization can increase both earnings and customer loyalty. In terms of earnings, personalized marketing can bring 31% higher profits compared to standard promotional materials. Research has also shown that customers are willing to pay a higher price if they receive the product in a personalized package.

Customers also want not only packaging, but personalized everyday products have also become highly sought after. Customers wish to have unique and personal products, both for themselves and for gifts.

Manufacturers of products such as sneakers, luxury cars, furniture, clothing, and even beverages have started

personalizing their products. The name or message on the product's label, packaging, design, or quality of work has increased customer interest and significantly increased companies' sales that have recognized customer preferences.

Having a product that they designed, refined, or gave it a final, personal effect, has become extremely popular among customers, especially the younger population.

Personalized marketing requires a quick response. Experts believe that a personalized approach in marketing will play an increasing role. With quality printing infrastructure and production devices that can print high-quality promotional products in the shortest possible time, companies will play a key role in meeting customers' wishes and needs better than the competition.

Mass production means producing high-quality products quickly, allowing companies to adapt to the needs of customers quickly and launch the desired promotional campaign in a shorter timeframe (e.g., posters, flyers, labels) and produce products that better target the end-user.

By determining your capacity, finding ways to better and more efficiently adapt to customers' wishes and needs, and define what form of personalization of products and services to offer. If you are proactive, have a complex printing infrastructure, and are flexible, customers will recognize you.

'Face to Face' Contacts with Customers

Advantages of personal contacts with customers are:

- Development of interpersonal relationships with customers

- Better understanding and knowledge of customer needs
- Improving business cooperation with customers
- Simultaneous exchange of information and generation of new ideas.

Personal contacts with customers overcome

- Temporal and spatial barriers
- Cultural differences and value systems

Tactics in Off-line, Face-to-Face Marketing

There are many tactics for approaching customers face-to-face, and we will share a couple of them with you now.

Establish a fan club - Sponsor gatherings of the customers. Let them be in touch with you, visit your factory or shop, and get samples.

Allow loyal customers to try your new product first. Create how-to-reward-customers-event. For the first order of a new product, provide them with branded gifts that will only come with the first 10-100 orders.

Give consumers a coupon that they can print out and use at your business. Use personalization in product design (their name on bottles or jars). Involve them in creating a new product and reward the best solutions.

Reward them for each purchase - create loyalty cards where their purchase will be recorded and where they will be rewarded after a certain number of purchases.

If you run a restaurant, provide them with a special place in your restaurant, a table just for loyal customers, or name something after them.

Let them star in the next commercial or invite them to design a new commercial for their favorite product.

A great tip is if your customers are your ultimate fans, know everything about you and the products, or have many ideas on how to improve the service, maybe you can give them a job.

Event Management & Relationship Marketing

Event marketing means:

- Special rituals.'
- Presentations
- Celebrations

All these events achieve several goals related to community, culture, and business. Also, special sponsorship events capture the attention of the participants and the media. They remain recorded in memory and on the Internet.

Remember, some events like press and educational conferences, congresses, and fairs can provide you massive media activity, brand awareness, and face-to-face customer experiences.

Trust and Loyalty

Although there is a significant similarity between relationship marketing and consumer relations marketing, there is an absolute difference between them.

As an integral part of a holistic marketing approach, relationship marketing emphasizes the importance of developing long-term relationships. This concept encourages connecting with all interested groups, company stakeholders: consumers, owners, investors, creditors, suppliers, distributors, marketing agencies, etc.

On the other hand, CRM focuses on establishing quality and long-term relationships with end consumers.

And of course, companies striving to build long-term relationships with consumers are not altruistic but purely economic. Companies want to keep existing customers. They generally start from the proven assumption that it is more expensive for a company to attract new customers than to keep existing ones.

By establishing direct communication with consumers, the company can personalize its relationship with them and offer them added value.

Communicate with customers and ask them for feedback on your products and services. Research shows how customers appreciate that you value their opinion and reward you with brand loyalty.

Social networks are an excellent channel for active communication with customers and make most of these channels for that purpose.

An engaged customer is a satisfied customer who will go from a passive consumer of your products to your products' active promoter. Besides, you will receive more feedback and a lifetime customer from the engaged customer. The engaged customer is a satisfied customer. How do you become a company that actively deals with its customers?

Follow these simple rules:

- Listen to customer feedback they leave you in comments, surveys, phone calls
- Respond to all your customers' inquiries quickly and personally
- Trust your customers

In a world of increasingly fierce competition, the key to survival will always be to respond to customer needs and desires.

Companies that succeed in this will create a customer base that will provide lasting value to their business.

A positive environment is crucial to building excellent relations with your customers. There are a few initiatives you need to follow to make such an environment:

1. Building trust:

Present yourself as a reliable, competent, organized, and efficient person who knows how to achieve his goals. Once you lose the customer's confidence, you will find it hard to regain it.

2. Creating a sense of importance:

Find something on the customer that you admire.

3. Creating a relaxed atmosphere:

A sense of trust and personal importance can lead to relaxed customer experience. A relaxed and satisfied customer will find it easier to agree to the negotiations' terms, which will lead to a common goal - harmonious and prosperous business relations.

Email Marketing

Email marketing is one of the easiest ways to communicate with your current customers and the leads you've captured. It's easy to use and enables you to offer information, specials, and more without an overwhelming amount of phone calls or the expense of postcards. This is a highly effective form of online marketing, but it needs to be done right and with some dignity. If you send out repeated emails in a short period, your emails will be marked as spam, and email servers can blacklist you.

You may have to jump through a few hoops with email servers. Using an autoresponder can ease the email marketing process. Still, you can do it, and it's an essential part of your online marketing plan.

In this chapter, we'll cover:

- The Benefits of Email Marketing
- Automation Accounts
- Building a Database of Qualified Leads
- Becoming a Trustworthy Sender
- Effective Emails
- Email Delivery System
- Analytics for Email Marketing

The Benefits of Email Marketing

There are many benefits of email marketing that make it worth finding the right ESP (Email Service Provider) to work

with. You can create targeted emails to send to your database or part of your database to offer them a special deal. This can:

- Increase conversions
- Increase repeat business
- Increase referrals and customer loyalty
- Increase brand awareness
- Streamline your sales process
- Gather behavioral feedback
- Generate fast results

Let's take a closer look at each of these to see how they work and why email marketing can deliver these benefits.

Increase Conversions: The standard person needs to see or hear an offer several times before they buy. Research shows it takes an average of seven times for the consumer even to remember the deal. When you put together an email marketing campaign, you can create multiple emails to market a specific product or service.

Increase Repeat Business: Aside from generating new customers, you can use email marketing to communicate with current customers. You can do this by offering them a special deal or putting together a monthly newsletter that is informative and offers them a coupon or discount.

Increase Referrals and Customer Loyalty: Referrals are easy when you utilize functions like forward to a friend and share buttons. You can also increase referrals by offering current customers a discount or other incentive for referring you.

Increase Brand Awareness: When you take the time to let your customers know about your business and your industry, you stay in their minds. It can be done with a newsletter or sending out tips and articles. Some customers may only visit you once unless they know that you have something new and exciting to offer.

Streamline Your Sales Process: When you use an automated process with links to your purchase page, you can streamline your sales process. You can save money on hiring a sales representative and keep from using your precious time with an automated sales system.

Gather Behavioral Feedback: Another great benefit of an email marketing campaign is seeing your customers' patterns, behaviors, and leads. You can see who opens the email, who replies to the email, and forwards your email from your email marketing program. That allows you to adjust your emails to target those who are not opening them. You can also use surveys to gather information about what your customers are interested in.

Generate Fast Results: Email is instant, whereas phone calls may not be answered or seen as an interruption. The likelihood of a lead calling you back is relatively slim. Most people check their email multiple times a day, which means your email can be opened the same or even the next day.

Automation Accounts

There are various automation accounts and email service providers you can work with when you set up your email

marketing campaign. You don't want to use your email to contact large groups of people. Even with the BCC (blind carbon copy) option, your email can easily be caught by spam filters, firewalls, and other protection methods. Not to mention that the influx of reply messages can be overwhelming to handle. Add that to the fact that most typical email servers don't have tracking options, and you can see why using an ESP or email marketing program is ideal.

There are ESP's that offer a variety of services at a reasonable cost. They provide tracking tools that help you see exactly how many people are opening, forwarding, and responding to your emails. They are web-based subscriptions that are required by law to comply with anti-spam regulations. This means more of your emails are delivered.

Depending on the ESP or subscription, there are a variety of features you'll have access to:

- Email Templates
- Legal Emails are Automatic
- Branded Emails (for a professional look)
- Manage & Store Database
- Track the Results of Each Campaign
- Resources for Successful Email Marketing Campaigns

These are the most popular ESPs out there:

- HubSpot: <https://www.hubspot.com/>
- Klaviyo: <https://www.klaviyo.com/>
- Emarsys: <https://emarsys.com/>
- Omnisend: <https://www.omnisend.com/>
- Exponea: <https://exponea.com/>

- Ometria: <https://ometria.com/>
- DotDigital (formerly DotMailer):
<https://dotdigital.com/>
- Sailthru: <https://www.sailthru.com/>
- MailChimp: <https://mailchimp.com/>

Most ESPs offer a 30-day free trial and have limits on the number of people in your database, how many emails per month you can send, and the number of images you can store. Check out all the information to see which ESP is best for your needs.

To set up your autoresponder, you simply choose when the email goes out when you write and save it. This is done by date, so you will want to know when to stagger your emails. A good rule to go by is no more than every three days, and a gap no larger than five days. This keeps you from appearing to spam and doesn't allow enough time for the customer to forget about you. You have a little wiggle room, such as when you send welcome or thank you letters for purchases, signing up for your newsletter, and other occasions. You can also choose whether to do a bi-weekly, weekly, bi-monthly, or monthly newsletter, depending on your time and the information you have to offer.

Build a Database of Qualified Leads

One of the main goals of email marketing is to build a list of qualified leads. You can do this by using special offers, promotions, or other incentives to encourage others to sign up for your list. You will not build a massive list overnight; in fact,

you don't want to. The key is to have qualified - meaning quality - leads.

You need to remember that people are protective of their email and personal information. With all the spam and scams out there, you need to instill trust and quality in your emails. Ultimately, your list is about quality. You should consider a few things when putting together your email marketing campaign and building a quality list.

Only ask for necessary information: Stick with first and last name, email, and, if you're interested, zip code. You need at least their first name to personalize the emails. If their address is not required, skip it. The shorter the sign-up form, the more responses you'll get.

Build your database slowly and steady. Once you start building your database and gain the trust of the people who subscribe, you can then ask for additional information- with a purposeful reason. Surveys are an easy way to add information to your database. Other considerations to take include:

Ask permission: You need to ask permission to get information from people. If you don't have permission to send a newsletter to your current customers, you need to send an email asking for their approval. Tell them what kind of information you'll be sending to them. Also, you need to include an easy way to unsubscribe from your list.

Offer incentives: To gain referrals and the trust of your current list, offer incentives. This can be in the form of exclusive information, free trials, discounts, or a VIP club- just to name a few.

Stay organized: Most ESP's offer contact management and the ability to export to an Excel document. This can help you keep track of the traffic your email marketing campaign is generating and give you something portable to look at. You should be able to organize, sort, and keep track of your list.

Minimize risk: You want to do everything you can to minimize the level of risk your leads and customers are taking when they sign up with you. To do this, you can include a privacy statement link to the announcement and give them an idea of how often you will be sending emails.

Media list: Keep your media lists separate from your customer/leads database. It's even a good idea to have your current customers on a different list from your leads. You will likely be sending them separate emails and different promotions.

List brokers: A list broker is a company or person who collects personal information, generates leads, and sells them to businesses looking to promote. Generally, lists are arranged by location, interest, and demographics. List brokers are becoming less and less of a resource. It's not an excellent way to build a database and is a costly mistake to make. If you do decide to work with a broker, make sure the information was gathered legally. These lists often bring bad luck and end up getting you spammed.

If you're looking for an opportunity like this, a better option is to rent an email list. You should also verify the list was obtained legally and include a sign-up button when sending emails to these leads.

Become a Trustworthy Sender

You know how annoying spam can be, so you also know how important it is to gain your customers' trust and avoid being labeled as spam. Now that you know how to get around spam filters and email protection utilities, you also need to know how to get your emails opened by the recipient. You can use various techniques to gain your recipients' trust and increase the number of opens you get.

- Ask Permission
- Get Whitelisted
- Get Legal

We already discussed how important it is to request permission in the email marketing world. Whitelisted is the opposite of blacklisting. Instead of being blocked by the email program, users save you to their contact list, which allows your emails to be delivered without incident.

When you make a concerted effort to stay within the legal bounds of the CAN-SPAM Act, you show your subscribers you are following the law and respect them. There are ways to avoid being penalized by CAN-SPAM, and you should be aware of them. You must include certain elements in every email you send out to your database:

- Email header that identifies your business
- Unsubscribe link
- Your physical storefront address or a PO Box for home-based businesses
- A clear subject in the subject line
- Working reply address

Effective Emails

Once you have confidence that you are following ethical email marketing practices, it's time to talk about putting together a well-crafted email. Before you start writing, first, you need to identify your goal for that particular email sequence. You need to keep this goal in mind when writing the sequence to stay focused and drive toward meeting that goal. Some examples of goals you may include:

- Generate leads
- Increase repeat business
- Create awareness of your business
- Announce new products and services
- Gain trust and create more authority
- Drive traffic to a website

There are points you need to take into consideration to build the body of your email:

- Call to action
- One message
- Value
- Customize
- Tell a story
- Story arch

Call to Action: In every email, you need a clear call to action. A call to action tells your reader exactly what you want them to do to obtain your goal. In email marketing, a soft-sell approach is generally better than a direct, aggressive ask. Take a few minutes to create an outline of the email series you're planning. A call to action can simply be to click on the link to your website

and read an article. Or it can be as in-depth as walking them through the process of purchasing a specific product.

One Message: It's essential to stick to one message to keep from confusing your readers. If your readers are confused about what you're trying to tell them, you're not likely to get the response you want to your call to action. The only place there is a bit of leeway for this is in a newsletter where you are likely to be sharing a few different tidbits. If this is the case, then you should still maintain a specific call to action.

Value: Your emails need to have some value to them, or they won't be opened or read. If the intended reader doesn't open them, they certainly aren't going to forward them. You can do this through emotions and by offering something for free. People love to get stuff for free as long as there is value to it. Some of the things that provide value are:

- Tips and advice
- Customer survey
- Tutorial or demonstration
- Product or service promotion
- Limited time offer
- A giveaway
- A product that creates a sense of urgency

Customize: The more you use your reader's name, the more connected the reader becomes to the email. When using an ESP, customization is easy to do. Key places to do this are the subject line, email salutation, and other natural areas. Do not overuse their name, or it can come across as cheesy or impersonal.

Tell a Story: An email marketing series is a great way to tell a story. Readers love to uncover things as they read through the series. You can use the end of the emails to set up for the next piece of the puzzle by telling them what's to come. This works using case studies, your own experience, and testimonials.

Story Arch: A story arch is a map of how the series will touch on the highs and lows of the email series' goals. You want to slowly build with the emails to reach a peak and then let the reader down softly as they are called to action.

There are also specific components every email needs to have to be effective. All of these components are typically easy. These include a from line, from address, subject line, and email header. You can set all of these up when you create your email marketing campaign using your ESP. Most ESP's will have an easy to use template that will walk you through all of these aspects.

Once you have your email mapped out and your series set up, you need to consider the emails' actual design and layout. It needs to look professional and be consistent with your current branding. Take a good look at the templates you're considering. Take into account the way people read—top to bottom left to right. Put the most important information in the first place they will see, and so on.

Images are important, but make sure they are relevant and keep the number of images reasonable. Not only will a large number of images become overwhelming to the reader, but some email servers may spam your emails or not load properly.

Links are a great way to draw interest and keep your call to action front and center. Use lots of links, but always use anchor

text for them. Your ESP will track your click-throughs, and it's important to see what readers are clicking on when they read your emails.

You should also offer the option for the reader to choose a text-only version. You need to check your text-only version to make sure it's readable and doesn't get lost in the conversion.

Analytics for Email Marketing

Email marketing ESP's offer many analytics forms to help you see exactly how your campaign is going. You can find out what emails are being opened and by whom. You will see your click-through rates, forwards, and shares. All of this information is invaluable as you learn how to use an email marketing program better and put out emails that meet your goals. The most important stats to track are:

Click-Through Rate: Your click-through rate is when the reader clicks on a link in your email that takes them to another website. It will also show which sites they went to, which is useful if you have multiple links in one email.

Opens: This shows how many people and who opened your emails. If your open rate is low, consider your headlines and how they can be better. You can also retest your email and see if it's getting stuck in spam filters.

Unsubscribe: You should receive an email every time someone unsubscribes. You want to use this information to look for patterns. Do people unsubscribe after a certain amount of time? Are there emails with certain information that people unsubscribe to?

Bounces: A bounce is when an email is undeliverable. This could be for a variety of reasons. If this happens once, go ahead, and resend the email. If it happens more than once, take them off your list.

Forwards: Almost all email templates give the reader a button to forward the email. You want to see which emails are forwarded because they are of a higher value to the customer. When you have this information, you can create emails that are just as valuable.

Email Delivery System

There are a variety of ways to maximize your email delivery system. The goal is to work smarter, so you don't have to work harder. Here are a few of those strategies to consider:

- Repeat emails
- Offer formatting options
- Test emails
- Work on whitelisting
- Sender verification

Repeat Emails: After 48 hours, you should resend your email to those who haven't opened them yet. This seems aggressive, but studies have shown it will increase your click-throughs by 30%. It's easy to do through your ESP.

Offer Formatting Options: Format makes a big difference if your emails are even received or viewable in the first place. This can be affected by email servers, browsers, and email settings. When you offer an HTML or text version, you can usually get around this by letting the reader choose.

Test Emails: Always send the emails to yourself on all your email accounts to test them before sending them out. You want to ensure the email looks right, reads well, and comes across the email server the way it's supposed to. You can always test with your family and friends to make sure your email makes it through spam filters and other email settings.

Work on Whitelisting: We talked earlier about whitelisting. You can directly contact internet service providers and domain names and ask them to whitelist your IP address or email address. This will ensure your emails go through and don't get caught up in spam filters.

Sender Verification: Sender verification is a feature you can add where the recipient has to verify they received the email. This is a great way to know the email made it through spam filters and get permission from the recipient to send them additional emails.

This chapter discussed email marketing and how a small business can use these tactics to reach out to both current and new customers. A great email marketing campaign can put you on the map and increase your sales significantly. Use these strategies to put together a smart email series and execute it effectively and efficiently.

Local Marketing

As the owner of a small business, a successful local marketing campaign is achieved by reaching out to potential customers in your area through social media channels and an in-person approach. Having strategies based on local marketing will help you to attract potential customers right in your backyard. One of the primary reasons to create a local marketing strategy is because many people like to do business with those in their community and are 'right around the corner'. Additionally, local increases the opportunity to get constant feedback and always provide the necessary service for your neighbors.

Strategies oriented in the local area of business will assist you in building your brand and reputation to increase brand loyalty. Visibility leads to top-of-mind awareness.

Here are a few tips and tricks for local marketing to try and increase your presence:

Local SEO

As a business owner, you probably know what SEO is or at least have heard of it. It is essential to know which steps to take to optimize your website to be first in search results in your local area of business dealing. It is important to focus on your local market as your initial niche; if you market too broadly, it will be harder for you to generate any traction. Doing SEO on

the local market will help you stand out among the competition.

However, SEO needs to be set up manually, as Google does not know your target audience nor that you are targeting your local prospects. Some signals on search engines (not everyone uses only Google) can help you stand out among other companies in the area. Examples of these signals are channels of social media, other websites in your local area, and review and reputation sites.

Users and their experience are priority #1

User experience is the most crucial step to think through when you decide to invest in SEO. Having a responsive website is one step closer to more engaged users, so make sure that your site loads fast.

If your website is slow in loading, you are in danger of losing visitors who could be your potential customers. Both desktop and mobile versions should be friendly to users. Always consider that at least half of the users worldwide use mobile devices, so invest in mobile as these prospects are looking for your service RIGHT NOW. And, according to HubSpot, when people find your business through a mobile device, your business will get more exposure the next day.

Navigation on your site should be comfortable and straightforward. Visitors can get misled and distracted by too many options so make the choice easy for them.

Do not forget to check your analytics to see how visitors interact with the website. The better you understand your

prospects' search habits, the better you can tailor your site, your offer, and your website copy to them specifically. Note that if the abandonment and bounce rates are high, then search engines will think you provide a bad journey for the customer. Search engines take everything into account.

Reviews

Reviews are an essential piece of successful local marketing. It goes beyond SEO itself. Many customers check the reviews before they decide to proceed to deal in business with you. The 5 stars and your ratings are front and center for prospects to see. If you have great reviews, you are one step closer to more paying clients.

Google My Business, Yelp, Yellow Pages, and BBB profiles are your first addresses to go to and fill in your business info. Google and Yelp are great starting points when it comes to your advertisements. You can check what your customers think in the review section, publish content, or give discount options to drive potential customers to your local business.

It is good to know that if you decide to invest in creating a profile on Yelp, there is a great chance to show up first in the search engine results.

Another thing you could do is create a Google My Business account. It helps if you update a profile with working hours and addresses as with pictures of products or store interiors. Take in the notion that Google Maps is one of the most powerful tools for Android users, while Yelp is for iOS users.

Invest your efforts in having reviews on all sites to attract as many potential customers as possible.

As we said in the beginning, the customer experience is very vital for your business, so feel free to ask them to review your business platforms. There are also services available that make it extremely easy for your raving fans to leave you an online review.

Contact details

This step is also vital as it brings up transparency on every platform. Contact details have to be the same on each platform and should be found in the header and/or footer section of the website. Schema (<https://schema.org/>) can help you to organize this information. If you have different details on different sites, you will automatically rank lower on the web no matter how much you spend on SEO.

Website SEO

Now that you are familiar with the foundations, it is time to work on the SEO on your page.

Add the name of your town and area to your website but be careful where you put it, so it makes sense to the user.

Here are some examples:

- Landing page headline
- Headlines
- URL (website address)

- Blogs or videos
- Headlines for pictures
- Video descriptions

It is helpful to add Google maps to make it easier for prospects to arrive at your place of business faster. And Google will like you more too.

Linking with other websites

It is beneficial to have a high number of visits to your website coming from different sources. Best practice shows links from other websites in your area that can affect your brand reputation. Nowadays, community management represents an essential piece of marketing strategy. Think about how to engage news or articles that link to your business' website. If you sponsor local events, there should be content with the location leading to your page.

If you see news or articles with your location, but not linked with your website, our advice is to send them an email to connect the keywords, location, and name of the business with your official website.

Congratulations! You have completed the fundamentals of local SEO! Let's move on to social media marketing tips and tricks.

Social Media Marketing for your Local Business

Social media is a great tool to increase your brand presence. Followers on social media like to see nicely curated content and they will follow everything you post.

Note that over 70% of people have accounts on at least one social media channel. If your connections are not from your area, then you may have interested prospects, but they may buy from someone closer to home. Even though social media channels are free, improper advertising can cost you a lot. Because of that, it is crucial to focus on the local community, network at local events, and initially pay for ads that will build your local presence. Here are some tricks that will help you create your local community following.

Followers on Social media

Your community on social media is super important. It means if you have people who are following you, they are interested in what you have to say and you are relevant.

- You are creating great content.
- Having more followers means that word about your business is spreading.
- Shares are very important and if you want to scale up your business, this will be your proof to then expand to other services or markets.

You should welcome people even if they are not your potential customers as they can be the ones who will increase your overall social media presence. Nevertheless, they are not primary users of your local product or service so use them as building blocks for your online marketing platform.

Follow your customers back. There are many social media accounts and sites your audience is visiting. If they are there, that means you should put some time and effort into those accounts and sites.

Follow the competition. See what your competition is doing. Whatever they do will allow you to ensure you are providing meaningful content, and also see potentially what not to do. There are many online tools to see what your competitors use. If they are using specific social media channels, you should consider those as well.

Keep track of what is happening in your community and create content based on it. It would be great if you can start to communicate about local events and connect them with your business.

Show engagement with the local community—post images of your business presence at events in your city or town. Promote engagement activities your business is involved with. Create content about the events you are organizing so your community is informed, then start online conversations about this topic. Press releases are a great way to get this content out.

Everybody likes to participate in local award-winning competitions. Make online competitions and award your audience with small presents. People like to win ... almost anything!

Write about local events, ventures, and daily life for your social media and website. Promote other local businesses and successful people. They can promote you back. Networking is essential for local companies. If you know local superstars or influential people, they can assist in reaching far greater numbers in social media accounts.

Tags based on locations are super useful on social media, and many people from your city can visit your page. Hashtags are also essential, so invest some time in finding which ones are popular in the local market. Facebook has the option of post targeting at the desired place.

Now let us investigate some paid options that can boost your online presence as well.

Pushing ads based on your location can help you a lot to increase your local presence. It will not cost you much if you decide to do this. The advantage of these ads is that people in your city will be able to see them, but you don't waste your money showing these ads to people who live outside of your target market location.

Focusing your ads on the location means that you will get people narrowed by location and Facebook makes this easy. This can generate a significant Return on Investment through your social media marketing.

Use the Facebook platform that consists of millions of profiles to help you get to your potential customers such as people from your city, tourists, commuters, and people who are passing by the area.

Choose a region or city on Facebook. You have an option to target the town and to add more miles around the targeted city on the map. Take into consideration that, if you add extra miles, the content dedicated to the potential customers in your city may not be of interest to a broader audience. Regarding content, always be aware of the location and how you address people living in the city and areas around it.

Take the example below:

Every year, thousands of people come to Kelowna, BC, Canada to the Classic Rock Festival. Your business is within 30 miles from it. You will take advantage of the festival and push ads on people who visit this festival. Think about their journey and timeframe while they are visiting this festival. Understand your buyer's point of view.

For people who come before the festival, they will need hotels or Airbnbs, restaurants or fast foods, markets, and will visit other local tourist destinations. They may also be interested in pharmacies and relaxation options. Your business can assist in their journey during the festival period. It would be a good idea to offer discounts or push products that can be useful for them.

The advantage of local marketing is an opportunity to empathize and send messages to potential customers to help with their demand. Sending a message to your customers that you are there to support them and they know where to find you are valuable for building your brand.

Besides Facebook, Instagram is another platform that also allows you to create location-based ads. Like Facebook, this platform also shares a lot of information about its users and you

can make it focus on and build your local audience. There are also other platforms worth exploring: YouTube, Twitter, Pinterest, and Snapchat.

The platforms mentioned above can support your marketing activities based on location and bring you customers who are ready to shop. There will be many more options to drive local marketing activities in the future to make it easier for you.

Small businesses oriented in the local area need to utilize all of the strategies listed above. If you listen to your customers, build the community, and design content for your local audience, you can dominate the competition.

Location-focused Ads

Advertisements focused on your location can bring a lot of revenue back to your business. It is essential to understand the process when you are preparing your marketing strategy. Create a strategy and ads and make sure you avoid wasting money on people who will not purchase your service or product. Know what your prospects are looking for.

Each business has a limited budget to spend on local marketing. Facebook and Google can help you set up campaigns to increase traffic towards your website. It will allow you to create campaigns focused on your location.

Check under the settings on both platforms how to do that. Besides the location, you can set how far from your target location people can see your ad. You can control all aspects of what your ads will target.

It is an advantageous method to promote your business not only to the people in your city but beyond the area to people interested in your industry.

Landing Pages

Landing pages are the beginning of the customer experience. Having a landing page means that the visitors first check your virtual offer before they get to purchase.

It is crucial to have it customized for desktop and mobile versions. Make your contact details available and easy to click. Display what your store looks like by having actual images on your website.

If you want to target other cities, develop one for each different landing page with different keywords. There is a significant opportunity to find customers and your city, so it is worth doing market research on tags and pushing ads on each keyword leading to your link.

Text Messaging

SMS is still quite a popular way to market your business. Text messaging is effective to remind customers of what's new in your store or to send when starting a new promotion. It is excellent for service-based companies as they can easily have a meeting with you and a tremendous benefit for follow up or specials you are looking to promote.

Local Brands

Your community supports the local economy as people will shop locally regardless of price. There are many explanations for it. The most powerful thing is boosting the local economy and keeping money close to home. This is a powerful motivator for many people.

Local brands bring value as the customer connects emotionally to the same place of origin. Think about how you feel when you meet someone from your hometown. Buyers react the same. Even though there are many differences among people, the sense of belonging is very strong.

Your business is the one creating this bond, and your community members are delighted to support the economy by choosing local products rather than products from big chains. Engage with your community and showcase how you connect with your customers in various ways.

Support Charity

Giving first is one rule all entrepreneurs follow. Giving back to the community by supporting charities, NGOs, and causes they hold dear is valuable to connect. By organizing events and raising money for a cause important to you, you can demonstrate your heart and how much you support the community.

Collaboration with Other Businesses

Collaboration with other businesses, even those that may be seen as direct competition, can lead you to new customers. Cooperating with companies beyond your industry, you can find opportunities where you both serve the same customer. Through joint ventures, alliances, and partnerships, you can co-create different packages and make beneficial referrals. Additionally, you can organize a gathering and promote the benefits of both businesses.

Events

Conferences and events are the next steps you can take as a local business to engage with your potential customers. Try to connect the topic of the event with your business. Also, there are always opportunities to speak to groups on the benefits of your product or service. This can be done both virtually and in person. When you promote these engagements on your website and social media, many potential customers will see it and attend. The credibility of being seen as an authority is unmatched.

Events are also important when it comes to launching a new service so use the opportunity to invite as many loyal followers as possible.

Keep in mind that you can always collaborate on your topic or industry with other stakeholders, such as other businesses or charitable organizations.

Collaboration with the businesses in the vicinity of your event is a must. It is a win all the way around. You can organize a day full of benefits for the whole neighborhood. Promotion can be simple in today's world—social, flyers, client, and prospect outreach—you can fill a room quicker than you think IF you have a great idea.

Once you have a successful event or two in your local area, consider taking these events to different cities or partnering with like-minded entrepreneurs for an online event. One successful event opens up options and opportunities to create audiences everywhere.

Empower Your Staff

Your entire organization is part of your marketing effort. The better they understand the goals and mission of the company, the better they can help. As a local business, your team is the most powerful voice and referral source. Free and paid marketing is great, as evidenced above, but your team, when trained properly, are your best source of business development. They are the ones who have an opportunity to talk with your customers daily, get feedback on your service and product, and truly connect.

You must invest time to educate them on how to be better marketers, how to listen for opportunities, and how to promote your business.

Education is vital for your staff. First, make sure they all know what your business is all about. Do not assume! Offer sales training so they can be more effective as they sell to

customers. Most sales are missed because employees are not trained properly. Don't make this mistake. I highly recommend providing incentives for everyone on the team, not just the sales reps.

Local Media

Press releases and promoting your business on local TV may bring potential customers to your door.

Audiences like to hear new stories about great products or services. Invite journalists to your events and ask them if your story can be released and mentioned on TV. Even more importantly, the media needs content. Whether it is TV, print, radio, or podcasts, they need content and are willing to promote you, many times for little or no cost.

Stories about local entrepreneurs who are giving back to the community and supporting the local community are the ones quality journalists are searching for. Before you decide to reach out to the press, think about outlining why your story is exciting and which topics could be covered to connect with your business.

Impact of Small Businesses

Small businesses are a significant segment of the economy, and it is harder for you to stand out since many big chains exert their influence to take over the market.

Nevertheless, local marketing methods can help you share your story and connect with the community on a more personal

level than big corporations can. The key is to implement these lessons and overcome inertia to get your momentum going.

Online Advertising

There are a variety of online ads to choose from for your marketing strategy. PPC (Pay-Per-Click) is one of them. However, this chapter will focus on other types of online ads, including banners, e-newsletter ads, e-newsletter sponsorships, and online classified ads.

Online classifieds, including Craigslist and eBay, can help generate traffic to your site, translating into more conversions and sales. There are a variety of online classifieds you can use. Because of the overwhelming popularity of these two sites, we'll work with them. The basic concept of online marketing is to get your products and services out there, and what better way than on an online classified board. Not only do online classifieds help drive traffic and sales, but they are free to post on and maintain. In this chapter, we're going to cover a few different areas of online classifieds and the benefit of working them into your online marketing plan.

This chapter will cover:

- Banner Ads
- E-Newsletter Ads
- E-Newsletter Sponsorships
- The Benefits of Online Classifieds
- Setting Up an eBay Merchant Account
- Lead Generation Through eBay
- Traffic Generation through Craigslist
- Effective SEO Ads

Banners ads are the ads you see at the top and sides of a webpage. There are various ways to utilize a banner ad, and CPC (Cost Per Click) and CPI (Cost Per Install) are the two most popular. However, a combination of the two is also available with some websites.

E-newsletter ads are ads you pay for to be in other people's newsletters. This is a great way to build a partnership with others in complementary industries.

An **e-newsletter sponsorship** is even more coveted because it awards you more space than a typical ad and a level of exclusivity.

Banner Ads

When working with banner ads, there are several things to consider when finding the right site to work with. If done the right way, a banner ad will generate many good impressions and will help draw qualified leads to your site. A banner ad is much more impressive to the reader than a classified ad or another advertising form. You can include graphics, images, copy, and other elements to catch someone's eye.

The benefits of a banner ad include:

- Greater visual appeal
- Ad space to accommodate copy
- Front and center placement

There is significant power behind banner ads. You can generate more traffic, effectively advertise new products or services, and build your brand confidently. A banner ad puts

your company and products front and center, which means you are noticed and visited by more people. This converts into more sales and new customers to add to your database for future purchases. A banner can be used to effectively market your products and services because you have more room to offer information, images, and other elements to make your products attractive.

Your **company and product branding** is an essential aspect of generating sales. When you use banner ads, you can help build a consistent brand image that is memorable and sells. This is especially good for new businesses or new-to-online-marketing businesses. If you are not sure about your central vision, look at your logo, business name, and other visual elements to make sure it's cohesive. If it does not feel right, don't be afraid to change it up.

There are also many different **types and sizes of banners ads** to choose from. It is important to understand the best placement options to help you get the best results.

- Standard: 468 x 60
- Half: 234 x 60
- Vertical: 120 x 240
- Leaderboard: 728 x 90
- Microbar: 88 x 31
- Square Bottom: 125 x 125
- Skyscrapers: 160 x 600 or 120 x 600 (this is more common)
- Medium Rectangle: 300 x 250

These are the most common sizes available and give you an idea of what to choose. Visit a couple of websites and look at

the different types and sizes of ads to see how effective they are. Go to a site with no expectations, and just let your eyes go to what they notice first. **Where is that location on the site? What size is the ad? What elements were used to make the ad attractive?**

By checking out other ads, you can see what works and, more importantly, what does not.

Once you know how other banner ads look, it's time to choose a location for your ad. There are two things to consider:

- What size should your ad appear in?
- What is your target market?

You should always know your target market and keep that in mind no matter what marketing you are using. When it comes to playing with online marketing, you need to fit your ads and partnerships with particular websites and partnering companies. This is much more niched than offline marketing but helps you reach a specific target market without wasting precious marketing dollars as with blitz marketing tactics (like newspaper ads and inserts).

One of the best ways to make sure the right audience sees your ad is by advertising in an online magazine where *your target market* and *their readership* are the same.

Once you have done a little research and know which sites you are the most interested in advertising, it is time to contact the site's advertising contact. It is not as hard as it sounds, no matter what size website or company you want to work with. You simply look for advertising information on the site or contact them through the contact submission form.

A contact will get back to you with information about their rates for the sizes they offer and other information, including:

- Visitor demographic
- Visitor volume
- Average click-through rate

If you are happy with all of these things, you are ready to work with the site and get your banner up and running. Give it a few days and see if you notice your site traffic increase or if you notice no change at all. You will quickly see if the ad is working or not. If not, go to another site and try again. If you have it in the marketing budget, place banners ads on two different locations and see where the numbers go. You are likely to see twice the results!

Banner performance can be affected by several things, and you can increase your banner's performance level.

Brief Copy: Keep your wording brief and to the point. Images are more critical in a banner ad, and most visitors will not stop long enough to read a long piece of copy in an advertisement. A few words to get across what you have to offer are plenty.

Graphic Weight: Graphic weight is the overall size of the graphic. Most websites have weight limits, generally less than 20KB.

Animation: Banners ads are getting flashier and flashier, and it can feel hard to compete with. The reality is that animated banners perform better than static ads. This can be done with text or images and move or blink. You will need a

web designer's help and can usually have this service done for around \$200.

Specific Ads: Design a particular ad for a specific site. It is important to design an ad that looks similar in feel and voice to the website you are advertising on. This helps your ad blend into the landscape and appeal to the readership of the site.

Test Your Ad: It is essential to test a couple of different versions of your ad to see which is the most effective. You can do three different versions and leave each up for 72 hours and track the click-throughs. The one that draws in the most clicks and conversions is a keeper.

Track Performance: As with all online advertising, you need to track the performance of your ad. Most publishers should be able to provide this information. However, if you are not getting about a 0.5-2% click-through rate, switch the ad out.

The pricing of banners ads comes in a variety of ways. These include:

- Flat Fee
- CPC
- CPM
- CPL

Flat Fee: A flat fee is exactly that. You pay one flat fee for a set amount of exposure time for your ad. Although, unlimited impressions, clicks, and sales sound like a great deal unless you are getting little to no action and are stuck in your agreement. It is a waste of money, time, and resources. Therefore, it is essential to find out about visitor volume and how it performs before you pay for an ad on it.

CPC: *Cost-per-click* is where you pay for every click on your ad that leads the visitor to your site. This is a more accurate payment method as you only pay when the ad works and save money when it does not do its job.

CPM: *Cost-per-impression* is the most common form of banner ad payment. You generally pay for 1000 impressions for a particular rate. So, \$5 per 1000 impressions is one payment method.

CPL: *Cost-per-lead* is where you pay for the web addresses you have gathered from the ad's exposure. You have to track and prove this for the payments to be accurate. This is usually done when your goal is to build your database through an online sign-up form or survey.

E-Newsletter Advertising

If you pay attention to some of the e-newsletters you receive, you may notice banner style ads on the newsletter's top or sides. These are companies that have paid to have an advertisement in the e-newsletter through the newsletter's publisher. For this to be successful, the key is to find a newsletter with a broad readership and the payment style you're looking for.

Payment Methods: Some e-newsletters offer a CPC (cost-per-click) payment system where you only pay for the click-throughs to your website. Most newsletter ads are funded through a flat fee. You have an agreed-upon size and payment, and it will appear in a specific newsletter only. Many e-

newsletter publishers offer packages where you receive multiple ads for a set fee as well.

Security: Because the publisher has done all the work to gain the recipients' permission, you are protected from spam.

Results: Research shows 22% of people trust an e-newsletter or ezine they subscribe to when unsolicited email marketing receives only 2% of people's trust. E-newsletter ads have some of the highest conversions rates in online marketing. The benefits speak for themselves.

Let's talk about the kinds of e-newsletters you want to work with. A broad readership is a given, but what else makes a successful e-newsletter? The real key is to find a complementary e-newsletter to your business.

If you have a photography business, find a wedding planner, and put an ad in her e-newsletter. If you are an automotive customization shop, place an ad in a dealership e-newsletter.

It's all about finding the perfect fit for you and the e-newsletter publisher.

Once you have an ad out there and can analyze the results a bit, it is time to take it to the next level. You can do this in a variety of ways. Let's take a look at some tips to do this:

Package Deals: Many e-newsletter publishers offer package deals when you run ads in both their newsletter and on their website. You can also ask whether they have a print magazine as an extension of their offering. This is the best way to get the most exposure for your advertising dollar.

Target Market: Talk with e-newsletter publishers about whether they have a breakdown of their target market. Sometimes you can pay for an ad in a specific area of their audience. This is especially true with large e-newsletters offering different topics to different readers.

Frequency: Because relationships are built on trust, you need to consider doing multiple ads with one e-newsletter instead of one and then moving to the next. Ensure the e-newsletter you are advertising in is conducive to your target market and invest in a package deal instead of one ad. Also, work with the publishing schedule of the e-newsletter you are working with. If it is a weekly newsletter, consider buying a certain number of weeks in a row. You can do the same with a monthly newsletter as well.

Analytics: As with all forms of online marketing, you need to test, measure, and track all the components of the ad to ensure it is working for you. You know the publisher pays attention to subscribers, opens, bounces, and all of that information. They will track the hot topics vs. the ones that receive a cooler reception. You need to take the time to keep track of the same things by looking at where your website visitors are coming from to know if your ad with working.

E-Newsletter Sponsorships

E-newsletter sponsorships are different in that you get a larger space and some other perks to go with it. The perks offered by sponsorship ads include:

- More Ad Space

- Room for a Short Bio
- Link to Your Website

Before you run out to swoop up your first e-newsletter sponsorship, there are a few things to keep in mind. You need to make sure you are still true to your target market and learn how to put together an e-newsletter sponsorship and always include a link to your website.

Link: A link to your site could be embedded into your image, in the bio area, or other images.

Bio: A sponsorship ad allows for more space to offer some information about your company. This can be a short blip about your products, services, and other things you have to offer. This is not an area for a full biography like on your site. Still, it is a functional space for how your company can benefit the readers, a subtle call to action, your logo, phone number, address, and website address. Keep it concise and to the point.

Target Market: Because you have more space in your ad, it is important to go beyond finding the right e-newsletter. You need to write to your target market. When writing your copy, make sure you have the target market in mind as you approach what you want to share with them. Also, consider the voice you want to use. Whether it is friendly, approachable, business-like, or overly professional should be dependent on the audience you are writing to. If you are unsure about this, ask the publisher about their audience.

The Benefits of Online Classifieds

There are many benefits to using online classifieds. When you work your classifieds ads and presence into your online marketing campaign, you will see results. These sites are well-known to users as the best place to go to score a deal. It does not matter if you have a product or service to offer. If you want local customers (and you do), you need to advertise on an online classified site.

Search engines work well with Craigslist and eBay sites and give them high page rankings because the content is updated frequently and is linked well. Target keywords used in your ads also helps them pop up higher in search engine results.

Another benefit of the higher exposure through online classified ads is the traffic it drives to your site. Of course, more traffic equals more conversions and more sales. The great thing about classified ad sites is that they deliver qualified buyers. The people who frequent these sites have already done the research and know what they want. One other benefit of working with Craigslist and eBay is that they accept PayPal as a payment form. This is a secure way of getting paid. Using PayPal also encourages impulse purchases. The customer does not have to get up from the desk to find their wallets and payment moderation options are available if needed.

Setting Up an eBay Merchant Account

eBay has made leaps and bounds in the way of online classifieds, so we will take a moment to talk about their

merchant accounts and how to utilize one to maximize sales. There are a few things to consider when working with an eBay merchant account. One thing to note is that eBay offers classified ads for about \$10/month, which is a fantastic bargain over PPC ads. With your eBay merchant account, you can create a mini store. Each product can have its small site - whereas this is not possible when you simply place an ad on a classified website. This enables you to draw customers to specific squeeze pages designed for each product.

Visit ebay.com to set up your merchant account. Before you get started, think about what your username is going to be. This is the name everyone will see and associate with your store. It needs to be something that reflects your business and the types of products and services you offer.

Once you have gone through the registration, you need to create an "About Me" page. This is similar to a bio page on your website or blog. Instead of another page talking about your experience and how long you have been in business, consider using the copy from your squeeze page to help convert people into your database. As long as your HTML does not contain JavaScript, you can paste the code from your site into the "About Me" section of your eBay merchant account.

Lead Generation Through eBay

When your account is set up, it is time to start working on your store. The main page of your store is like a compilation of all your classified ads in one place. You should then have a separate page for each product you have to offer. The great

thing about the storefront page is the visitors can look at an item they like, click on it, view specific information, and a window showing similar items you have for sale.

Through your merchant store, you can accept various payment forms or stick with PayPal as offered through eBay. This is an important consideration but know that most eBay shoppers are used to paying through PayPal and feel more secure. All auctions must be done through their payment processing system. The advantage of posting classified ads is you can control the payment method, your checkout system, upsell/cross-sell, and add customers to your database.

When putting together a classified ad for eBay, there are a few considerations you need to make.

Keywords: As with all online classified ads, you need to think about the keywords you will use. Almost all eBay buyers use the search function to find what they are looking for on the site. Take the time to use Google's Keyword Planner tool to find the most popular keywords surrounding your products, services, and company.

Take a look on eBay to see the competitiveness of the keywords you are considering. Enter one into the search box on the site and see how many listings come up. If there are a ton of listings, you know the keyword is pretty popular.

Listing Title: When you have your keywords collected, it is time to create your ad. Click on the *sell* tab. Under *selling format*, choose to have a classified advertisement for 30 days. Next, you will come up with a listing title. It should match your search terms but needs to be kept short. Keep it under 55 characters and to the point. Grammar does not matter so much in your

title listing. The point is to get your ad to appear in top search listings.

Subheading: The next portion of the ad is your subheading. This is where you can describe the product a little more. You grab the visitor's attention and get them to click on your ad. Use two to three keywords or keyword phrases in your subheading to grab their attention.

Graphics: Once you have done this, you can take the opportunity to add graphics to your ad. You can add a single image to make your ad stand out. Use a graphic that represents the product, industry, or business you have. Also, use a bright yellow or green border around the image.

Description: The description section should house the HTML code from your website on the page where all the information about the product is listed.

Traffic Generation through Craigslist

Craigslist, created in 1995, has more daily visitors than Netflix. As we mentioned, Craigslist visitors are ready to buy. They have done their research, and they are there to search for a specific item to purchase. Regardless of what you sell, you can use Craigslist to help generate traffic to your site and convert those visitors into customers.

Craigslist is easy to use and categorized by cities, states, regions, and countries. When you get to the main listing page (one of 500), you can then narrow down the area through the type of product, service, or ad you're looking for.

One of the reasons Craigslist is a must-have in your online classified marketing plan is because Craigslist ranks high in

Google. This gets your ad and website near the top of Google search results without all the extra SEO work you have to do with your website, blog, and PPC ads. There are several reasons Google and Craigslist work so well together:

PageRank: As I mentioned, Craigslist ads tend to rank high in search results where they are well-written. Crawlers can make it through Craigslist ads easily and index the postings almost immediately.

Page Depth: The page closest to the top is crawled first and indexed more quickly than the deeper layers. Most Craigslist ads are incredibly close to the surface, meaning it only takes a click or two to get there.

HTML Code: Craigslist is a no-frills kind of site. It is built entirely in HTML, and no CSS or Java was used. Because of this, the site is accessible for search engine spiders to read.

While you do not need a Craigslist account to post ads, it is a good thing if you want to edit and delete your ads at any time. Simply go to www.craigslist.org and sign up for an account.

Effective SEO Ads

Once you have an account and are ready to post an ad, there are a few things you need to take into consideration when writing your ad. We'll go over all those things here, so you know how to write and create a well-written, active Craigslist ad.

Ad Location: Because Craigslist is a vast arena of locations, it is essential to choose your ad's right areas to be effective. If

you are a local business, you only need to select the listing page for your city or town. Users usually look in their local or close to the local area, so make sure you are posting where your target market will see it. If you have multiple fields you want to market to, you will need to post slightly different ads one at a time.

Avoid Flagging: You want to avoid being flagged by Craigslist as you can appear to be posting spam. Any visitor, as well as Craigslist admins, can flag an ad for removal. Like most classified sites, there are some guidelines Craigslist operates by.

Here are the things you need to know to avoid being flagged:

- High-Quality Content
- Relevant Links
- Avoid Duplication
- 48-hour Rotation
- Delete Old Ads
- Know the Terms of Service
- Avoid Excessive Posting
- Understand Ghosting

The 48-hour rotation refers to posting new, similar ads in a different geographic region. You can do this after 49 hours; however, you should remove the old ad first.

Ghosting is when one of your advertisements is deleted or seems to disappear without any notification to you. This can happen when you post too often. If you feel there is no legitimate reason for this action, contact Craigslist about it.

Choose the Correct Section: Once you have a location, you also need to choose the right section for your ad to be effective and avoid flagging. You should note there are very similar sections to choose from. An excellent example of this is jobs vs. gigs.

Keep in mind some sections generate more traffic to websites and blogs. Some of these sections are events, items for sale, services for sale, community, and the discussion forums. The discussion forums are massively underused but can be a great way to drive traffic. Always remember to use proper forum etiquette and be genuinely involved.

Create a Solid Ad: Once you have all the other components in place, it is time to put together a good ad. Keep your ad simple, to the point, and use plain text. When writing a classified advertisement for Craigslist, the same SEO principles apply as with other classified ads. You want to use your keyword in the ad title and different keywords throughout the ad copy. Make sure the title specifically addresses the product or service. You can add images but only do so if it is of the product or is relevant to the ad.

Images can make a big difference in the amount of attention your ad gets, especially if it's listed in the for-sale section. Some users do not even look at an ad unless there is an image included.

Track Results: Craigslist does not have a tracking system like PPC ads. You can use Google Analytics to see how much traffic comes from Craigslist, but not from which ads or the conversion that comes from your Craigslist ads. You can put a code in the ad or a specific telephone extension for the phone

number to help track which ads are the most effective. Simply ask for the code that was listed in the ad when a visitor calls or makes a purchase.

In this chapter, we talked about online advertising that goes beyond the realm of classifieds and PPC. Banner ads and e-newsletters are a great place to reach a targeted market and get a response for the money you spend.

Also, we talked about online classifieds and how to use eBay and Craigslist to take your online presence to the next level. These are easy tactics to use, and most online classifieds are free. It only takes a few minutes to put an ad in place, and once you have written a couple of ads, it will come naturally.

The Key Components of a Revenue- Producing Website

Before you embark on an extensive online marketing campaign, you will need to have a well-designed website. You must work through the process of deciding what elements you want to incorporate and put that plan into action. It will be essential to consider the different elements within your site to decide which ones are the best for your brand. Then you'll need to ensure that you have the standard pages most all websites have and determine any other pages you will want to integrate. Put it all together with a web designer or template, and you'll have a company site you'll be proud to project and offer for years to come.

In this chapter, we'll talk about:

- Site Planning
- Domains
- Hosting
- Maintenance
- Web Designer Vs. DIY
- Templates
- Landing Pages
- Easy to use
- Online Ordering

- Ask Questions
- 5 Must-Have Web Pages on Your Site
- Other Pages to Consider
- How to Gather the Content for Your Site
- Put it All Together
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Site Planning

Before you start putting together the actual elements of your site, you need to put a framework for action into place. This will help you stay on track through the site-building process and ensure you don't forget anything important. Keep in mind that some of these actions will also become essential as you build a site. The better prepared you are, the better your website will be from the start, even though pertinent changes and upgrades along the way will be paramount to a secure site. Thinking the process through, preparing a plan for the site will align to a solid transformation and inevitably save you time and money.

Domains

Your domain is your Uniform Resource Locator or your URL. Think of it as the web address people type in when they want to visit your site. You have no doubt used hundreds of

these to go to your favorite websites or “clicked” these on to upload the desired URL site. You want a URL that will be easy to remember as it will separate confusion from those desiring to see your site. Your top priority to consider when purchasing a domain is the ease of access.

You will also need to utilize your business name or as close as you can get it. It is best to have a .com (rather than .net or .org for example) unless you have a country code domain that you want to use. The key is to keep your domain name notable, memorable, and professional. If your business name is unavailable for some reason, consider playing with words or abbreviations pertaining to your business name that will still connect to your brand products and services.

Hosting

A host is an external server that keeps your website running. You need a host for your website to be live and available to your targets. Most companies that sell domains also host sites. You will have the option to keep all your services in the same place or split them up. The big difference will likely be cost and service and is a decision you can make now and then change later if needed. If you are working with web developers, it would be prudent to ask for their opinion on the matter since their experience could be very valuable. In addition, utilizing your web developers for their hosting services through their own companies may also work as a strategic advantage for you.

Maintenance

Another thing you have to consider is how your maintenance will occur. With certainty, all websites need maintenance. Whether you are changing out a weekly deal, adding new portfolio photos, or just giving it a fresh look, you need to keep your website fresh and up to date with your best information. While you may feel confident making a few simple changes (for example, pictures and content copy), it may be beneficial to work with a webmaster for these changes as they may get more complex over time.

For example, you could be working on small modifications that could modify the website code, which can result in your site crashing. If this happens and your website is down, you will probably have to bring a webmaster in to repair to get it back up and going. This unfortunate mistake can be costly and time-consuming. You can bet that any traffic driven to your site while it's down will not return. Every minute your website is down, you are losing potential business. Be prepared.

Web Designer vs. Do It Yourself (DIY)

A web designer is a freelancer or web professional who has experience with building and launching websites. If you know absolutely nothing about websites and need a reasonably interactive or even a complicated site, this may be the way for you to go. Most small businesses don't need a complicated website to get started, and you can always add features as you grow and decide which additional elements will benefit your users.

If you're intimidated by the web-building process, it never hurts to visit your competition and get inspiration.

DIY website building is generally based on a template and site builder offered by your host. They are usually easy to work with and provide all the necessary functions a web designer could put together for you. When using a template through a web host, you also have customer service and help when you need your questions answered.

Templates

Templates are generally available through your web host or various technology service centers. One source that is very popular is WordPress based site builders, with the option of finding an outside, free or premium template and uploading it into your site builder. Many of the same simple elements are available when you build your site, including:

- Video
- Ad Placement (often with limitations depending on your host)
- Content
- Pictures
- Portfolio or Gallery
- Add Pages
- Online Store
- Elements
- Video
- Images

Because of the popularity of templates, there are many available and they're often categorized by industry. You can choose from website templates in different sectors such as photography, food service, candy shop, hair salon, etc. Consider your industry, and you may find the perfect website template without having to make a lot of changes. When choosing a template, consider that other businesses have used the same template, and therefore your sites may not be differentiated from theirs.

In your local and even regional area, this issue may not present difficulty for you, but it would be reasonable to keep it in mind in case you need to make some changes. There are many ways to personalize a template, including changing color schemes, the header, adding your logo or letterhead, and other personal elements. Weigh all of your options and remember that it's a continuous journey to find what will work best for you.

Landing Pages

Your landing page is the page your visitors land on when they enter your web address or click on an ad. It is usually your home page, but it may be another page if you're using a sales page in your advertisements. Regardless of which page you are using as your primary, it needs to be well designed and constructed. It should offer information about you and your company, describe your products and services, and showcase your current special offer or a discount. Visuals, like pictures and videos, are always an excellent element to use on your

landing page. One great way to engage your visitors is by utilizing your logo or your letterhead as the site header. You want people to connect with your site instantly, gain their interest immediately by making your landing page highly attractive, and offering a variety of media forms to sustain your visitors' responsiveness.

The online attention span is incredibly short, and you have seconds to impress a visitor enough to stay on your site and look around. Your website must be easy to use and to navigate. There also needs to be a clear, easy way to contact you with any questions. Engage and Educate must be your theme and premise.

Easy to Use

Your site needs to be easy to use. That means your navigation should be clear, your links need to work, and your forms need to be simple to submit. If a visitor has a difficult time getting around your site, they probably won't come back, and they certainly would be hesitant to recommend you to other people. Think of how you can make your website easy to use and offer online features competitors don't provide.

- Do you have an online store for products and services?
- Can your customers book a consultation or appointment online?
- Can they submit a question or find your phone number if they have a question?

These are all essential things you need to think about from a customer's perspective. Go to a competitor's site and surf

around a bit. Take notes about what you like and what you don't like. Take some time to analyze and assess what will apply to your potential customers. Make a list to ensure that when you implement your site that it will resound with ease for the user.

Online Ordering

If you sell and ship tangible products, an online store is a great way to boost sales. An online store also allows you to offer customers a way to purchase around the clock. Making sales without your physical presence.

Another advantage of online ordering is that you can track sales in a way that doesn't require data input. PayPal, Stripe, and other payment processing sites track all transactions and allow you to pull reports automatically. You will need to merge these with in-house sales and invoices to see an accurate picture of your monthly sales and expenses.

Ask Questions

This is where the simplicity of your submission form comes in. Don't ask too much information, but always get a visitor's contact information so you can get back to them with an answer. All questions should be answered within 24-48 hours and a confirmation page or email is always a nice touch. On your submission form, you need Fields (boxes for information) to include:

- Full Name

- Phone Number
- Email Address
- Content or Other Information

You want to give people the ability to express a question or concern. There are other features you can add to get more information about what they need. The key to a good contact submission form is its simplicity as to ask for necessary contact information of the visitor but allow them to briefly express what they need.

5 Must-Have Web Pages on Your Site

To have even a primary site means you need some pages included that are non-negotiable. They are all standard pages that other websites have, and they set visitors at ease. These pages include:

- About Us
- FAQ's
- Contact Us
- Terms of Use/Privacy Policy
- Testimonials

These pages are all relatively easy to pull together. You can do it on your own or with help from a freelancer. Make sure that you give special consideration to these significant sections.

1. About Us

This is the page where you share your bio, picture, company history, and other information. This where your authenticity

and credibility start. Visitors visit this page more than any other on your website. They want to know you and make sure that you have the knowledge and expertise they need. You have the opportunity to share your knowledge, training, education, experience, certifications, and anything else that makes you a leader in your industry. If you have other staff members, this is a place where you can put their picture and bio as well. Professional discretion gives your visitors a trustworthy and reliable impression of your legitimacy.

2. Products & Services

Regardless of the business you have or the industry you're in, you need to tell people what you have to offer. If you're a salon, you tell customers about your cut, color, perm, and styling services. If you're an auto detailer, you tell customers about your detail, tinting, and other services. You can also use this page to inform customers about your guarantee, warranty, delivery options, and other related services.

3. Contact Us

This page is essential for your visitors and potential customers to have a valid means to reach you for questions or concerns. There are several elements you can include on your contact page. If you have a physical location, consider putting your address, phone number, email (with an embedded link), and a Google or Bing map showing your location. This is a great way to give customers a way to find you in a manner in which they are comfortable.

Depending on the level of contact you want to offer, other popular features include:

- Live chat
- Submission form
- Toll-free number

Start small and add elements as you feel more comfortable using them. If you don't have a toll-free number, consider adding a line for messages only. Use a contact submission form so they can ask general questions, request a consultation, or book an appointment. Notifications can come to you via email and are easy to monitor. A local phone number is significant for local customers and gives the added sense of legitimacy, showing you are a 'real' business.

Revealing your location also offers a sense of comfort and saves you from having to give out directions to new customers. If you have intake or administration forms for new customers or prospects to fill out, consider putting them on your website so customers can print, fill out, and bring to their appointment.

4. Terms of Use & Privacy Policy

These are official pages that tell the visitor what they should expect of your site and show that you respect their personal information. It is a standard for all credible sites to have. Because they are legal documents, it can feel overwhelming to put them together. Some websites offer template versions where you only have to input your company name. This is a great way to put both together quickly and post to your site. An example is found at www.ftcguardian.com. Create a separate

page for them but list the page in the footer instead as a tab on your main menu.

5. Testimonials

This page is one that cannot be underestimated. You want to showcase the positive things your customers are saying and attributing to your products and service. People want to know how others see you, your company, and the satisfaction that others have in doing business with you. Your testimonials can influence a new customer to purchase over most other information you offer them. You can gather testimonials by providing a short survey at the end of every appointment, project, or purchase. Always ask customers before putting their reviews or comments on your website.

Also, consider a portfolio or gallery page to showcase your finished jobs and results with customers. This is a great way to promote how you usually do things. Always ask a customer before posting pictures of the finished project. If you do a gallery, place a testimonial with the photos from the job. If applicable, use before and after pictures to show your superior quality and results.

Other Important Pages to Consider

While the five pages above are the most important for the site, several other pages can make your website and company more user-friendly. You want your visitors and potential customers to feel welcomed on your site and find a reason to keep coming back.

Ordering Page or Online Store

If you have tangible products (or even intangible services), an online store is a great way to streamline the process. You can utilize a couple of different services to pull this off. Many web hosts have online store templates where you can build an online store. You can also do this through a payment processing service, like PayPal and Stripe. If you have services, you can put prices and descriptions online and utilize an online cart. Alternately, you can link the BUY button to an email so you can contact them directly to set up the sale.

FAQs

Customers and site visitors love when they can get an answer to a question immediately without spending the time to contact you. Think of the most common questions you usually get and ask current customers to fill out a short survey. Compile these and come up with simple answers everyone can understand. Avoid having a list of questions that is overwhelming or too long. Put a note at the top of the list that says they can contact you (link to your contact page) if they need more information.

Appropriate questions include answers about your products and services, your hours of operation, what to expect during their first appointment or consultations, and specific information of your business. If you're a landscaper, share your procedures for home and property treatment. The same can be used for carpet cleaners. An example is:

How do I know I can trust you in my home?

We are experienced and extremely professional. We conduct background checks on all of our employees before we let them on a job site. To help protect your beautiful home, we wear booties and protective clothing to keep outside material out of your home.

How to Gather the Content for Your Site

Once you have an idea for what you want your site to look like, it's time to put together the content. You can do this in one of two ways: you can write the content, or you can hire a freelancer to do it. There are benefits and downfalls to each, but the important thing is to explore and find the right method for your business to be successful.

Do-it-Yourself vs. Freelancer

As with any part in this process, you can choose to handle it yourself, and writing the content for your site is no different. The upside is that you will save some money and you will have the chance to utilize your creativity. The downside? Web content writing takes experience and *finesse*. If you don't have experience writing web content, the best choice is to bring in someone who does. They need to have experience writing online and utilizing the aspects of SEO writing. This will help your website attract attention from search engines. It also ensures your content will be without simple writing errors, which can turn visitors off and make you look less professional.

The bottom line: When it comes to web content, the best choice is to find an experienced freelancer who knows what

they're doing. This will ensure you get the best content without mistakes.

Put it All Together

Now you have a plan and the content, and you wonder what's next. You have to put it all together and publish your website. If you're working with web designers, they will put everything together. You can check their progress before your site is published. If you're building the website yourself, you will need to go into your site builder and input the content, links, and templates for each page. Always be mindful of the need to consider the value of a web designer. How much time will you spend putting your site together? What is your time worth in monetary value? If you spend this time doing other promotional things, would you bring more money into your business? These are important decisions to make because your business success depends on them.

Easy Site Promotion

Once you have a site, you'll need to spend a bit of time getting the word out. Of course, you need to try different marketing campaigns and strategies to realize which are the best for your business. Practice makes it perfect and you will modify the website and campaigns to boost visits. There are some quick basics you need to do to get your website off the ground.

Link to Social Networking

Website templates and other building methods offer the choice of adding links to social networking sites that you can generally put on your landing page or other pages. Another more productive way to link to social networking is to use a widget that showcases either your updates or friend list and a button for them to Like or Share. It will keep the visitor on your page and accomplish growing your database at the same time.

Submit to Search Engines

You can go directly to search engines like Google and Bing and submit your site directly to the search engine. Input the URL and click add site or another indicator to add your website. It will not get your business to the first page results—that needs SEO and other promotional work. At least, you will be in their directory and consumers will find your brand with the keywords you've utilized.

Announcements

An announcement to your current database, blog readers, social networking followers, and existing customers is one of the best ways to get traffic to your site. If you do an e-newsletter, put together an article or announcement that excites the reader and gets them to your website through the link you include in the newsletter. You can do the same with a paper newsletter and include your URL. Put flyers in your store to give to current customers or place them in bags at the checkout.

Do a blog post on your new site and use social networking updates to tell your followers about it. These simple actions can have a massive impact on the traffic you get to your new website.

Test & Measure

To test and measure your website means to observe the analytics and see where you can make changes to get more visitors, contact form submissions, orders, appointments, or other results you need. Google Analytics is the most popular form for tracking information about your website. It's free and easy to set up. There are some key things to track when you are hoping for the success of your website:

User Preferences: You can tell this by seeing which pages are the most popular and how long they are staying on those pages and your site overall. It can tell you which pages are useful, and which need modification. It is especially true if the number leads you generate is low, and you are receiving little interaction through your site.

Where Your Traffic Is Coming From: Take a look at where your visitors are coming from. This could be from your blog, social networking, ads, search engines, and referring sites. It's important to know this information because you can find out what you need to improve. Maybe your ads need some work, but you think the opposite. Research is always the essential component in digital marketing, and you need to know everything about your business.

Positive or Failing Lead Generation: If you have inadequate lead generation, you need to understand the

reason. Maybe you aren't getting the leads you hoped for? Perhaps people aren't buying from your online store? You can see where this is happening and make changes to increase your lead generation. Consider generation excitement such as conducting a contest.

Effectiveness of Online Advertising: Take a look at how many hits or visitors are coming from your ads. You may find they need work to be more successful. You can also assess ad opportunities that may work better. Maybe Facebook ads aren't producing, but your Google ones are. Consider the different advertising platforms and opportunities to find the right traffic for your site. Industry-specific forums and websites may be smaller in size but offer more concentrated traffic than a more extensive ad base. This can save you money and boost your traffic at the same time.

Outsource Content Creation

In the world of online marketing and web presence, content is the king. If you're unfamiliar with SEO writing, outsourcing is the best way to go. The cost of working with a freelancer is worth the time it frees up for you to concentrate on other marketing needs.

We'll talk about the various resources and options to find the right freelancer. With these options, you can find the perfect fit to get your website online and your ad campaigns operate smoothly.

Online advertising campaigns should never be on auto-pilot, especially in the very beginning. It will be a costly lesson for you, as well as wasted time.

Independent Consultants

If you Google “SEM services”, you will quickly find there are hundreds of companies devoted to helping businesses with Search Engine Marketing. That is because these services are needed for any business. The sheer number of companies in existence prove their necessity.

But how do you choose the right consultant to work with? While most of the companies you'll see are highly reputable and capable of what they do, there are some out there that use strategies that can get your business blacklisted in the search engines.

When considering a freelancer or SEM company to work with, always ask for references then follow up with the recommendations. The obvious benefit is that you will have someone handling the unfamiliar aspects of online marketing. The negative is that you'll never learn how to do any of it on your own.

SEM is labor-intensive, so many companies don't work with businesses that don't have the resources to invest in their services. This doesn't mean you have nowhere to go for help; it merely means you may need to get creative with arrangements to get the services you want at a price you can afford.

Full-Service Advertising Companies

There are many benefits to working with a local advertising company. These include:

- Facetime with your marketing executive
- Built-in networks
- Local and online strategies
- Tracking abilities for local campaigns as well as online campaigns

Aside from reaching out to your community for an advertising agency recommendation, there are some other heavy hitters in the field:

- OrangeSoda (www.angesoda.com)
- ReachLocal (www.reachlocal.com)
- WebVisible (www.webvisible.com)
- Yodle (www.yodle.com)

Because of the level of automation, many of the local online advertising companies state that you can be up and running within a few days. Because these companies are used to working with small businesses and know you have a limited budget to work with, you get great services without breaking the bank.

Do-It-Yourself Tools

If you find that you want to try to do your own website promotion, there are a variety of platforms you can use to help you through the process. These platforms are programs that can be used with your online marketing campaigns and they

can be tested and measured for their efficiency. The obvious benefit is the lack of cost you have when paying someone else to take care of it.

Many platforms offer free trials to give you a chance to check out the platform to see if you can benefit from their system.

This chapter was intended to help you visualize, prepare, and build your website on your own or with the help of professionals. Don't be overwhelmed; take one step at a time and remember that there is always help when you need it.

Ultra-Targeting and Segmentation

Businesses and brands never forget one fact about their customers, and that is, they are all human. It means they all differ from each other.

You can simply group them by particular variables such as geolocation, demographics, purchase behavior, and others. Targeting and segmentation is the system of putting customers into specified groups. Businesses use targeting and segmentation for advertising their products or services to their target market.

It is essential to study the market and the target groups that buy your products. With only the ideal and proper segmentation of the target market, can businesses achieve the best results and more sales?

If you are checking social media daily, you can confirm that your ads are targeting everyone correctly. Consumers sometimes feel like the Internet is reading their minds because some advertisements seem like a perfect solution for an existing problem. The actual reason behind it is marketing segmentation.

Sales departments know that it is difficult to attract all consumers in the same way. Some of the reasons are that consumers are not the same, they do not have the same desires, and they live in different cultures across a large geographical

area. For this reason, it is essential to do market segmentation and select the target audience for your product and to position the product in the market.

Targeting Success

Businesses plan their marketing strategy to get sales from consumers. Companies and brands know that they simply cannot sell products to all people. Imagine you are selling glasses to people who do not need them. It is the same for baby products or anything else. Your business needs to define a particular group of people who will most likely buy your products or services. Consumers inside of this group are your target market.

Businesses try to explore and establish target markets that will eventually result in loyal customers. It is not simple to implement a marketing campaign that will affect all consumers in the same way. Some people love something and are thrilled because of it, and some will hate it. Don't think you made a mistake with the marketing campaign. Just think of the fact that all people are different and have personal opinions and needs.

Target marketing focuses on market segments where consumers' requirements and wishes most narrowly match your brand offerings. This group will be very important in providing your business with more revenue and profit.

If you are paying attention to a specific group of consumers, it is more likely to get them to buy from you than it is with a random group of people. You have to focus also on a platform where you are going to advertise. It all depends on the type of

product or service. You can target different locations, age, gender, and more. However, it is vital to know your target audience so you can improve your ROI and generate more sales as a result.

You can use Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, or LinkedIn, to target specific audiences depending on different characteristics. Nowadays, it is easier to promote your business online, but it is useless if you promote it to the wrong audience because you will not see an adequate return on your advertising dollars.

Segmentation is Key

At first glance, segmentation can look simple, but it is a very complicated job. Businesses need to create their marketing campaigns in a way that they can get attention from a potential consumer. Consumers have different needs and desires. That is why segmentation is vital. It is easier to create a campaign for a specific group of people that need your products or services. Do not look at your target audience as a small or irrelevant group; these people are going to be your loyal customers.

It is essential to collect and analyze sales data, earnings, and sales growth rates so you can select the target market. When developing a product, attention should be about the targeted audience of the product.

For example, baby diapers are for children, while walking aids are for older consumers who need help. If you want to do a market segmentation for baby products, you will have to divide a target market into smaller groups of people who have

similar requirements. Instead of targeting all parents in Toronto, you might break that down further to new parents with toddlers who like online shopping.

Consumers are specific with their needs. Because you know your target market, you can put their needs first. This way, you are getting more loyal customers who will buy your products and services.

Segmentation allows businesses to change and upgrade their strategies. Although it is a part of strategic marketing, it is only one step in the process of focusing the entire company on the customer. The first signal is that it is no longer thinking about "what the product has" but "what potential customers want." For this whole process to be successful, it takes the dedication and willingness of the entire team to take action based on the results of the segmentation and the models created. Otherwise, marketing plans are imprecise

Even though there are various types of segmentation strategies, here are four that are most common: *demographic*, *geographic*, *behavioral*, and *psychographic*.

Demographic Segmentation

Demographic segmentation is constructed on measurable statistics, such as age, gender, nationality, income, marital status, education, religion, and more. Businesses most commonly use this kind of segmentation because it is the easiest method to identify and measure target markets. Even though it is the most accessible, that does not mean it is the correct segmentation.

Age segmentation refers to the change of each individual's needs and wishes at different ages and stages of their life. For example, the choice of some products often depends on the age of the consumer. A 20-year old single man is likely to spend his money on tech gadgets while a 40-year old married couple of two buys more household goods.

Gender segmentation recognizes different approaches from men and women. Consumer gender can also serve as a segment of the market since the range of products may be exclusively for the female or male population. Therefore, women use unique cosmetics, but also clothing and footwear. Toys made for girls and boys are different for young children.

The demographic segmentation distinguishes between different generations known as generation X, generation Y, and the market for the elderly. Generation X includes people born from 1965 to 1976. They spend more on cosmetics, music, and travel, but they are also a significant market for PCs and online services. Generation Y is born between 1977 and 1994 and cares about the body, health, and technology. The elderly market is over 65 years old. They tend to spend on themselves, travel, are usually loyal to the brands they buy, and are financially sensitive.

Demographic segmentation may include baby foods for young children only, as an example. Baby food intended exclusively for young children as such makes a target market. It is an example of demographic segmentation by age. Another example of demographic segmentation is products for older people. For example, facial cream for women over 60 is exclusively for that age group.

Income segmentation is when luxury brands are promoting their products to higher-income consumers. It does not sound believable that a person would buy something you think makes no sense to anyone. However, this segmentation is essential to observe because everyone spends money differently. Observe that the first-class compartment on an airline is *always* full.

There is also *education, occupation* as well as *psychological* segmentation because consumers can be segmented based on different motives, perceptions, and attitudes.

Geographic Segmentation

Geographic segmentation separates the market by location. This type of segmentation relies on the belief that people who live in the same region or work at the same place have similar wants for specific products or services.

For businesses that sell and promote their products internationally, geographic segmentation is adequate for location market targeting. However, they cannot rely only on this type of segmentation. They often combine it with demographic segmentation—a combination we appropriately name *geodemographic segmentation*. Businesses with eCommerce stores connect these segmentations in different campaigns. They change countries or cities in each campaign to realize the best ROI.

A considerable difference in geographical segmentation relates to urban and rural areas. For example, we can consider the size of furniture for people who live in apartments in cities (and have far less space) compared to people who live in larger

homes in the suburbs or countryside. Equally, there are differences in the automotive industry, where some cars are for city driving, and some are for more rugged terrain.

Behavioral Segmentation

Behavioral segmentation refers to consumers' purchase behavior, occasions, reaction to marketing campaigns, brand loyalty, and others.

For this kind of segmentation, a new iPhone release is a perfect example. Every year, Apple releases a new model of the phone, and there is a massive demand for loyal customers who are willing to upgrade and purchase it. These customers want to be the first in line, and they will even camp overnight to achieve that.

Businesses sometimes find it tricky to examine a specific behavior, so in the following paragraphs, you may find some variables to help you with that.

Occasions

Consumers tend to purchase specific products at the same time of the day, month, or year. Businesses predict their demand and offer them products. For example, think of Valentine's Day. On that day, you can find roses and flower bouquets on every corner. Businesses also offer cards, teddy bears, hearts, candy, and other products. Companies have to adapt to holidays and every other occasion where they can promote their products and services.

Benefits

We are already familiar with the fact that people differ with their perceptions and needs. It is no different from *benefit* segmentation. Consumers see dissimilar benefits for the same product. For example, one consumer can buy a car for its performance, while the other one can buy it for its design. These factors are essential to both of these customers.

Brand Loyalty

When it comes to brand loyalty, there are three groups of consumers. First are the loyal customers who will always buy products from the same brand. The second group includes those customers who are loyal to more brands and casually choose between them. A third group is consumers who are loyal to none; they simply choose a product because of its price.

For example, if you observe people at your local gym, you can witness these groups of customers. There are Nike fans who have the Nike logo on all of their clothes and equipment. Then, we have those who mix between a few brands such as Nike, Adidas, and Under Armour. Finally, some people do not wear branded fitness apparel at all, or they wear random brands.

Psychographic Segmentation

Psychographic Segmentation, usually known as lifestyle analysis, is the most challenging segment to analyze because it connects to two somewhat private variables: personality and lifestyle. This segmentation asks questions such as: Does this

customer live in the present, or does he focus on the future? Is he shy or outgoing? What are his hobbies? These are just some of the questions, and you can agree that it seems hard to answer them.

Psychographic segmentation tells us that the selections people make while buying products mirror their lifestyle. This information is not visible on the surface; it is necessary to dig deeper. Businesses use additional research such as interviews, surveys, or marketing AI to find out data from websites that consumers visit, to social media posts and others.

Also, sometimes you may expect false information as a result because we are talking about people who are unpredictable and can change hobbies because of various reasons. However, it is better to have some results than no results at all.

Process of Market Segmentation

The process itself begins with determining the market needs. Companies should listen to the needs and desires of consumers. It is precisely these consumer needs and desires that determine what type of segmentation to use. Then the market segments that will bring the company the highest profit are selected, ensuring the company achieves its goals. Then marketing activities take place. Then comes the decisions about the price of the product, its promotion, and sales in the final destination.

There are four stages for the process of market segmentation:

1. Identification of market needs and consumers (field research - consumer survey).
2. The formation of market segments (based on the purchasing power of consumers, the similarities and differences of needs, implementation of marketing strategy, the cost of creating the segment).
3. The choice of target segments (the segment size, growth, competitors, the cost of reaching the segment, compatibility with the goals and resources of the company).
4. Elaboration of the marketing mix (product, price, distribution, and promotion).

Examples of Market Segments

Retirees are a market segment that businesses address over and over. This is especially true in today's world, given that they are financially sensitive, but also in terms of health. Therefore, they spend minimally and only as much as they need. They like to purchase products to make their lives easier and healthier. They watch their diet and may take vitamins to improve their health. Although they can afford the product at a lower price, they pay great attention to its safety, so promotion should go in that direction.

Teenagers are also another example because they comprise a large, diverse age group. People in different countries of the world behave differently, but they like to spend on clothes, technology, festivals, and have a good time. They do not care as much for safety.

Students are another market segment. Some like to spend money on books and various literature to educate themselves better, while others want to go out and socialize. However, they spend money cautiously because they have just become independent and may not have a lot of disposable income to spend.

Businesspeople are also an example of a market segment. Some products are designed especially for businesspeople, and the promotion of such products goes precisely in this direction.

In market segmentation strategies, you should now have insights into the following areas:

1. Focus on the largest market segment
2. Sale of various products in different market segments
3. Sale of one product in all or most of the market segments
4. Focus on the small market segment
5. Creating a new market segment
6. Breaking the market segment into several sub-segments

The following criteria must meet well-identified market segments:

1. *Internal homogeneity*: Consumers in the market segment must be as similar as possible to each other.
2. *Mutual heterogeneity*: Consumers in different market segments need to be as diverse as possible from one another.
3. *Potentially Significant Profitability*: Segments must be large enough to ensure profitability.

4. *Operability*: Segmentation criteria must be used to identify consumers.

Importance of Ultra-Targeting and Segmentation

Market segmentation is of great importance when it comes to consumers and consumer behavior. Market segmentation is essential in determining the audience for a specific product or service.

This chapter clarifies several types of segmentation, namely demographic segmentation that divides consumers by age and gender, but also geographical segmentation that divides consumers into groups based on regions or continents. It is important to carefully choose the target market for the product and the positioning in the minds of consumers.

When segmenting a market, it is vital to get to know the needs and desires of consumers. It is essential to keep an eye on the market, the demand for the product, and how consumers accept it.

Ultimately, it is important to conclude that market segmentation is essential in product planning, as well as is the choice of a target market. When segmenting the market, businesses should focus on consumers and their needs and wants. This way, they can quickly improve and update already existing products or even make new ones. They already know their targeted audience and loyal buyers who will be first in line to buy.

Viral Marketing

You've likely heard the phrase "Going Viral." Viral marketing includes writing and using content that appeals to the masses. There is a bit of science and a bit of luck when creating viral content. The basic definition of viral marketing is to create content that spreads based on entertainment, creativity, or merits. You don't have to be a marketing professional to create viral content - though you do need to know some of the tricks to avoid wasting time and money.

Viral marketing broken down is essentially massive word-of-mouth in a relatively short time. As you know from offline marketing tactics, word of mouth can be the best marketing out there. Offline word of mouth is usually based on customer service and the services you provide. Viral marketing is based on authority and content, driving traffic to your site and converting visitors into customers.

YouTube is one of the best ways to cause a viral phenomenon. Still, other media sharing sites can also create the same situation.

In this chapter, we're going to cover:

- What is Viral Marketing?
- The Benefits of Viral Content
- What Your Content Should Be Like
- What Kind of Content is Best for Viral Marketing
- Commercial Content
- YouTube Content

- TikTok Content
- Various Media Types & Creativity

What is Viral Marketing?

Viral marketing is the type of marketing that can provoke curiosity and possible sales of a service or product through content that gets viral in front of the millions of people online. The idea is for users to decide to share content.

Because of the simplicity of content sharing, social media is a great source for this marketing type. The most common example in recent times is the creation of moving, pop-up, or amazing videos on YouTube and TikTok that are shared on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and other networks.

Remember the video where 20 strangers kiss? Extremely charged with a whole range of emotions, "First kiss" spread to all social networks at dizzying speed from YouTube, where it was viewed by more than 145 million people around the world. Delighted viewers did not realize at first that this was a brilliantly designed advertising campaign by the American fashion brand Wren. This three-minute video is one of the best examples of successful viral campaigns ever. The stakes were minimal, and the performance was many times better than expected.

With their informal approach, they left a much stronger impression and engraved themselves in the memory of millions of audiences.

Businesses often risk their marketing campaigns because of the ease of sharing and getting viral. In this kind of marketing, you can't target your audience, nor narrow it by any chance. Viewers who saw your video will interpret it in their way, and you have to be ready for all kinds of critics or compliments. However, with a successful viral campaign, your brand will have many fans and potential customers.

The essential thing in the whole story is to be original, imaginative, and witty. In general, by no means aggressive in today's world full of advertisements, forceful campaigns have more and more countereffects.

The Benefits of Viral Content

Viral content can drive traffic to your site, but what other benefits can viral content offer you? Let's look at some of the benefits of viral content and how it can efficiently work into your current online marketing campaign.

1. Low price

You don't have to worry about the business costs of viral marketing campaigns. The main characteristic of this kind of marketing is that the viewers do the most for us; they share our content with others. Because of this, you don't have to invest in advertisements or media space.

2. Long-range potential

A viral video can reach many international viewers without investing money or any struggle. Therefore, small businesses

or even private entrepreneurs can find their customers far from the company's headquarters.

3. Not pushy

Many viral video creators never expected that they would get that kind of attention. The audience is the judge, and viewers are always the ones who decide if they will share the video. The point of a viral campaign is that it has to be natural and not considered pushy. Thus, communication of the brand with its viewers is healthier when compared to classic types of marketing. This kind of content creation supports you in building your image or product. Try to implement your ideas and express your creativity to create a video that will possibly go viral. Always trust your instincts, and you may see how many positive reactions and shares your video can get.

4. Social Media

The connection between social media and viral marketing is strong. When you consider how people share news and information, Facebook and Twitter are the first that come to mind. You start by sharing this information on your profiles, and it can spread like wildfire. This is entirely free marketing and one of the best ways to drive traffic to your site.

5. Sustainability

Long-term results are what you're looking for, and you can use viral marketing to sustain your marketing efforts if you know what you're doing. Since viral marketing tends to be viewed as an explosive hit, there is a specific way to create viral

content that withstands the test of time and continues to provide you with benefits. One of the best ways to do that is to create evergreen content that readers will continue to find interesting. Something like a 50 Best list with celebrity connections is a piece of content that will continue to pull readers in and beckon their opinion to the comments section.

6. Incoming Links

You know incoming links are essential to driving traffic and sustaining that content. An incoming link is when a reader/viewer links to your piece of content. Maybe they share it on their social networking sites, blogging about it, or adding it to their HubPages. Regardless, you want to see solid incoming links accumulate on your content. This shows how and where viewers/readers are sharing it.

7. Get People Talking

Viral content drives traffic to your site or blog, and then it's your job to keep people interested and interacting. The more interaction and time people spend on your website, the more likely you will convert and continue to grow. This could be from contact submission forms or blog comments. The key is to get people interacting with you and each other for the best results.

What Your Content Should Be Like

Before you launch a piece of content into the viral marketing world, there are a few things you need to consider. The content

you put together for viral marketing must be better than the typical article you produce. It must be of high quality and contain content people care about at the moment.

The essentials are:

Accessibility: This means your viral content needs to be easily accessible for it to spread and become viral in the first place. The way to also do this is to ensure you are keeping your content from being too niched. Keep your content general enough to attract a broad audience but informative enough to gain a specific type of audience.

Ask Questions: To get the interaction we talked about, you need to ask questions and engage readers. You can write a piece that sparks curiosity or controversy; just walk that fine line to build a real following instead of a judgment toward your opinion. You can share information without damaging your image and brand.

Make it Interesting: If your content doesn't draw attention, it won't go viral. You need content people will gravitate toward. You can do this with content about something unique, interesting, odd, and weird.

Well-Constructed: Your content needs to be well-constructed for readers to get through the entire piece. If your content is full of mistakes, bad grammar, and misspellings, they will "walk" away and never look back. Make sure your videos look good and make sure your articles offer ample and correct information.

Content Volume: Volume can refer to the length of an article and the amount of content you put out there. Quality is king,

so keep that in mind always, but you should also make sure your content is complete. When doing a list style (which is a trendy style of content and great for viral marketing), you need to flush out the list and offer as much information as possible. Make sure your content is correct and fill in all the blanks. When your content is evergreen, it will withstand the test of time no matter how much new content comes out.

What Kind of Content is best for Viral Marketing?

Now that you know what makes content viral and the work you need to put in for content to go viral, let's talk about the types of content that are best for viral marketing. Articles and written pieces are a good choice. Although videos typically go viral much faster. These are the mediums to use, and we'll talk about that more later in this chapter. Here we want to consider the genres of content that work best. The ones to consider are humor, controversy, informational tools, and lists.

We mentioned **lists** a little in the previous sections. Lists are great because people love to see things ranked. Best of..., Worst Dressed..., Richest..., these all pique curiosity and encourage people to share and participate in the conversation. Make sure your list content is original and offers value.

Offering **tools and information** that can be used is a great way to build viral content. You don't have to focus on making people laugh or cry when you give them something to help them succeed. You are appealing to the masses. People love to have their problems solved for them and gravitate towards

solutions to help. A collection of tips, links, and other resources are great content based on viral marketing.

When **humor** is your vehicle, you are likely to find success. People love to laugh and share it about as quickly as it takes to hit 'forward' in their inbox. Videos, jokes, animation, and other mediums are great ways to draw people into the humor and encourage them to share.

Controversy is an excellent way to get people talking and sharing, but it can be a slippery slope. You need to have backing for the statements you're making, or you will cross the line and lose respect.

Commercial Content

Trying to make commercial content go viral - it just doesn't work that way. One way people decide this is by uploading their commercials to YouTube and hoping for the best. Viewers don't want to see your latest commercial; they want something they feel involved in. If you appear to be merely making a pitch for your products or services, it will drive viewers away. Take what you do and think of things you can share with people to build an audience that will convert to new customers.

If you have a hair salon, you can create a video on cutting the top three Hollywood hairstyles. They see what's in and what works for various lengths of hair, and you get to show off your skills.

Don't try to bluff your way through it. People will see if you're genuinely interested or merely trying to sell them something.

YouTube Content

As you likely know, YouTube is one of the most prominent mediums out there. It's great for sharing information and for that information to go viral. You have probably taken part in a video going viral as you view and share it. Three major types of video smoothly going viral are entertaining, informational, and how-to. Informational offers material to people they can apply and use to better their life in some way. A how-to video will walk them through the process of something tangible they are trying to accomplish and often bring them a favorable resolution by the end of the video. Entertaining is precisely that. It brings humor, drama, or controversy to your audience that they will likely share based on the video's theme alone.

With **informational** videos, you don't have to limit yourself to news about your overall industry. Do tour videos taking the viewer through your production plant to show the pride you take in your products' manufacture. Share the backstory of the creation of your company with pictures and first employee or client accounts.

How-to videos are extremely popular. Choose something you know about extensively that you can help the viewer accomplish. Always use "how-to" in the title as this is a vast search keyword.

Entertaining videos don't have to mean silly stunts, but if your company offers a product or service that you can demo crazily, consider using that. People love humor and want to be entertained. Find ways to add a little fun to your business, and

don't be afraid to laugh at yourself. It shows confidence and that you are approachable.

Once you have a video idea, there are a few things you need to consider. You want a storyline that encourages viewers to get involved. Whether that is a discussion in the comments area, an email to you, or a phone call for a consultation - you want to engage them and use a subtle call to action.

If you don't have experience filming a video, consider spending the money to bring in a professional. You want your video to be of **high-quality**. A low-quality video is fine for the bedroom teen singing sensation, but not for a company working to build credibility.

Just as **keywords** are relevant in written content, the same is true for the video keyword-rich areas. This includes the meta, title, and other keyword opportunities.

TikTok Content

In 2020, TikTok became an application, which surpassed Facebook in terms of popularity when it comes to the number of new users. Like the former Vine, it emulates the popular social networks Snapchat and Instagram, but again in a different way. It is most similar to YouTube because its primary function is not through connecting and direct communication, but in creating video content.

Anyone can easily record a video and publish it with various filters and background music and, in that way, express themselves and attract the audience.

However, TikTok targets teenagers and young people. So it is still primarily made up of users under the age of 30, about

66%. According to the research, in 2020, young people aged 16 to 24 spent an average of seven hours a day exclusively on social networks. And to connect with younger audiences, brands must follow the changing behavior of Generation Z, which makes up 40% of global consumers this year.

TikTok has an emphasis on the content, not on the one who creates it. Proof of this is the numerous profiles with a relatively small number of views and likes on most videos, but which have managed to go viral, e.g., just with one video. By 2022, video is estimated to account for 82% of all internet traffic.

Suppose you already know some influencers interested in your business and with a significant number of followers on Facebook, Instagram, or YouTube. In that case, there is a possibility that they already have their TikTok audience. Influencers will remain on the list of digital marketing trends in 2020, so it is worth investing in cooperating with them.

Short video formats are the future of the Internet. TikTok provides just that to its users who can express all their creativity within a few seconds. And everything that is recorded on TikTok can be shared on other social networks.

Various Media Types & Creativity

Articles and videos are the most common ways businesses create viral content. Still, there are other emerging areas to consider rounding out your marketing campaign. The other media types to consider are apps, eBooks, free content, and podcasts.

Apps are phone, search engine, website, and social networking add-ons that can be fun and useful. These apps can be low to no cost, which increases their appeal. When these apps' popularity starts picking up, users will recommend them, and downloads will rapidly increase.

Podcasts are mostly a radio bit online. You can record this yourself with some basic equipment and practice. Consider professional industry interviews and other exciting information. People love that they can download a podcast to their MP3 and Smartphones to listen to on the go. You can enhance the experience by creating a series of podcasts that are based on the same theme. This keeps the first listeners coming back for more.

Information products like eBooks and free reports are a great way to build your database, exposure, and credibility. Creating one of these doesn't have to give away the farm. Work with a freelancer to create a 10-15 page document sharing something about your company or industry. This is not a sales letter and shouldn't be pushy about what you're offering.

One of the most important ways to make viral marketing work for you is to be open-minded and pay attention to what works and what doesn't. This chapter covered the world of viral marketing, but it's an ever-changing area of the web. Check out the most popular videos on YouTube to see what viewers are gravitating to. Figure out how you can offer something valuable to them within your company or industry arena. Once you get the hang of viral content, you will be able to put better quality, better performing content out there.

Think about what you share online. In most cases, this is not an ad. Most viral content is fun, proactive, and informative. It usually stimulates strong emotions in the viewer. To encourage viral marketing, you need to create such content. Furthermore, your content needs to be as easy to share as possible, which means you need to have social media buttons, so people don't give up on the initial urge to share some content.