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INTRODUCTION

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING



SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING

Marketing for your small business can be challenging. You may struggle with lack of resources like budget, time or manpower or have less visibility and brand awareness. You may feel like a little fish in a pond full of whales. However, there are strategies which your small business can enlist today that can bear fruit.

Big or small, the tenants of effective inbound marketing, when observed, will help your business grow. Inbound marketing helps you position yourself in such a way that your ideal customers are looking for you rather than the other way around. You will attract them through valuable content that helps your market reach its goals rather than interrupting them with disruptive ads or smooth-talking sales tactics.

“The tenets of effective inbound marketing...will help your business grow.”

To elaborate, inbound marketing is about three steps:

- **Attract**—Get the attention of your target market with your website and blog. They have questions and you have answers!
- **Engage**—Move those prospects along in their sales journey through conversational and relational tools like email and continuing to provide valuable content.
- **Delight**—Keep that relationship going through continued stellar service, listening, and expertise.

With these steps in mind and remembering that a small business's resources must be allocated wisely to have the greatest return, it is good to have a grasp on what those steps look like in real time.

How do we work smarter rather than just harder?

1. Know Your Market
2. Know How to Reach Your Market
3. Provide Value to Your Market

KNOW YOUR MARKET

We have said this before, and we will say it again. And probably a few times after that. You HAVE to know [who your audience is](#). Map out your ideal target market and access their needs. Create [buyer personas](#). Find your target market and stick to it. By getting to truly know the wants and needs of your customers and potential customers, you will know how your company can help them. And if they don't know how you can help them, chances are, they aren't going to come to you for help. (See how this works?) This also speaks to making sure you know your company's [unique selling proposition](#). Your why. And the why that sets you apart. The why that tells your market why they pick the little fish over that dang bloated whale.

KNOW HOW TO REACH YOUR MARKET

Once you know your audience, you need to know how best to communicate with them. What channels should you use to reach them? Your best bet is to look at where they already are. You wouldn't just stand on the street corner and shout "Look at me!" like a Newsie. No, you need to go to where they are already talking about their needs and be there to chime in with your helpful and engaging information.

The most common channels used in inbound marketing are:

- Blogging
- SEO
- Email Marketing
- Social Media, such as Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn
- Pay Per Click Ads
- Branding

PROVIDE VALUE TO YOUR MARKET

You've gotten to know your target market. You've got just the thing to help them address their pain points. You've figured out where your prospects are already searching for their answers. Now, for the love of all the fish in the sea, what do you say to bait the hook?

While we cannot give you the words to say, we can let you have a peak into our [content marketing](#) tackle box.

As a HubSpot Solutions partner, we like to follow's HubSpot's [Pillar and Cluster model](#).



We look at the needs of our market and say, “Okay, so what questions are they asking?” And then we set out to answer them in a series of ways: through blog posts, infographics, social media posts, informative videos, and email campaigns. Each piece of content is a way to further draw in our target audience and “just keep swimming...”

For example, you are currently reading a blog post about [small business marketing](#). That topic: small business marketing is, in fact, the main pillar topic. To which there are other blog posts, aka cluster content, about more specific topics that help clarify and support the larger theme of small business marketing. They are all linked together through hyperlinks which shows Google and other search engines that they are all related to one another, thus increasing the likelihood that you cast your line into the place your fish are already searching for bait.

Each of these steps, while simple to define, require effort. You will be working smarter as well as harder, [not instead of harder](#). But that’s okay. Hard work is how the little fish gets big.

**“Hard work is how the
little fish gets big.”**



CHAPTER ONE

KNOW YOUR WHY

KNOW YOUR WHY

Knowing your business's unique selling proposition is important for any small business, especially when it comes to [small business marketing](#).

Years ago, as director of a Women's Business Center, a client came in to tell me about her fantastic business idea. Let's call her Nancy. As was my custom, upon first meeting a client proposing a new business, I asked one simple question: Why? Nancy looked at me like I had three heads. She had just told me her fantastic business idea—she wanted to open a restaurant.

Nancy: "I make great food. My food is delicious. That is why I am opening a restaurant."

Me: "Do you eat at any local restaurants? If so, which ones?"

Nancy (a bit agitated): "Of course, I do. I like [fill in the blank]."

Me: "Do they have good food?"

Nancy: "Of course! That is why I eat there."

Me: "So why are people going to choose your good food over the other good food that is available to them?"

Nancy (a bit deflated): "I don't know."

Food being "good" was not unique. Good food was not enough of a distinction to set Nancy apart from all the competitors. I had to educate Nancy on what a unique selling proposition (USP) means.

What is a unique selling proposition (USP)?

In a nutshell, a USP is a differentiator. It is the very attribute that is going to set apart your product or service from all your competitors. Which always leads to the following statement: [Know your why](#).

“Know your why” does not mean, as Nancy initially thought, “I love cooking and serving people”. “Know your why” means *why people should choose your product or service*. Why should someone choose your “good food” over some other restaurant’s “good food”?

So how do you differentiate in a world of “good food”? Marketing is *not* about creating demand. It is about meeting demand. Study the market which you plan to target and find out what they demand or need. What need is not being met? This is where market research comes in handy. Market research includes studying industry trends, conducting focus groups, surveys, etc.

Marketing to prospects and clients/customers involves understanding the buyer’s journey. Buyers have a wealth of information at the tips of their fingers (Thank you, Google!). Buyers research, compare, and review products and services before buying anything. Now that buyers no longer primarily rely on

companies or salespeople to educate, the buyer’s journey has begun before the buyer even reaches out to you (or knows about you).

In order to reach your buyers, you need to understand your target market. You need to understand what problem you can solve for them, and why you would be best the solution for them. In order to be able to reach buyers at each stage of the buyer’s journey, you need to know your USP.

“Marketing is not about creating demand. It is about meeting demand.”

The three stages of the buyer's journey are:

- **Awareness Stage** – Uh oh. I have a problem that I would like to solve. For Nancy, it would look like: “My stomach is growling and I feel sluggish.”
- **Consideration Stage** – I know what my problem is, and I must research options and solve my problem. For Nancy it looks like: “I am hungry. I need to eat. I am going to Google what restaurants are near me.”
- **Decision Stage** – I choose this solution for my problem. For Nancy? Well she has decided upon Panera Bread. Your USP will also guide your sales funnel.

In order to guide buyers through the sales funnel, you need to be able to put yourself in your buyer's shoes. (We will talk about creating buyer personas in a later post.) Often, entrepreneurs love their ideas so much, they cannot understand how others could not possibly fall in love with their ideas, too. Alas, we don't all think the same. It is imperative to think about what your target market wants, not yourself. (Unless, your target market is only you, in which case I don't think you have a lucrative business idea.) By focusing on what the buyer wants or needs you guide them through the sales funnel.



You must also understand what motivates your buyers' behavior and buying decisions. In Nancy's case, good food might not be enough of a motivator. Perhaps, convenience is most important or good service. (Lots of moms choose Chik-fil-a for these very reasons.)

Finally, research your competitors to know what buyers like and dislike. The more well defined your USP is, the better you will be able to pull leads into your sales funnel.

As Simon Senek, author of "Start Your Why", says, "People don't buy what you do; they buy why you do it. And what you do simply proves what you believe." By focusing on the why, you inspire others. Senek explains this well by comparing Dell and Apple. Dell focused on the "What" they do, and by doing so, pigeonholed themselves into making computers. However, Apple

focused on the "why", thereby diversifying into other products, like iPads and iPhones. When Apple marketed the iPod as "1,000 songs in your pocket", it gave people the why, which is the true USP.

Remember what I wrote earlier, marketing is not about creating demand. It is about meeting demand.

People wanted "a thousand songs in their pocket". People did not want an iPod. They wanted what the iPod could deliver. The USP was not the iPod and all its technical features. The USP was "a 1,000 songs in their pocket".

“ The more well defined your USP is, the better you will be able to pull leads into your sales funnel. ”

CHAPTER TWO

KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE



KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE

When crafting your [inbound marketing strategies](#), knowing your target audience and buyer personas is imperative. The difference between inbound marketing and what people usually think of when they think of marketing is that in inbound marketing, the business is attracting customers by creating valuable content and experiences tailored to them. Traditional marketing pushes content on prospects or customers. And they don't always want what you are pushing. (Telemarketing comes to mind.)

Imagine being a comedian. You've worked hours on the perfect jokes. You rehearsed in front of your friends. They loved it. You are going to slay. You're a bundle of nerves as you walk out on stage, but the adrenaline starts to take you

over. You proceed with your first joke poking fun at cosplay. Then another. All you hear is crickets and then, "BOOOOOO!" When the lights come up, you discover the comedy venue is next to a large Comic-con. Had you thought about who was sitting in the audience, would you have really gone in that direction?

Inbound marketing is about forming connections. It is about [solving the problems](#) that buyers already have. In order to do this well, you must know your target market inside and out. How else can you provide valuable information your customers can use? How else can you meet their needs if you, in fact, don't know the needs?

“Inbound marketing is about forming connections.”

Target Audience

Your target audience is the specific group of people whom you want to reach because they are the people most likely to buy your products or services. They share the same common characteristics, demographics and behaviors. The more specific you are in defining your target audience the more successful you will be reaching the best possible conversion rates. (Don't be afraid to narrow down your target. Just because you are narrowing down your target doesn't mean you cannot sell to someone outside of your target.)

To determine your target market:

- Compile data on your current clients – If you are an existing business, you already have information to dive into.
- Check out social media analytics – See who is interacting with your social accounts, even if they are not customers yet.
- Check out the competition – What are people saying about your competitors? What do they like? What do they dislike? Can you fill any needs?
- What is the benefit of your product and service, and who is seeking that benefit? Often, businesses focus on the features, like open 24 hours. What is the benefit of being open 24 hours? The business can satisfy your need any time of day.
- Research industry reports – These forecast what buyers are seeking.
- Market research – Market research is not just for corporate America. Regardless of the size of the business, market research needs to be conducted via focus groups, surveys, test ads, etc. Querying your friends is not a focus group. They may not want to hurt your feelings and so the data will be skewed.

Buyer Personas

Once you know your target market, it is time to drill down and define your buyer personas. [HubSpot](#), the founder of inbound marketing, states that “buyer personas help you understand your customers (and prospective customers) better.” This makes it easier for you to tailor your content, messaging, product development, and services to the specific needs, behaviors, and concerns of different groups”.

Therefore, if you have your buyer personas well defined, you can create content that will help buyers through the buyer’s journey and sales funnel.

“Buyer personas help you understand your customers better.”

The three stages of the buyer’s journey are:

- **Awareness Stage** – Uh oh. I have a problem that I would like to solve. (What types of problems are your buyer personas experiencing?)
- **Consideration Stage** – I know what my problem is, and I must research options and solve my problem. (What options do your buyer personas consider when trying to research options to solve their problems?)
- **Decision Stage** – I choose this solution for my problem. (What do your buyer personas typically choose when solving their problem?)

Let’s face it, by focusing on the buyer persona and what matters to them, you can carry them through the sales funnel much quicker, which leads to a quicker sale conversion for you.



Buyer Persona Example

If you are the owner of a dermatologist office, you may have the following buyer persona.

Aging Alice

Alice is a retired woman who is concerned about looking the best she can, as well as living life to the fullest.

Roles: Mother, Grandmother, Wife, Friend, Avid Traveler, Cook, and Shopper

Goals: Alice enjoyed her career for over 30 years. Now, she wants to focus on her husband and herself. She wants to do all the things she couldn't do when she was working and taking care

of her family. She wants to travel, and she wants to look good. She doesn't want to look "old". She wants to take on this next chapter with vibrancy. Instead of looking at the next years of her life as the last chapter, she wants to embark upon this next chapter with gusto and passion. She cares about her husband and wants to focus on their bucket list. She wants to feel sexy. She wants her children and grandchildren to say, "I want to be like her when I am her age."

Challenges: She doesn't have as much energy as she used to have. Her face doesn't match her inner voice. She tends to prioritize other things over herself even though she really wants to make some serious changes. She would just like to feel good about herself.

Age: 60 plus

Income: \$100k plus

Education: B.A. or more

Location: Central Virginia, Suburban areas

Story: Aging Alice is fun-loving and is not looking to slow down in retirement. Her focus has just changed. She wants her and her husband to focus on their own dreams, while still looking good. She wants the best for her children and grandchildren, but she wants to start prioritizing her needs first. She and her husband are in a financially good place for retirement, and she wants to take advantage of that. She wants to travel, shop, and enjoy the company of friends. She doesn't want to look or feel "old". She wants to feel sexy and vibrant. She isn't trying to look like she is 20, but she wants to be the best self she can be, which includes being healthy.

Imagine creating content required to take the buyer through the buyer's journey and sales funnel. It's easier to craft content when you have a specific buyer persona in mind.

If only the comedian knew who was in the target audience, maybe he would have written some good self-deprecating jokes instead. And bought himself a cape.

Check out [HubSpot](#) for a free Buyer Persona template.

“It's easier to craft content when you have a specific buyer persona in mind.”

CHAPTER THREE

CONTENT MARKETING

CONTENT

MARKETING

CONTENT MARKETING

Content Marketing is MPWRSource's [bread and butter strategy](#) when it comes to helping its clients boost their market share. It is how we meet the needs of a client's target audience. But what, exactly, is it?

We are so glad you asked.

The [Content Marketing Institute](#) defines content marketing this way:

CONTENT MARKETING IS A MARKETING TECHNIQUE OF CREATING AND DISTRIBUTING VALUABLE, RELEVANT, AND CONSISTENT CONTENT TO ATTRACT AND ACQUIRE A CLEARLY DEFINED AUDIENCE – WITH THE OBJECTIVE OF DRIVING PROFITABLE CUSTOMER ACTION.

Traditional marketing, or Outbound Marketing, is not as effective as it once was. It

interrupts your audience's day with "Look at me" messages about products and services. Content Marketing, as part of an [Inbound Marketing strategy](#), attracts and engages your target audience through content pieces that are educational, informational, relatable, and human. Its goal is to promote relationships whereby your business can meet needs, versus just hoping to land the simple sale and move on. Moreover, content marketing has been shown to be [3x more effective](#) than traditional outbound marketing.

Content marketing is important to your business when it comes to helping your [target market](#) go through the traditional buyer's journey. The buyer's journey is the process buyer's go through in order to become aware of, consider and evaluate, and decide to purchase a new product or service.

The four stages of the buyer's journey are:

1. **Awareness:** Your buyer is keenly aware of a problem they have but is unaware of its solution.
2. **Research:** Your buyer does due diligence to find a solution to its current problem. This can look like googling things and asking peers for recommendations.
3. **Consideration:** At this point, your buyer has found several solutions that may meet its need. Your buyer weighs pros and cons of each solution. Most often, this looks like finding that right balance of quality, service, and price.
4. **Buy:** Finally, the customer makes their decision and moves forward with their purchase.

Traditional advertising and marketing are great when it comes to the second two steps. Content marketing taps into the first two steps of the buyer's journey by raising awareness of solutions and educating audiences on solutions, services, and products they may have never considered before.



Even prior to many folks now working virtually, according to Sirius Decisions, 70% of the buyer's is complete before a buyer even reaches out to sales. [Content marketing](#) shifts the focus from the business to the buyer.

The content marketer is always seeking to be helpful and human, engaging its target audience through useful and informative content.

5 STATS

TO GET MORE TRAFFIC TO YOUR PAGE

- COMPANIES THAT BLOG**
RECEIVE 97% MORE BACKLINKS
- HAVING A BLOG**
DRIVES 55% MORE VISITORS TO YOUR PAGE
- INCREASED WEB TRAFFIC**
EQUALS 67% MORE LEADS FOR YOUR COMPANY
- INCREASED TRUST**
60% OF CUSTOMERS SAY THEY FEEL BETTER ABOUT A BUSINESS AFTER READING BLOG POSTS.
- SOCIAL MEDIA SHARING**
23% OF SOCIAL MEDIA MESSAGES CONTAIN CONTENT. CREATING MORE CONTENT INCREASES SHARES AROUND THE WEB.

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The most used weapons in the content marketer's arsenal are:

- **Webpages:** By using effective SEO strategies, you can make sure that your ever-important digital marketplace is actually drawing your target market in. After all, it is not just what you say that matters, but how you say it.
- **Infographics:** Infographics are usually long, vertical graphics that can include charts, statistics, and otherwise helpful information. Oftentimes ideas that are difficult to describe can be shown and easily digested in a well-crafted infographic.
- **Videos:** People like to watch. And with many of us now working from home, human connections is ever more vital. Buyer's want to be told a story and thanks to the falling cost of professional grade equipment as well as the rising quality of phone capabilities, video is king. We want to see and hear about how something works and can help us. So pull out your ring light and phone and get to talking to yourself on film.
- **Blogs:** Blogs can be used to convert readers into customers, boost brand awareness, and build relationships with your audience.
- **Podcasts:** Podcasts give you visibility to an entirely new market. It is a great way to interview subject matter experts or people who have used your goods and services in order to really speak (quite literally) to your target market.

Increasing your market share and amount of leads generated from helpful content is a process that is proven to produce results. On average, it takes 9-18 months of solid content marketing strategy to see results, but inbound marketing results dramatically outperform outbound efforts.

“On average, it takes 9-18 months of solid content marketing strategy to see results.”

CHAPTER FOUR

EMAIL MARKETING



EMAIL MARKETING

Email marketing is essential for [small businesses](#). On average, 90% of people from every demographic are on email, and email marketing gives you the biggest bang for your buck. In fact, data shows that email marketing has the greatest possibility for return on investment to the tune of 4400%! That means for every dollar spent on email marketing, you stand to earn \$44. Over 50% of people state that marketing emails [influence their buying decisions](#). This makes it the most effective means of digital marketing by a landslide.



Americans send 102.6 trillion emails every year. The average email subscriber receives 13 commercial emails each day. And this is across every demographic board. So unlike social media, it is not a stretch to say that literally everyone is using email. It has become a normative means of communication in both the professional and personal realms. And we use it daily, with 99% of us checking it daily with some users checking it as often as 20 times a day. After all, with the rise of mobile use, we can all check our emails on our phone each time we hear the ping of a notification.

More than half of us check our email before we do anything else online. Let's be honest, a lot of us even check our email before getting out of bed in the morning. Our email becomes the first thing we do in the morning and the last thing we do at night.

So it is clear, no matter your target market, no matter your demographic, industry, or even

budget, email marketing is the most effective way to reach your audience.

You may be thinking, "Yea, well...with social media I can get in front of millions for free!"

But the truth is you may not even get in front of your own followers for free with social media. The engagement rate for social media is less than 1%. In fact, the engagement rate of social media is barely over one half of one percent. Compare that to email's average open rate of 22.86% and an average click rate of 3.71%. Emails reach most of the people they are intended for and produce a greater return on investment.

“Email marketing is the most effective way to reach your audience.”

This means for small businesses that even on a small budget, you can see results from effective email marketing.

But how?

Like all inbound marketing, effective email marketing is helpful, human, and informative. We have all received emails that seem pointless, impersonal, and a nuisance. But effective email marketers keep the CATS equation in mind.

CONTENT + AUDIENCE + TIMELY = SUCCESS

1. Content:

What you say matters. Just like every aspect of content marketing, providing valuable content to your target market that addresses their pain points matters. It does not matter if you get in a person's email inbox if they do not care about what you have to say. If your content does not provide value, simply put, your audience will dwindle as they quickly opt-out and unsubscribe.

Make sure that your marketing emails are well written and well designed by using a comprehensive email builder. We love HubSpot here in the Superhero Lair of MPWRSource, but based upon your needs, other viable options include resources like MailChimp and Constant Contact. These resources allow you to create and personalize your own email campaigns with little to no graphic design experience.

No one wants an email that is simply a giant block of texts. Add photos and life with simple elements to attract and engage your readers.

“Like all inbound marketing, effective email marketing is helpful, human, and informative.”

2. Audience

Keep in mind your buyer personas as you craft your marketing emails. Additionally, the more personalized you can make your content, the better. Segment your contact list and provide content that will directly address each segment's preferences and problems.

You can and should also customize your emails based upon where each contact is in their buyer's journey. Those searching for solutions will have different pain points than those already using your goods and services.

Personalize your emails with your recipient's first and last name, versus a blanket Sir/Madam. Have your salutation reflect the relationship you are trying to establish with your audience.

Once you've made your email personal, make sure your text and supporting visuals engage

“The more personalized you can make your content, the better.”

your readers, which should include a call-to-action (CTA). A CTA makes sure that your readers know exactly why you are emailing them, such as you want them to subscribe to your podcast, use this 20% off coupon code, or register for this amazing virtual event you are putting on that will make all their wildest dreams come true. Make your CTA easy to understand and to act upon. Also, and we cannot stress this enough, be mindful that over half of your audience will be reading this email on their phone. You must make sure that your emails are designed for reading across all devices—desktop, tablet, and mobile.

3. Timely

Your emails not only need to provide valuable content to your target audience, but they also need to be timely. And believe it or not, there are [better times of day](#) to send emails than others. And while they may seem obvious upon reflection, they often are not.

Be mindful of the daily rhythms of your target market. Emails sent during the day perform better. In fact, emails received between 8-10 am on Thursday mornings perform the best. Weekends are typically horrible for email blasts. Mid-week and mid-day emails will often be your best bets.

Like most things in inbound marketing, the best way to reach your target audience is to know your [target audience](#). Use email marketing not just to push product or communicate service interruptions, but as a way to enrich your relationship with your customers.

“Use email marketing not just to push product or communicate service interruptions, but as a way to enrich your relationship with your customers.”

CHAPTER FIVE

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

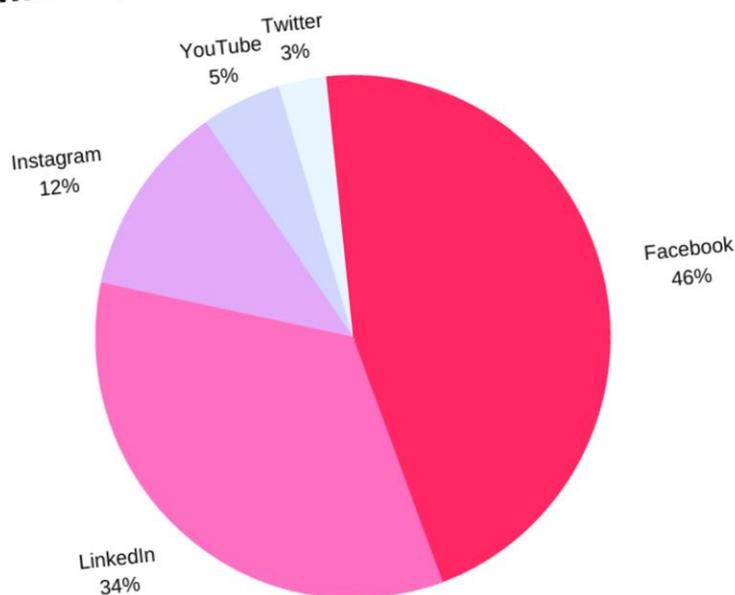


SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Social media marketing can be overwhelming for small businesses, but it can and should be an integral part of your organization's larger [inbound marketing strategy](#).

[Statista](#) reports that in Q1 of 2020, Facebook had 2.6 billion monthly users. B2B's social media channel, LinkedIn, had 160 million users. So no matter your audience, they are on-line. And listening.

Most Important Platforms for B2B Marketing



*Source: 2020 Social Media Examiner's Industry Marketing Report

But with so many opportunities to engage and post, it can feel as though you're just standing on a street corner yelling to the masses. Is anyone listening? Are you saying the right thing? Are you even on the correct street corner? Where are your keys, and, for the love, why on earth are there so many cat videos? There *are* ways to make sure you're on the correct track with social media marketing.

To get you off that corner and into the driver's seat, we've come up with 7 Road Signs to help you on your journey to successful social media marketing.

7 Road Signs Towards Successful Social Media Marketing

1. Define Your Social Media Goals
2. Know Your Audience
3. Know Your Metrics
4. Look at Your Competitors
5. Create Helpful and Human Content
6. Be on Time
7. Be Willing to Regroup

“Where are your keys, and, for the love, why on earth are there so many cat videos?”

Define Your Social Media Goals

As with every journey, you have to know where you are going. You need an end goal in mind and a map to get there. Social Media may seem organic and fluid, but you cannot approach it vacation style, just showing up and seeing where the day takes you. Determine what you want to get out of your chosen social media channels. We recommend setting goals that are both reasonable and affordable that allow you to scale your efforts over time.

Some common goals for social media strategy are:

- **Increased Brand Awareness:** Let your audience get to know your company and its culture. People want to know those with whom they work. What matters to your company? How do you highlight the skills of your employees? Avoid posting solely about product offers and promotions. Share content that emphasizes your personality to create authentic brand awareness and lasting loyalty.
- **Grow Your Audience:** Introduce yourself to new people within your target market!
- **Generate Leads and Sales:** 65% of the buyer's journey happens online. Share content that is helpful and human that addresses the pain points of your market.
- **Increase Web Traffic:** Social media can drive traffic to your website. Whether through promotional posts, shares of informational blogs, or social ads, keeping an eye on your determined metrics will help you determine your social media ROI.

Know Your Audience

If you've been reading along in our small business marketing series, you probably have heard this one before. But it bears repeating: [KNOW YOUR AUDIENCE](#). Social media is full of [demographics and data](#) that can speak directly to the approach your organization should take but it is only as good as your knowledge of your target market. Knowing your Buyer Personas is a must. Facebook and You Tube attract high-earning users. Instagram is a hotbed for Millennials and Gen Z. Women love their Pinterest accounts. LinkedIn users are well-educated and prefer industry specific content. Twitter? Okay, well Twitter is the wild west and everyone is screaming. Twitter also requires the most posts/tweets to be effective. Think multiple posts per day that require active social listening.

Your social media strategy must take into account your buyer

personas so that it can speak to them where they are already are. Take your message to them.

Know Your Metrics

You have your goals. You have your [buyer personas](#). And you think you've figured out what channels your people are using. So.... now what? How do you even know that your social media content is working? Metrics. We're marketers, so yep, the answer is probably "look at the data".

“Your social media strategy must take into account your buyer personas so that it can speak to them where they are already are.”

What metrics matter?

- **Reach or Impressions:** Post reach is the number of unique users who saw your post. How far is your content spreading? In the world of ever-changing social media algorithms, tracking reach is important.
- **Clicks:** This is the number of clicks on your content, company name, or logo. These clicks are pivotal in determining how your users are moving through your sales journey and it helps determine how your campaigns are engaging users.
- **Engagement:** This number represents the total number of social interactions divided by the number of impressions. This lets you know who interacted and if it was a good ratio out of your total reach.
- **Hashtags:** What hashtags are most associated with your brand? Which hashtags create the most engagement? Which hashtags are you using the most and with the most success? This can help you determine future content.
- **Organic and Paid Likes:** Organic traction is much harder to use to gain traction due to algorithms which is why many organizations turn to Facebook Ads. However, because of its broad use of hashtags, organic reach goes further on Instagram. Knowing these differences will allow you to invest wisely in different formats

Create Helpful and Human Content

Your social media strategy will be centered around [content](#). That is, after all, what you will be sharing.

It is important to create compelling content that attracts your audience. After all, our motto in inbound marketing is “Attract, Engage, Delight”. Use blog posts, helpful articles from relevant 3rd party sources, videos, infographics, ebooks, whitepapers, case studies, statistics, and memes.

Not only must your content be informative, but it is also important that it looks good. Creating visually compelling content on a day-to-day basis is challenging. This is especially important on highly visual media channels like Instagram and Pinterest.

Use a [social media calendar](#) to help you establish themes, carry out campaigns, and keep your posting consistent.

“It is important to create compelling content that attracts your audience.”

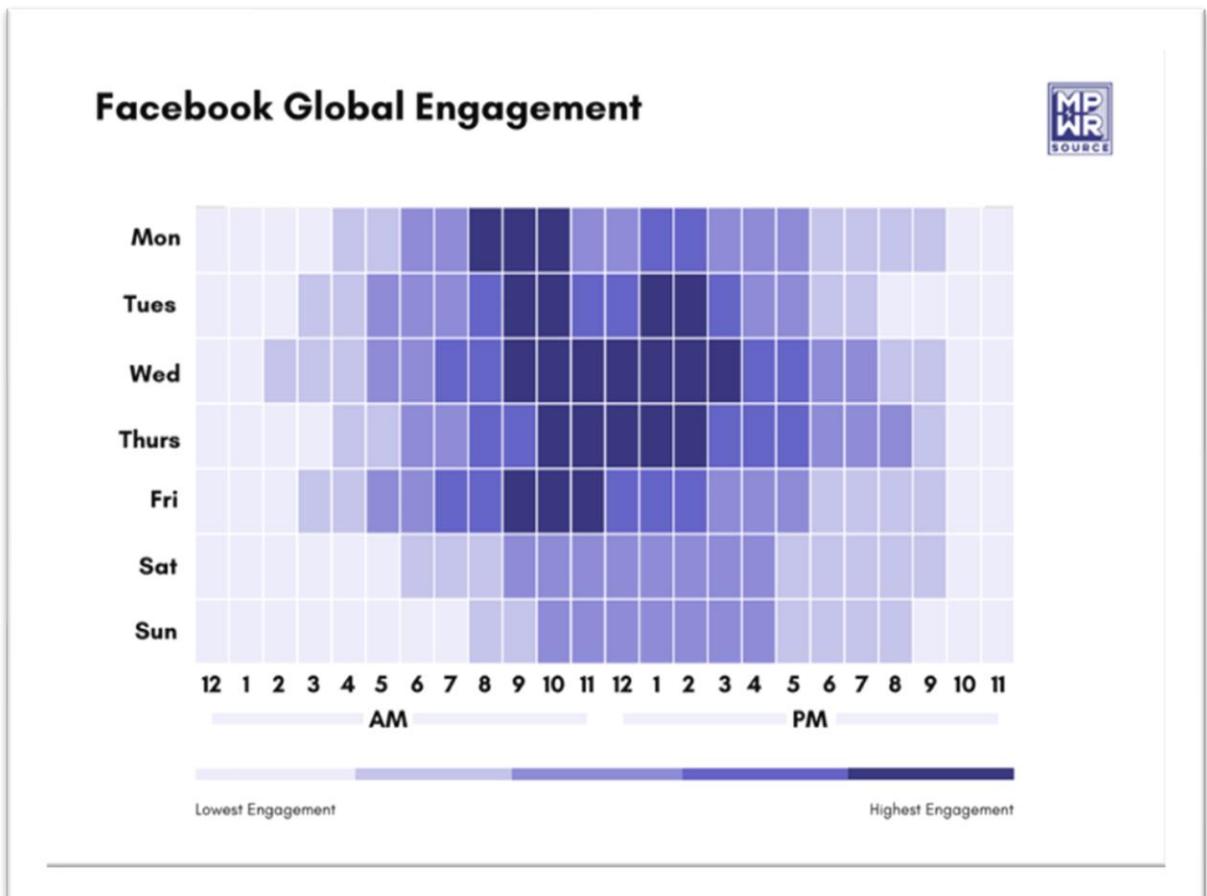
Be On Time

You've found your people. You have said amazing things to them that engages them with your stellar content. They've responded. Now what?

Are you even listening? With the rapid fire pace of a 24 hour news cycle and play by plays of events available across multiple platforms, your audience expects to be heard. Now.

Actually, yesterday. And it is crucial to reach and respond to your followers in a timely manner. The [average response time](#) for brands is 10 hours, however customer expectation is that a brand will respond by 4 hours.

There are also best days of the week and best times of the day to post. But all of this is for naught if you don't engage with your market after posting.



Through social media, you can earn trust and respect from your audience. With the right social media monitoring tools like [HubSpot](#) or HootSuite, you can keep tabs on what your audience is saying and interact with them accordingly.

“Tracking data can help you be proactive and have the best strategy as possible.”

Be Willing to Regroup

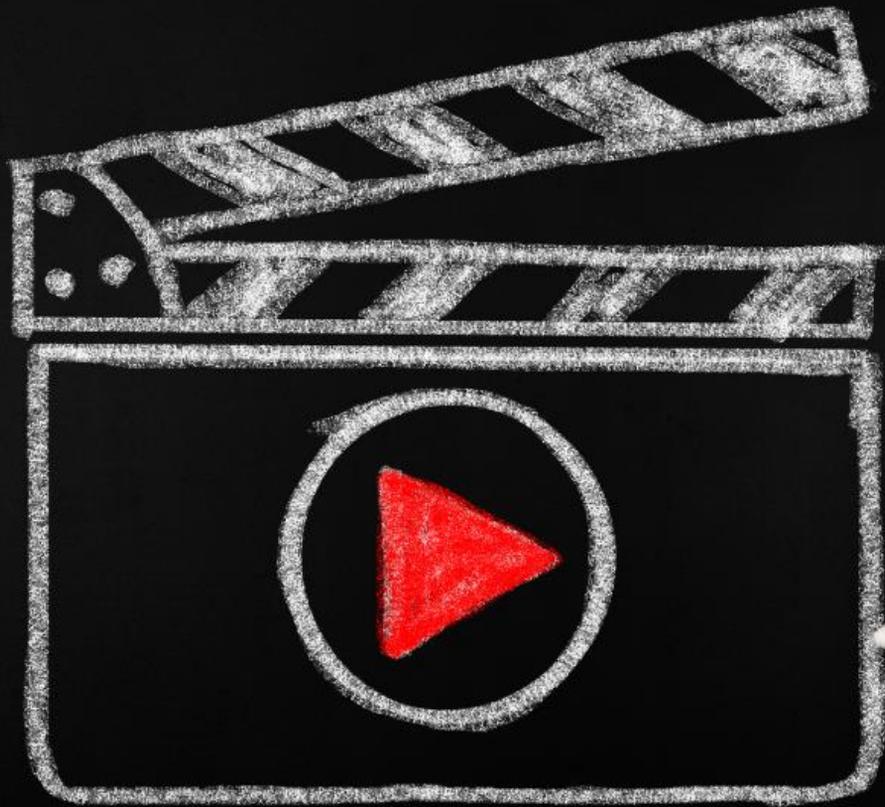
Now that you have a clearer picture about what your social media strategy should be, it is also important to make sure that as you read your metrics, you are able to adjust your strategy as you progress throughout the year.

By reading your metrics, you will be able to discern how your campaigns are doing. Which social media channels are meeting your goals? Look at your top performing content and adjust your campaigns accordingly. Not completely without some trial-and-error, monitoring your metrics allows you to make small tweaks along the way. Tracking data can help you be proactive and have the best strategy as possible.

By following these road signs along your social media strategy journey, you will reach your destination of social media strategy success!

CHAPTER SIX

VIDEO MARKETING



VIDEO MARKETING

VIDEO MARKETING

Video can be intimidating to a small business, but the numbers don't lie. According to HubSpot, 54% of consumers want to see more video! When part of a larger inbound marketing strategy, video is one of the easiest ways to put your target market at ease and connect with them on a human level. The current global forecast estimates the average person will watch 100 minutes of online video each day in 2021. Why not have 5 of those minutes be spent learning about your company? With 75 million Americans watching online videos every day, video marketing offers exciting opportunities.

MPWRSource's Visual and Creative Designer, Matthew McPartland, says, "Video allows a company to show their product or service in a

way that allows a customer to quickly understand what they do and get a picture of who they are. People have short attention spans and a video gives them all the info they need within 5 minutes."

Video marketing is a quick and effective way of marketing your company, no matter the size of your business. Not only does it stimulate interest and increase lead generation and sales, but video marketing content also engage with your target market at a higher level. It allows you to establish and build trust.

“People have short attention spans and a video gives them all the info they need within 5 minutes.”

The sharing of your video across social media platforms can amplify your company's reach, boost your online presence, and promote brand awareness. When information is shared by someone you know, the information is much more apt to be viewed, liked, or shared. Video marketing also provides a great ROI.

Video is an effective storytelling tool. People like to watch. Video is continuously dynamic and continues to delight, entertain, and inform. Video can even be funny, educational, inspiring, motivational or heartwarming. Videos can resonate more with audiences than other mediums. Video helps put a face to a name and allows an audience to peek into your organization. Simply put—people like to work with and buy from people and video gives them an opportunity to “meet” you.



You don't need much to get started. With a decent camera or a good smartphone, you can make some great videos for your business.

Some 71% of B2B marketers and 66% of B2C marketers use video for their content marketing. A video incorporating text, music, and photographs makes it an ideal medium for conveying compelling content. They engage users for longer periods of time on your website. They are also a great way to increase your email and social media outreach. You can embed videos into email marketing campaigns or put your videos on your website, YouTube, Facebook, and Instagram. Actually, you should probably do both of those things.

But how?

First you should determine what types of videos you should create for your business. Begin with videos that have the biggest impact on your business.

Videos that have the most impact on your business:

Product Explainer Video:

This should be your first video. 95% of consumers report having watched at least one explainer video AND 89% of surveyed business owners report an increase in their conversions due to explainer videos. The content is more important than your production value. Home in on what problems your business solution solves. Speak to your target market's emotions and explain how you can directly address their pain points. Keep your videos to 60 seconds or less and use simple, conversational language.

“Begin with videos that have the biggest impact on your business.”

Customer Testimonial Video:

Interview long-term customers that have seen tangible results from your product or services. Share these both on social media and a prominent spot on your site. Hearing from a happy customer will help those in the beginning of their buyer's journey get a clear picture of what your company brings to the table. It can bolster your audience's confidence in your company's ability to deliver solutions.

“Hearing from a happy customer will help those in the beginning of their buyer's journey get a clear picture of what your company brings to the table.”

Tips for a testimonial video:

- Give your client an idea of what you are going to ask so that they can prepare, but don't provide too much of an idea as you want their responses to sound natural and unrehearsed.
- Shoot the video at the customer's workplace, if possible.
- Capture additional B-Roll footage as they will provide interest and make your video more cohesive.
- Let the camera run and worry about editing later. Ask your interviewee to repeat themselves if they stumble over words but try to keep the footage as natural as possible.
- Keep it conversational to get authentic responses.

Company Story Video:

How did your business get started? What is unique about your corporate culture? What sets your business apart from its competitors? This is your opportunity to really showcase your why, your unique selling proposition. Remember that when people choose to partner with you, they are buying more than just goods and services. A video that tells the story of your company and your people will connect with your audience in a way that no other content can. It is the ultimate human medium that can really showcase your brand.

Demo Video:

A demo video is literally a walk-through of your services or products wherein you can explain just how you can help your customer. You can incorporate images, infographics, as well as animation to help your audience get a feel of what you are offering.

Now that you have an idea of what types of videos you should be making for your business, it is time to discuss the real question...HOW? LIKE REALLY, HOW DO I DO THIS?

How Do You Make Your Video?

1. Determine the Video Purpose:

Make sure you know why you are making your video. We are marketers, so asking why should be expected by now. What story are you trying to tell? What problems does your video hope to solve? How will this video support your company's larger marketing goals? What will be the outcomes and results that measure success? (Think KPIs.)

“What story are you trying to tell?”

2. Write a Script:

A great script will help insure you deliver the answers to why you are creating the video in the first place. Writing a good script not only involves knowing what you are offering, but also involves researching your audience's interests. The script should be memorable, compelling, simple, and clear. Make sure it lets your audience know what you hope they do with the information presented. Do you want them to visit your place of business? Do you want them to buy a product? Do you want them to visit your website or attend a virtual event? After writing your script, you can use a simple storyboard to block out your shots. It does NOT have to be professionally drawn out but should be informative of what you want your audience to see. You can include your infographics and other visuals as well.

3. Identify the Tools You Need:

You can use a camera, a webcam, or a decent cell phone that can take video. If you decide to go all-in, you will need a good DSLR camera, tripods, lenses, audio recorders and other accessories to create a professional looking production. You will also need good video editing software.

4. Set Up Your Camera:

Make sure the subject of your video is placed either at a third or the center of your frame. They should also not be too far or too close from the camera. A good rule of thumb is to have your subject place three fingers atop their head and use that marker as the top of your frame. Make sure also your environment is quiet and there is adequate lighting. We also recommend using a tripod for a steady camera angle.

4. Record the Video:

Make sure your subject looks at the camera. Also remember that angles matter. Most people are most flattered being shot at a downward angle. Hold your camera in a landscape format unless you are shooting specifically for a medium that has another format, like Facebook Stories.

5. Edit the Video:

Editing can seem daunting at first, but there are some free editing platforms like iMovie or Windows Movie Maker to get you started. For more professional features, look to Adobe Premiere Pro or Apple Final Cut Pro.

6. Upload Your Video:

This is where you decide where you want to interact with your audience. How you decide to release your video will largely depend upon which platforms best reach your target audience. Look at the data you compiled while doing your

Social Media Marketing and go from there. When uploading your video, make sure to include the right video hosting platform as well as making sure you have an attractive thumbnail.

Inserting a video transcript can also help boost your SEO as it allows Search Engines to gather more information from your video that helps send viewers your way. Don't forget to use the lessons you learned from social media and email marketing to alert your current contacts about your new video content.

“Don't forget to use the lessons you learned from social media and email marketing to alert your current contacts about your new video content.”

7. Measure Your Results:

You spent all this time researching, planning, filming, and editing your video. Now is the time to make sure all those efforts weren't in vain. Most websites and social media platforms come with analytics you can track to measure the effects of your video marketing.

Key analytics to look for are:

- **View Count:** The number of times your video has been viewed.
- **Play Rate:** The comparison of the number of people who have watched your video compared to the number of people who had the opportunity to watch it.
- **Watch Rate:** A measurement of how much of your video people actually watch. Are people hitting play only to hit pause before they reach the end?
- **Click-Through Rate:** This is the percentage of viewers who click on your video's call to action and visit another page.
- **Conversion Rate:** This metric measures what percentage of video viewers become your customers.

According to surveys of 70% of marketers, videos produces more conversions than any other type of content. It can also boost your rankings of your website by search engines, driving more traffic to your site. They also help those that land on your website stay longer. Video marketing should be an integral part of your small business marketing strategy. Videos allow you to communicate your message in a way that is both engaging and personal.

CHAPTER SEVEN

SEO OPTIMIZATION



S.E.O.

SEO OPTIMIZATION

SEO optimization is NOT just about keywords. Or keyword placement. Or where you place your longtail keyword in your copy. We cannot stress this enough: SEO optimization is about more than keyword phrases. Here are 10 Tips to help you boost your SEO and increase traffic to your website.

(Please, dear reader, laugh. Yes. This paragraph is one long SEO optimization pun. And it is only moderately funny. But we are attempting to help you with your small business marketing, so please be kind and laugh.)

1. Remove anything that slows down your site.

Sometimes, when I go to Target, if the line is too long, I abandon my cart. My cart full of things I just HAD TO HAVE. I don't want to wait. The wait

makes me question if I really need that hand towel that says "Everyday I'm Brusseling". That wait gives me time to see if I can find the hand towel online. Similarly, a slow page can frustrate the user experience and ultimately discourage people from buying your product. Why? Because everyday we're husseling, brussels sprout pun hand towel or no.

Data from Strange Loop shows that a mere 1-second delay in page load time can yield a whopping 7% loss in conversions. Not only that, google uses site speed in its rankings. 80% of visitors will abandon any site that takes longer than 3 seconds to load. So make sure to not make your readers wait!

2. Link to other websites with relevant content.

You may think that having outbound links that direct people away from your site is a bad idea. You would be wrong. It is helpful to your reader and that is entirely what good inbound marketing is all about—informing your target audience. By linking to other good resources of information, you show your market that you know things. And the things you don't know? Well, you know the people who know those things. Which is called wisdom and experts share it.

3. Write for humans.

Your target market is human. So, your [content](#) should be directed at humans. We like to think of this as the Field of Dreams approach to content marketing: IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME.

If you create relatable, educational, valuable, human content, THEY WILL READ IT

AND BE ENGAGED AND GIVE YOU ALL THEIR MONEY. (Okay, okay. Maybe not ALL of their money.) Your focus as you create content should be on return on investment, not on rankings. Will rankings help you? Sure. But it doesn't matter how many people show up to your site if they are a) not the right people, or b) the content on your site's only value is its ranking. You want your site visitors to become customers, and that lead conversion only happens if you are providing them with actual value and not just a mumble of keywords strung together to appease an algorithm.

**“IF YOU BUILD IT,
THEY WILL COME.”**

4. *Have web analytics in place.*

This seems like a no brainer. You can't track how people are finding you if you don't have the means to track the data. Google analytics or tools like [HubSpot](#) are things you should put into place before you even have your first website visitor.

5. *Don't ignore your META Descriptions*

Neglecting to craft a thoughtful meta description is common. But the meta description is the very first thing people see when Google serves up your page to search users. So make that first impression count. Shoot for around 150 characters that can succinctly describe what your article is about for your best SEO optimization.

Search engines don't like duplicate content. So be original. Depending upon what platform you are using, there are different plug-ins you can use. WordPress's [Yoast](#)

[plugin](#) is a helpful tool.

6. *Have meaningful content slugs*

A content slug is part of your URL that directs people to your particular page. If users cannot understand your URL, chances are search engines cannot either. We always choose the title of a post as its content slug. Not only does this help readers and search engines determine what the subject matter of a page is about, but it also helps us organize our content. Avoid content slugs that use numbers or characters unless it is relevant. No one knows what the subject of this URL is "www.yourwebsite.com/article/123456". But were you to see this [www.yourwebsite.com/this-writer-at-mpwrsource-is-amazing](#) ? Well, then you can clearly see it is an article written about me.

(Stop laughing. We will let you know when we are joking. See first paragraph and keyword puns.)

7. Use social media.

Make sure that your posts are easy to share by embedding links to social media. And make sure that sharing your posts are part of your organization's social media strategy. Creating useful content is a surefire way to make people share your content. We share things we like. And encourage people to share, especially your employees. Consider having an in-house contest to encourage your team members to share. The person who shares the most or drives the most traffic to your website gets a \$5 gift card to that place you all love. You can also host a giveaway on your own social media platform that includes entries for liking your page, commenting, or sharing. Do not doubt what people will do for free stuff. Even small free stuff.

8. Image keywords

Images are important in search engine optimization. In fact, google has given image search its own dedicated search result. And when users look for a particular image...as luck would have it...they use keywords to do so. So when you select your captions, make sure they indicate what is in the photograph. Just be careful as you use your keywords, you avoid [keyword stuffing](#) as this will actually negatively impact your rankings.

“Creating useful content is a surefire way to make people share your content.”

9. Long-Tail Keywords Do Help

We know. We've said to not hang your hat solely on keywords. But we do love long-tail keywords. What we mean by that is to consider the phrases people type out to search for things rather than just the subjects. For example, for this page—the keyword might be “SEO optimization” whereas the long-tail keywords would be “tips on how to increase my SEO”. Do you see the difference? They often are easier to work with and can help boost your organic traffic.

Additionally, thinking of question keywords also helps as more and more people are using digital assistants to help them with their internet searches. When thinking of how to phrase these long-tail keyword queries, simply ask what Alexa or Siri would use to figure this out for you.

“Thinking of question keywords also helps as more and more people are using digital assistants to help them with their internet searches.”

You may research and find that your long-tail keywords have fewer monthly searches. But here is the thing—these long-tail keyword searches have higher conversion rates. And that is the end goal. Converting the searcher to a customer. And serious buyers use a long-tail search because they have a specific question or pain point they want addressed.

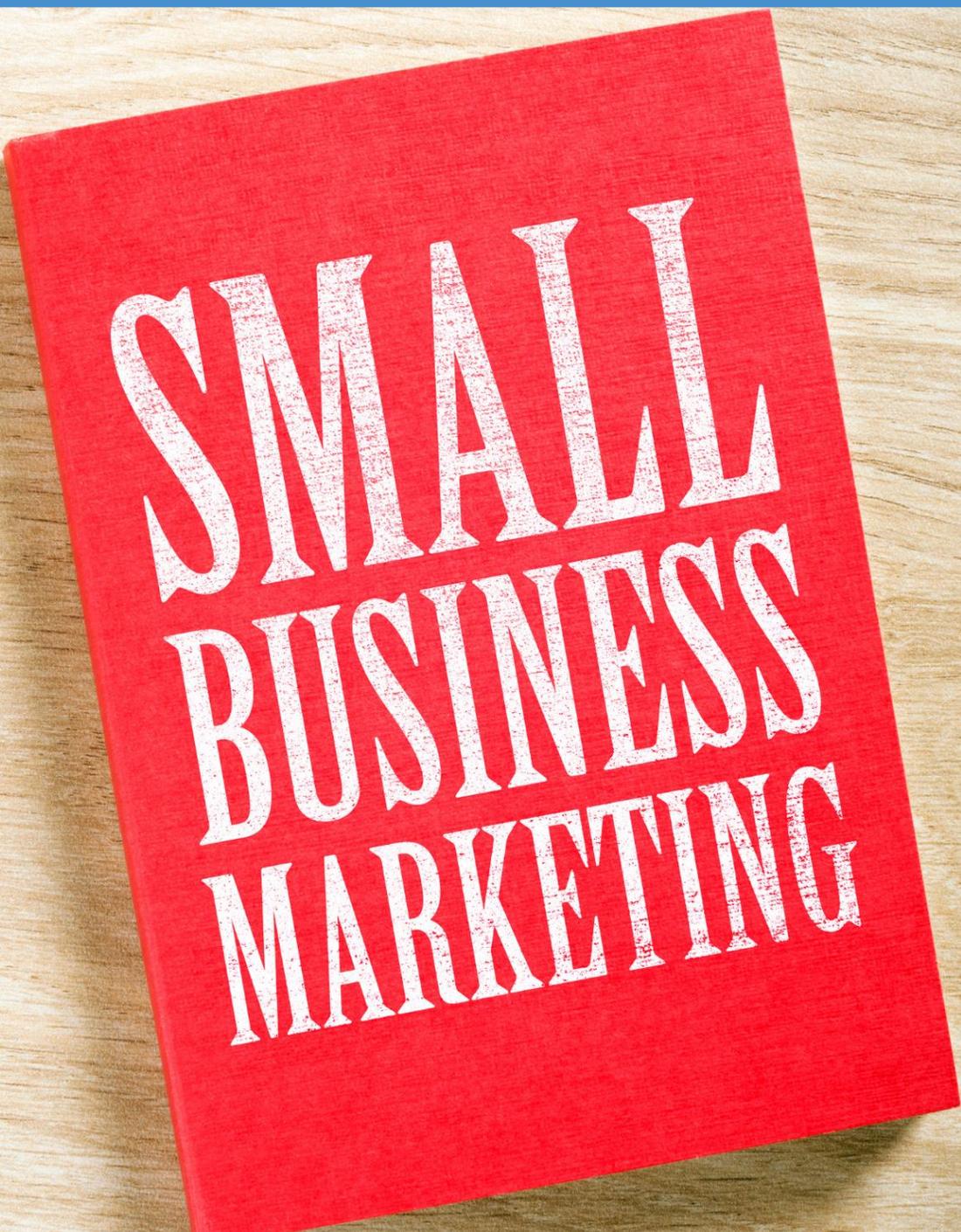
10. Be consistent in your content creation

We get it. Creating original, informative, engaging content on a regular and consistent basis is challenging. Especially if what you are trying to do is actually do your job vs write about doing your job. But whether you are a B2B or B2C business, when it comes to content marketing, consistency is key. If you struggle to create content for your website consistently, consider using a marketing company that can help. We hear the squad at MPWRSource has a great Creative Team with a crackerjack Content Leader. Allegedly, there was once a fictitious article mentioned about her titled “this-writer-at-mpwrsource-is-amazing”.

“We hear the squad at MPWRSource has a great Creative Team with a crackerjack Content Leader.”

CONCLUSION

10 SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING TIPS

A red book cover with white text, tilted on a wooden surface. The text reads "SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING" in a bold, serif font.

**SMALL
BUSINESS
MARKETING**

10 SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING TIPS

A [strong online presence](#) is a must have for any business large or small in 2020. 97% of people learn about [local businesses online](#), more than anywhere else, making your digital footprint more important than ever. If you are looking for a way to track your return on investment and brand awareness, digital marketing is a must have.

Online marketing may sound foreign to you. But good news! You're here! You made it to MPWRSource and the MPWRSource Squad is armed and ready to help you get your marketing moxie on through tips about [inbound marketing strategies](#).

Marketing's job is to attract,

delight, and engage (educate) with buyers online and inform your target market about how your company can alleviate their pain points. It helps to build a pipeline of qualified leads that get turned into sales. With a small or start up business, less visibility and lack of resources (money, time, and human capital) can add to the challenge. But there are key strategies anyone can implement that can take you from a bumbling Clark Kent to a Superman in no time.

“97% of people learn about local businesses online.”

1. Know Your Audience

A niche is where you will gain the most traction with your small business marketing. If you attempt to reach everyone, most likely you will reach no one. Take a look at your existing customers and think about their problems and priorities. What drives them to make a purchasing decision? How can your company meet their needs? Knowing these answers will help you to craft an effective [BUYER PERSONA](#).

2. Know your Unique Selling Proposition (USP)

Sometimes when we meet with a client, we get excited. They're able to tell us what they do and why they do it and how they meet the needs of their market and we all start singing Kumbayah because we know we are about to embark on a great marketing journey. Other times, we hear a client tell us

about their start up or their business and we just look for the camera a la Jim Halpert and think to ourselves, "Yea, but why?"

[Your USP is your differentiator](#)—it is what sets your business apart from all the others. Your why, your USP, is the reason people will choose you over your competitor. Maybe it is your customer service, price point, or location. Remember, as Tiffany Joy Greene, M.B.A., states, "Marketing is not about creating demand; it is about meeting demand."

"If you attempt to reach everyone, most likely you will reach no one."

3. Pay Attention to the Data

Once you have a few strategies in place and have experimented with different campaigns, find out what has been working and do more of that. As your business grows, scale and double-down in the areas that have proven to generate revenue. Small business marketing needs to work smarter, not, necessarily, harder.

“Small business marketing needs to work smarter, not, necessarily, harder.”

4. Dance with the One Who Brought You

On average, it costs [5 times more to acquire a new customer](#) than to close an existing one. This means you have got to tend to your existing customers. Market to your clients, continue to take them out for a spin on the floor.

Seek out opportunities for upselling, repeat purchasing, and cross-selling. Because your existing customers have already made a purchase with your business, they already like, know, and (hopefully) trust you.

Even in the event that a customer may have just had a one and done experience with you, make sure it was a good one. A delighted customer who brags about you is a powerful marketing tool.

5. Utilize Free Marketing Tools

Many small businesses have limited resources for marketing. You likely don't need to buy programs with all the bells and whistles when just starting out. Use free promotional tools where possible, only committing to pay for tools you know will drastically improve your existing efforts. There are free website platforms such as Wix, WordPress, and SquareSpace. Make sure you are on Social Media channels such as LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram. There are free CRMs such as HubSpot, and free email campaign builders such as MailChimp and Constant Contact. But remember, as you grow, you will need to scale your tools with you, and you will ultimately get what you pay for. Focus on your potential ROI of using a tool, remembering you need to work smarter, not harder to grow.

6. Create a Website

65% of the buyer's journey happens on-line. People are googling services and reading reviews long before they ever make a buying decision. This is where you will show your why and how potential customers can contact you. A well-developed website is your salesperson that never takes time off.

7. Start a Blog on Your Website

Blogging is a great way to communicate with your target market, particularly those that have not yet made a buying decision. It is a way to establish yourself as a trusted source and leader in your area of expertise. Blogging also increases your website's visibility. Even posting as little as once per week will boost your web traffic. Don't forget to also add a call to action to that lets readers subscribe to your blog and receive emails. This is a great way to capture more leads and get them on their way into the sales funnel.

8. Get Social!

Social Media is more than just murder hornet memes and BuzzFeed quizzes. It is actually a [powerful business tool](#). Social media helps increase traffic, improve search engine rankings, and engage with potential and existing customers.

Maximizing your social media presence is an easy layup for small business marketing pros.

9. Whip out those Emails

Email generates [\\$38 for every \\$1 spent](#) which is a whopping 3,800% return on investment. It is truly one of the most effective marketing tools out there. Email has an average 3.9 million daily users, according to Statista. That's a pretty cheap tool for such a wide net. Emails are a simple and cost- efficient way to communicate with both existing and potential customers. To make it even

easier, there are many [free email marketing animation](#) tools that you can use to get you started.

“Social media helps increase traffic, improve search engine rankings, and engage with potential & existing customers.”

10. Experiment with Photo and Video Content

We have all been cooped up indoors for too long due to Coronavirus, we want to see the world! Quick snapshots of your work culture give folks a peek inside without having to mask up. A 1-minute video of you chatting up your latest promotion makes your business instantly approachable and human and the ROI on video is profound: product videos increase the chance of the purchase by 144%. (Raise your hand if you bought that thing you kept seeing the video for on Instagram. Mine was a fancy fire pit and my lockdown S'mores are on point.) Most social media platforms are visual in nature and lend themselves to the sharing of this content anyway. Don't get too stressed that it will cost an arm and leg.

There are [many free or low cost ways](#) to achieve the results you want to really elevate your small business marketing efforts.

Don't be afraid to think outside the box. One of the lessons of 2020 is to expect the unexpected—so dazzle your audience!

“Don't be afraid to think outside the box.”

