

LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

April 2021

10 Tips to Help You Get to Know Your Customers Better

*6 Effective Tips for
Marketing Your Business
on a Budget*

*Sure-fire Ways
to Destroy
Your Brand
Reputation*

*Three Strategies to Gain
Followers on Twitter*

*10 Tips to Ensure
Brand Consistency on
Social Media*

*9 Tips for Growing
Your Small
Business*



Infographic:
Understanding
Google Analytics

FREE!

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Thank you for taking the time to read through this month's magazine issue. We hope you find it full of interesting articles, and more importantly, that you'll one or two tips that you can immediately apply to your business.

This month, as usual, we address several ways to help you grow your business. You'll find tips that will help you market your business, keep your brand safe, and get the most from your social media efforts.

You'll also find our popular Marketing Calendar and this month's Infographic on Google Analytics.

If you're not already receiving this magazine regularly, we suggest you add your email to our subscriber list. We have some exciting articles already in the works for the upcoming issues. Don't miss out!

If you like the magazine, and know other local business owners that could benefit from receiving our magazine each month, please do us (and them) a favor by forwarding a copy to them.

If you have any comments about this issue or would like us to help you with your marketing please do not hesitate to contact us.

Be Well!

David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

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A Little About Us

Local Business Marketing Magazine is proudly provided by LMS Solutions, Inc.



LMS Solutions was developed to give businesses of all sizes the ability to leverage the same cutting-edge marketing platforms that the Fortune 500 organizations use, at extremely affordable rates.

We offer an extensive catalog of cutting-edge Local Online, Mobile, Social, Pay-Per-Click, Video, Web and Direct Marketing Media Programs. Whether you're a small business, medium business, or non-profit organization, our programs can help you find greater success.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

April

Autism Awareness Month
National Humor Month
International Customer Loyalty Month
Lawn and Garden Month
Stress Awareness Month
National Volunteer Month
National Sexual Assault Awareness Month

April 1st - April Fool's Day
April 2nd - Good Friday
April 4th - Easter Sunday
March 27th - April 4th - Passover
April 21st - Administrative Professionals Day (US)
April 22nd - Earth Day

1st - Burrito Day
2nd - Autism Awareness Day
6th - National Student-Athlete Day
7th - No Housework Day

7th - Beer Day
7th - National Walking Day / World Health Day
9th - Winston Churchill Day
9th - Day of Silence
10th - National Siblings Day
10th - ASPCA Day
11th - National Pet Day
12th - Grilled Cheese Sandwich Day
13th - National Scrabble Day
15th - Titanic Remembrance Day
16th - Wear Your Pajamas to Work Day
18th - Pet Owners Day
20th - Look Alike Day
22nd - Jelly Bean Day
23rd - Picnic Day
23rd - Take Our Daughters & Sons to Work Day
26th - Pretzel Day
28th - Superhero Day
30th - Adopt a Shelter Pet Day
30th - Bugs Bunny Day

May

ALS Awareness Month
Mental Health Awareness Month
Military Appreciation Month
Employee Health & Fitness Month
National Barbecue Month
National High Blood Pressure Awareness Month
National Hamburger Month

May 1st - May Day
May 5th - Cinco de Mayo (US)
May 9th - Mother's Day
May 31st - Memorial Day (US)

1st - Law Day
1st - Fitness Day
2nd - Harry Potter Day
2nd - Life Insurance Day
3rd - Melanoma Day
4th - Star Wars Day
4th - Teacher Appreciation Day
5th - Hoagie Day

6th - Skilled Trades Day
6th - Nurses Day
7th - National Space Day
7th - Military Spouse Appreciation Day
8th - World Fair Trade Day
8th - Stamp Out Hunger Food Drive Day
10th - Shrimp Day
10th - Clean Your Room Day
11th - Eat What You Want Day
12th - Receptionist Day
13th - Apple Pie Day
15th - Armed Forces Day
15th - Pizza Party Day
15th - Bike to Work Day
15th - NASCAR Day
20th - Rescue Dog Day
21st - Pizza Party Day
24th - Scavenger Hunt Day
25th - Wine Day
25th - Missing Children's Day
28th - Hamburger Day

A photograph of two women in a shop. The woman on the left, with blonde hair in a ponytail and wearing a white short-sleeved top and tan pants, is leaning over a counter. The woman on the right, with brown hair and wearing a light purple top, is standing behind the counter and gesturing with her hands while talking. On the counter are several white folders and a laptop. In the background, there are shelves with various bottles and products against a brick wall.

10 Tips to Help You Get to Know Your Customers Better

You will almost always find “get to know your customers” at the top of most lists of marketing tips. Undoubtedly, buying your products will help you target marketing more effectively and develop more products that your customers will love.

However, how do you go about learning more about your customers? In many instances, customers are merely names on a sales report. How can you find out what drives these people to buy your products and learn more about their interests? Here are ten tips to help you build a profile of your typical customer.

1. Assume Nothing

The first thing you must do is discard all the preconceptions you have about your typical customer. Your assumptions about your target market may be incorrect or out of date. The reason why people buy your products may be something entirely different from what you believe. What you need is up-to-date, real-life data that will help you build an accurate profile of your customers. And don't be surprised if you find that several groups of people with different interests buy your products. If that is the case, you could target future marketing campaigns at these different market segments.

2. Conduct Customer Surveys

Of course, the simplest way to find out more about someone is to ask them some questions, and surveys are the best way to get feedback from your customers. There are various software tools available that will help you conduct surveys, including GetFeedBack, SurveyMonkey, and Zoho Survey. Many of these tools will help you build online questionnaires and analyze the results. Keep the questions simple, though,

and don't get too personal. You will also get more responses to a survey if you offer an incentive, such as a prize draw or a discount voucher.

3. Analyze Customer Reviews

Allowing customers to post reviews about your product or service provides social validation that can boost sales. Customer reviews can also be a source of valuable marketing data. Read what your customers say about your products and try to get into the mind of the reviewer. Some of the comments that you previously skimmed over could be incredibly revealing. Statements like "I bought this for my 89-year-old grandmother," for example, may reveal a target market that you had not previously considered. You might also find that people are using your products in ways that you had not envisaged.

4. Keyword Research

You might have only used keyword research tools to choose keywords for your content. But the search terms people use to find your website can also reveal more about what your customers need. The Google Keyword Planner is an excellent place to start. Type in a keyword

for your product, and the tool will list related search terms. Other keyword research tools include SEMrush, Ubersuggest, and Ahrefs. Analyzing keywords, especially long-tail keywords, will help you understand how your customers find what they need.

5. Investigate Your Competitors

You may find out more about your customers by looking at what your competitors are doing. The businesses you compete with will be attempting to appeal to your target market, and they may be one step ahead of you. So, look at the type of content your competitors use and research the keywords they are targeting. Find out what kind of social media posts create the most interaction for your competitors and look at the comments that people are leaving against those posts. If competing companies display their bestsellers on their websites, that will help you understand what their customers are buying.

6. Hold Events

Holding events is another excellent way of getting to know your customers. In some industries, customer days would be an

appropriate way to meet your target audience. In other sectors, webinars might be more appropriate. And, of course, in times of pandemic, online meetings will be preferable. Events provide an opportunity to meet both prospects and existing customers. The feedback you get, plus the questions that people ask, will help you understand your customer's needs and concerns. The best way to get people to attend an event is to offer something valuable in return, such as an exclusive tutorial. Or you could provide a special price for early adopters at a product launch.

7. Website Analytics

Google Analytics can provide you with useful information about your customers. The tool will reveal the basic visitor demographics, including gender, age, and geographical location. Delve a bit deeper into Analytics, and you will find information on people's interests. Google Analytics will also show you how people interact with your site and which of your pages are the most popular.

8. Discover What Your Customers Are Talking About

It will help you understand

your customers if you know what concerns them. What are people saying about your brand, for example? What is trending in your sector? Of course, manually tracking online conversations across multiple platforms would be next to impossible. It would be best to use social media monitoring tools, like Hootsuite, Sprout Social, or Buzzlogix, to monitor brand and keyword mentions. You can also see what is being posted on the web with Google Alerts. Monitoring relevant keywords and hashtags will keep you in touch with customers and alert you to what your competitors are doing.

9. Engage with Customers

Go to the places where your customers hang out and join in with the conversation. Look for social media groups where your customers might be found and join online forums relevant to your niche. Be the first to answer questions from your target audience and respond to any mention of your brand. Striking up a conversation with your target audience will help gain people's trust. When people begin to trust you, they will be more likely to share information with you.

10. Build Customer Profiles

The objective of all the above is to build up a picture of your customers. As mentioned above, you will probably find that you can segment your market and have several different profiles of a typical customer. Go beyond the basics of gender, age, and location, though. You need to know what your target audience is concerned about and why they might, or might not, buy your product. It will take time and effort to identify precisely who your customers are. However, when you get to know your customers, you will be better placed to sell them what they want.

To sum up, it's going to take a lot of work to get to know your customers well. Once you have conducted surveys, analyzed the metrics, and joined the conversation, all that data will need collating as well. And don't forget that your typical customer may change over time. Your customer profiles, though, will provide you with a precious resource. A resource that will help you target every marketing campaign, every new product launch, and every piece of online content you produce.



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10 Tips to Ensure Brand Consistency on Social Media



CONSISTENCY
is a key

A life without any surprises would be dull. However, when it comes to branding, consistency is everything. Suppose you saw a McDonald's restaurant without Golden Arches. In that case, you might keep on driving until you found another restaurant you recognize. And, if you ate a Big Mac on vacation, you would expect your burger to look and taste the same as it does at home.

Brands like McDonald's go to great lengths to ensure a consistent experience in all their restaurants. McDonald's advertising and recipes vary in some countries to cater to local tastes and cultural sensitivities, but the core elements of the experience remain consistent, and people are "lovin' it" right across the globe.

So, what does a burger have to do with brand consistency on social media? Well, on-brand social media posts will all carry the same branding and message. However, post content will vary slightly to suit each platform. Users will immediately recognize and trust the brand on any platform, even if the content is somewhat different. Here are ten tips

to help you ensure that your brand message is as consistent as a Big Mac across all social media platforms.

1. Define Your Brand

Persona and Message
You cannot stay on-brand if you have no idea what your brand represents. So, first, identify your target audience, and then develop a brand personality that will appeal to that audience. For example, is your brand playful, serious, or sympathetic? Are your products exclusive, high-quality, or value for money? The format and content of posts may vary across social media platforms. But the personality and overriding message must stay the same. A person whose character and opinions change according to who they are talking to would appear disingenuous. If your core brand message differs across social media platforms, people will think the same applies to your business.

2. Get the Basics Right

Your logo is the face of your business; it is what makes your brand recognizable. So, ensure that you use the same logo on all your

social media accounts. Be careful about image sizing when you upload logos, too. If your image's shape does not match that of the profile picture, your logo could get stretched. It will also help people identify your brand if you use the colors and fonts wherever you can. And use the same cover image if the platform allows one. Remember, you can recognize a McDonald's whether it is located in a shiny new mall or a prestigious 100-year-old building.

3. Develop a Brand

Guidelines Document
The best way to ensure that employees stick to your brand identity is to have a formal brand guideline document. Typically, a brand guideline will include which logos are to be used in various situations. There will be color and typography guidelines. And the guide will also specify the tone and voice to be adopted in any written content. Your brand guidelines will help ensure continuity of brand personality, even if you change personnel. The brand guidelines will also help ensure branding consistency in other materials and media, including

advertising, packaging, and correspondence.

4. Focus on the Platforms that Are Right for Your Brand

One of the most common social media mistakes businesses make is they spread themselves too thin. It is challenging to retain brand consistency when you are posting on 20 or more sites every day. Each of the various social media platforms also attracts different audiences. For example, according to Sprout Social, the largest age group using Twitter is 30-49. The largest age group using TickTock is 18-24. It would be better to focus your efforts on a few platforms that attract your target audience rather than trying to appeal to everyone.

5. Assign a Social Media Manager or Team

It is best to assign one person to manage your social media marketing. If volume makes it necessary, use the same team of people to write and post social media content. You want to avoid everyone having access to your accounts, posting whatever they feel is appropriate. So, try not to allow managing

your social media management to become the job that anyone free at the time does. If you want to retain brand consistency on social media, you need to have a consistent team working with a plan.

6. Create a Posting Schedule

Try to avoid posting to social media accounts on an ad-hoc basis. If you do, you will lose the flow of the message you are trying to convey, and you will be more likely to go off-brand. Schedule posts in advance so that you can develop themes and reinforce messages. Take time to consider what you are posting and the impact that each post will have on your audience. You might change lanes on your social media journey. But, if you don't have a route map, you could easily make a wrong turn and get lost, along with the people who are following you.

7. Avoid Gimmicks

The chances of one of your social media posts going viral are slim, and, if a post does go viral, the extra attention it creates will be very short-lived and could be damaging to your brand. So, try to avoid

the common mistake of following the latest social media trends in the hope of gaining more views, shares, and likes. If the topic is not relevant to your brand, it will not benefit your business anyway. You will get better results from social media marketing if you take the long view. Focus on building relationships and trust rather than gaining a short-lived boost in interactions.

8. Maintain Quality Across Platforms

A consistent level of quality in social media posts is just as important as a consistent look and feel. So, pay attention to grammar, spelling, and layout, even in the short-form content. And use high-quality images, graphics, and videos across all platforms. What you post on your social media accounts affects people's perception of your brand. If your social media posts are inconsistent and low-quality, people will wonder if you apply the same lack of care to your products.

9. Adjust the Tone to Suit the Platform

As mentioned above, McDonald's Big Mac ingredients are slightly

different in some countries to suit the local tastes. The same approach should be adopted in social media posts. What works well on Twitter will not always be suitable for Facebook. So, try to avoid posting the same content across all platforms. Use automation tools with care. Automating posts will save time, but it increases the temptation to disregard the importance of adjusting the content to suit the audience. The branding and message should be the same regardless of platform, but the content may be subtly different to fit the medium and the demographics of the platform's users.

10. Be Authentic

You need to be true to your brand across all platforms. People will soon see through you if you are not authentic. Your brand personality, values, and beliefs should shape everything you post on social media and dictate which types of posts you like and share. It will help if you think about your brand as an individual with a personality. A person who advocates urgent action to slow global warming, for example, is unlikely to share a post advertising a car with a V8 gasoline engine. Likewise, it wouldn't be too clever if a vegan food brand

retweeted a McDonald's Big Mac special offer.

Brand consistency on social media is essential for building trust and creating loyalty. So, define and document your brand.

Limit the people in your organization who have access to your social media accounts. And remember, it is not only your logo that creates consistency across the various platforms. The tone and quality of your posts are also crucial elements of the personality of your brand.

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6 Effective Tips for Marketing Your Business on a Budget

Marketing your business is vital as it helps you expand your brand, increase sales, learn the market, and earn trust from your audience. However, it is normal for a company to run on a shoestring budget that it can't support some marketing strategies. This may be due to expansion activities, seasonal fluctuations, insufficient capital, or expenses not being monitored.

Regardless of your company's financial

status, you can't pause marketing. You need to continue employing marketing approaches as they will help you get new leads that will increase your profit margin. The following are six effective tips for marketing your business on a budget.

Ask for Referrals

It is effective to actively ask your existing customers for referrals. Research shows that 60% of marketers have attested

that referrals generate high volumes of leads. Therefore, you should encourage your customers to mention your business to their loved ones. Their word of mouth will cost you nothing, yet your customer acquisition rate will increase.

Referrals always work because people tend to trust the testimonials of people they know. Besides, your customers know the right people who can benefit from

your business. Thus, when you ask for a referral, they will think of them, and inform them immediately. Referrals usually lead to more referrals, so they can help you increase your brand awareness at no cost.

You can also use incentives to motivate clients to refer your business. This will still not cost you a lot as you will use manageable incentives such as discounts, gift cards, or limited free subscriptions.

Open A Google My Business Account

If you don't have a Google My Business account, you may be missing out on getting new clients. This feature was introduced by Google to help users find businesses, either through the search results or maps. For instance, if someone in your locality searches a keyword that relates to your business, Google will include your map among the top ones.

In your Google My Business listing, you will include your business name, products or services, contacts, business hours, and address to provide a reader with adequate information.

Opening this account is free, so it's one of the most affordable marketing approaches for business owners.

Use Social Media

The advent of social media has helped many businesses grow tremendously without breaking the bank. Statistics show that in 2020, 3.6 billion people were on social media globally, and the number is expected to increase to 4.41 billion by 2025. With these high numbers, it is easier for businesses to reach a large audience via a screen.

Hence, you should open an account on a wide array of platforms to reach different markets. Moreover, it is essential to have a social media team that takes care of the posting and engaging with the audience. However, you need to be creative to win clients via social media. For example, you should tag your customers on your pages and ask them to tag you on theirs.

Participate in Trade Fairs

Trade fairs or shows offer a cost-effective platform for businesses to showcase

their products and services to a large number of customers. Thus, it is important to participate in those that are organized in your region to help you raise your brand awareness. Besides, they will allow you to meet with customers in person, and in turn, build relationships that will benefit your business for years.

These events are usually affordable as all you need to have is a simple booth, your signage, technological accessories, business cards, and refreshments for your employees. By the end of the event, you will have captured the attention of hundreds of clients who will come to your business location.

Collaborate with Another Business

Collaborating with other businesses is another marketing approach that you can employ with a tight budget. However, you need to make an informed decision to ensure this plan benefits you. For instance, you should not collaborate with a direct competitor. Also, you should work with a local business to help you reach your target audience easily.

Business collaboration is not necessarily a partnership strategy that requires you to sell your shares. You can choose to only have a marketing relationship with the other company. One of the ways to do that is by cross promoting each other's brands on social media. You and the other business can have a social media contest, whereby your company will manage the contestants and your partner will award them.

For instance, if you run an auto shop, you can collaborate with a restaurant. Then, you can ask a question like 'the best ways to make car tires last longer,' and the first contestants with the right answers will win dinner at the restaurant.

You can also cross-promote another business by including their leaflets or business cards in your brochures and they will do the same for you. This can help you reach a new pool of prospective clients.

Guest posting is another strategy that you can use to collaborate with another business. In this plan, another business will allow you to write an article or blog for their

website, but you will provide a backlink to your website. This can expand your network significantly as it will help you catch the attention of new customers.

Apply for a Business Award

The chances are different awards are held in your region, so you should consider applying to them. Just being shortlisted as a nominee in a category of the award can increase your brand awareness as voters will want to know about your business, which means free marketing.

Additionally, winning an award can help you get new contracts and supply channels. For example, if you win an award for the best interior designer in the region, you can rest assured that a significant percentage of home and business owners will trust your work and will always consider you first.

Marketing your business on a budget should no longer be a challenge. The tips discussed above are inexpensive and practical so they can help you acquire new customers without straining.

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Sure-Fire Ways to Destroy Your Brand Reputation

Brand reputation is everything in the digital age. Bad news travels fast via online reviews and social media. So, if someone has a bad experience with a business, word will soon get around.

But it's not only customers' comments that can sink a business's reputation. There are plenty of examples of companies scoring own goals, too.

Most business owners know better than to admit their products are low-quality publicly. However, it is easier than you might have thought to damage the reputation of your

business. Here are ten things that could damage your brand reputation beyond repair.

1. Profiteering from Disasters

The COVID-19 pandemic had a devastating effect on people's lives, and there were initially shortages of some products in the stores. Some retail businesses did the right thing by restricting the number of items in short supply that each shopper could buy. Some companies, however, made the most of the shortages by inflating their prices. Arguably, all businesses

had to do whatever was needed to survive the crisis. However, consumers are unlikely to forget the stores that were blatantly profiteering.

2. Taking a Stance on a Contentious Issue

Unless you are 100% certain of your customer base's views, it is best to stay clear of politics and religion. There are always opposing views on sensitive issues. If you back one side of an argument, you will alienate customers who hold opposing views. The best policy is to steer clear of any issues that might be divisive.

3. Misleading Customers

Misleading customers will get you some very negative brand mentions. So, be sure that you meet any promises you make. The most basic way that you could be misleading customers is by overselling your products. Things like hidden conditions in warranties and guarantees of fast delivery that are not met will also anger customers. It is best to be up front and transparent with customers. If you are honest and set expectations at the right level, customers will continue to trust your brand.

4. Public Arguments with Customers

Arguing with customers online is a big no-no if you want to maintain your brand reputation. So, if you get a bad review or a negative comment on social media, take the discussion off-line. The best way to respond to negative comments is to thank the commenter for their feedback, apologize if you were in the wrong, and ask the individual to contact you directly. Even if you win a public argument with a customer, you will damage your reputation. Discrediting a customer will make your company appear aggressive and uncaring, and your customer might feel

they have been publicly humiliated.

5. Expressing Personal Opinions on Public Platforms

Avoid using your branded social media accounts for personal use. If you want to engage with people on Twitter and Facebook personally, set up separate accounts, and remember to log out of your business accounts when you have finished making company posts and comments. If you inadvertently like or share something contentious on a business account, it will be forever associated with your brand.

6. Taking Customers for Granted

No one likes to be taken for granted. So, you must demonstrate that you care about and value your customers. Make customer service one of your top priorities and respond to both public and private customer complaints swiftly. People understand that all companies can make mistakes sometimes. But, if you fail to rectify or compensate for your errors, customers will not forgive you and likely to tell other people about their experiences.

7. Failing to Engage

People want their voices

to be heard. So, try to avoid making your social media and other communication platforms one-way channels. If you all you do is post offers and advertisements, people will get bored and switch off. They will assume that your business doesn't care about its customers. Engage with customers and respond personally to their comments. Avoid using template responses to emails and social media posts. Your customers are people, so show them that there are real people behind your brand who care.

8. Attacking the Competition

Publicly deriding the competition will not win you any fans and could land you in court. So, it is better to highlight your strengths rather than criticize your competitors. Attacking the competition will be seen in the same light as one individual insulting another, and personal attacks on individuals are unkind, unnecessary, and often driven by jealousy. Attacks on the competition will give your company a bad reputation and might provoke a retaliatory response that you are unable to counter.

9. Disrespecting Employees

If you don't treat your workforce with respect, they will not respect your company. Sometimes disgruntled employees are inevitable. After all, no one is going to be happy about getting fired. But, if there is widespread discontentment in your workforce, word will get around, and it will damage your brand reputation. Modern consumers like to buy from ethical businesses. So, it is best to treat employees fairly and with respect. Likewise, it is also advisable to source products and services from

similarly ethical vendors.

10. Not Thinking Before Speaking

Gerald Ratner's prawn sandwich earring joke was funny and probably true. The Ratner's jewelry chain did sell some very cheap items. However, the entrepreneur had not thought about his humorous speech's potential ramifications should the content be made public. The value of the Ratner Group fell by £500 million immediately following that speech. So, think before you speak, and proof-read content for anything that might be damaging or misconstrued.

One innocent mistake could have a devastating effect on the reputation of your business.

Brand reputation is a fragile thing that can be easily damaged by poor customer service, misleading customers, and ill-thought-out comments. Consumers have long memories, too, so it can take a long time to rebuild a damaged brand. And people are quick to share their thoughts about brands. So, it would be advisable to take every possible precaution to ensure that you protect your business's good reputation.

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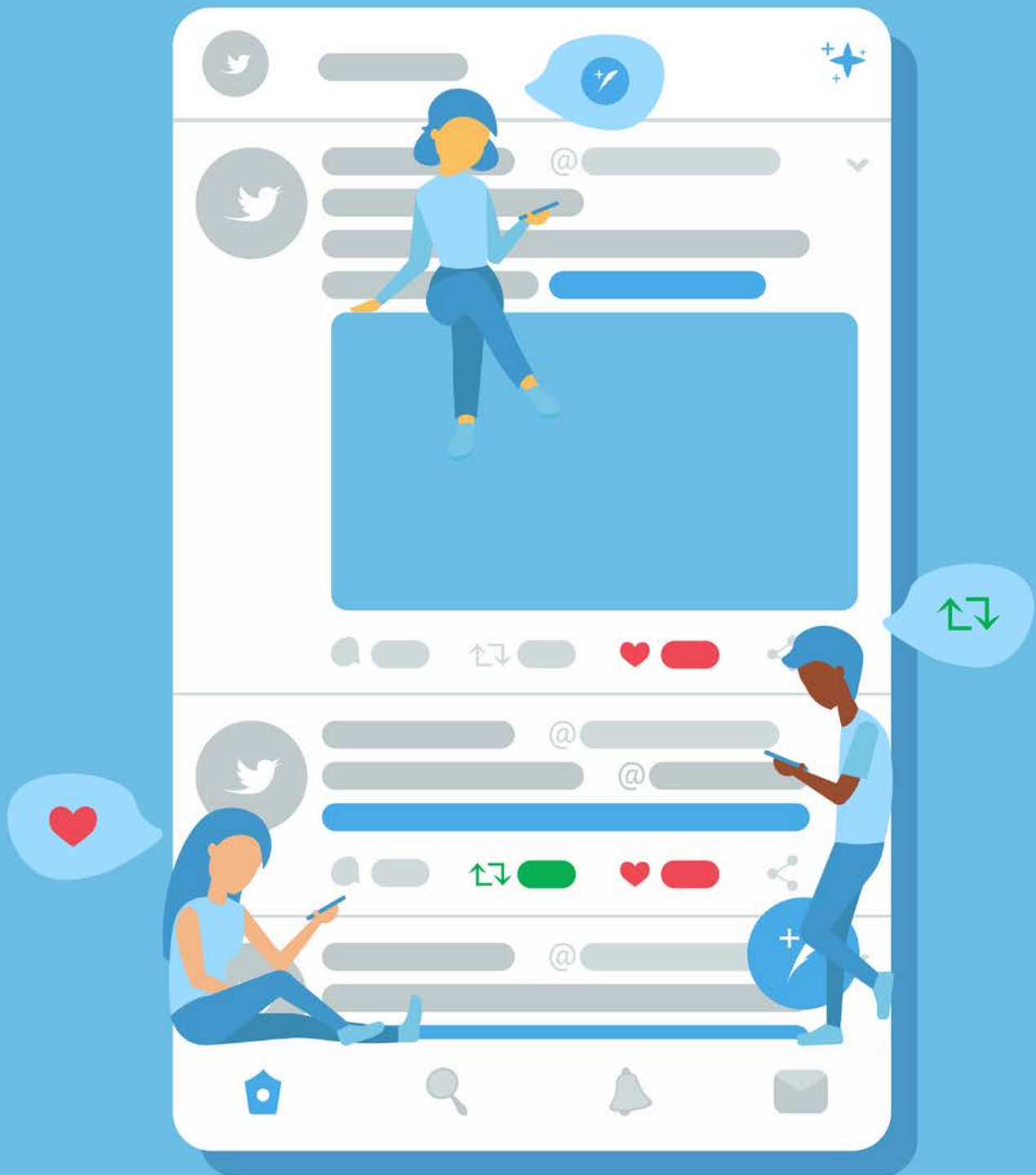
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Three Strategies to Gain Followers on Twitter



Twitter is a fantastic social media platform for nearly all brands, but you will need a good plan and strategy to be successful. One of the critical things you need to focus on doing is to gain followers regularly. Therefore, the following article aims to provide some key strategies to achieve your goals.

1. Post a lot of content

One of the main points about Twitter is you can post a lot of content on the platform. It's increasingly difficult to post too much because streams move so fast that older updates can be forgotten about very quickly. However, it's also important to be consistent, so you aren't posting ten updates one day and only one or two the next.

Twitter can be an enriching platform for those brands that post many daily and weekly updates. Therefore, put a plan together for content to create and post new updates as efficiently as possible. It's also a good idea to utilize a social media dashboard to ensure you post a consistent number of updates each

day and spread them out throughout the day.

2. Targeted following

There are different opinions on targeted following, and this strategy is more useful for smaller brands without much name recognition. As mentioned, it isn't easy to achieve much on Twitter if you don't have enough followers. The idea of targeted following is that you follow select users that may want to follow you back or interact with you.

By following this process, you will gradually increase the number of followers you have over time. The aim here is to gain real followers that are useful to you. Therefore, this is not the same as buying followers, which will result in a lot of low-quality followers. Also, keep in mind this is a long-term process that will not make an immediate impact. Only follow users in small numbers each day; otherwise, Twitter will flag this as suspicious and stop you, and the process becomes counterproductive.

3. Interaction is key

Many brands make the

mistake of merely posting content when using Twitter. The problem with this approach is it implies the business only wants to use social media for a one-way purpose. It's also not the most effective way to gain followers unless your content gets noticed.

If you want to gain followers, you should look to interact on Twitter as the opportunities open up to do so. Therefore, respond to your content comments to ensure your profile looks active and interact with others' posts. Remember, an action as simple as liking, retweeting, or commenting can be enough to gain followers. Also, look for opportunities to use your industry experience to help others.

Twitter is a fantastic platform if you know how to use it to benefit your brand. However, it will only work if you can gain followers regularly. Therefore, the preceding article has looked at some key strategies to help your brand grow. Remember to post a lot of content, engage in targeted following, and interact when opportunities present themselves.

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9 Tips for Growing Your Small Business

Starting a business is easy but taking it to the next level can be challenging. You will need to go beyond your normal operational measures to attain your goals. Fortunately, it is possible with the right tactics up your sleeve.

However, business success is gradual and doesn't occur overnight, but with time, you will see your efforts bearing fruits. We're providing nine tips for growing your small business.

1. Know Your Clients

It is essential to know your clients' needs to provide the right products or services. Therefore, you should always encourage them to leave reviews. This way, you can adjust your products or services to meet the existing demand of the market.

Periodically, you can request your customers to complete surveys. You can include an incentive, such as a discount for those who take the survey, and so on.

2. Offer Excellent Customer Service

Consumers love companies that give them utmost attention. Hence, you should offer satisfactory customer service. It is imperative to have enough customer care agents to answer calls and respond to emails on time. You should also have a social media team that replies to comments and engages with your audience.

In your physical business, your employees must be friendly. They should always smile and talk to customers respectfully. You also need to train them frequently to make

sure they understand your product or service in-depth. Clients always appreciate it when they can get adequate information before making a purchase.

In addition, it is effective to tell customers 'thank you'. It seems subtle, but it can make a client feel important. You can also include gratitude messages in your receipts or send thank you notes during special occasions.

Moreover, if you want to introduce a new product or service, you should give consumers a free sample or trial. With free samples, customers can evaluate the new venture before purchasing it. This makes your target market know that you care about fulfilling their needs. Providing excellent customer service can significantly increase your customer retention and acquisition rate.

3. Form Partnerships

Most established businesses expanded due to constructive partnerships. Thus, you need to consider partnering with companies that can help you make a difference. It doesn't necessarily have

to be a business in your industry.

For instance, if you run a home renovation business, you can partner with a paint company. You will recommend their paint services to your customers and they can help you find homeowners who need renovation services.

However, you need to get legal help to avoid partnerships that may harm you in the future. Your attorney will go through the contracts to make sure you only sign beneficial deals.

4. Ask for Referrals

The best advocates for your company are satisfied clients. Thus, you should not shy off from asking them for referrals. Do not assume that because you offer quality services, your consumers will automatically talk about your company to their colleagues, friends, and family. You need to actively remind them to do so.

You can incentivize the referrals, like giving customers codes or links. When a new purchaser uses a client's referral info, they will get a discount.

You should also encourage

your customers to share and tag your company on their social media pages. For example, if your client buys a dress, they can tag your shop on their post, so that other people can find you easily.

5. Embrace Corporate Social Responsibility

Consumer's love spending their money on businesses that help communities. Therefore, you should research societal goals that you can support to connect emotionally with your customers. You can sponsor a talent show, buy supplies for a local sports team, or pay a student's college tuition.

You should also take part in functions. For example, if your community has a run to support cancer patients or raise awareness about drug abuse, send your employees to participate. Your business should not only be about making money, but also developing the community.

6. Attend Trade Shows

Trade fairs or shows usually give businesses a platform to showcase their products or services to many consumers at once. It is crucial to

always participate in them because they can give you an opportunity to market your business effectively. Furthermore, you will get to interact and connect with customers in-person.

You can also connect with other businesses at these events. Consequently, you can build productive networks that will help you in the future.

7. Expand to International Markets

It is vital for your company to access global customers. However, you don't have to break the bank to make this possible as you can use your existing budget to tap into international markets.

For instance, you can put your business on websites that export products. Different global platforms that cater to the needs of different business types exist, so you can't miss finding one that will work for you.

8. Consider Franchising

If your brand is already recognized in the industry, but you lack adequate capital to open new stores, you can consider franchising. In this strategy, you will allow third parties, referred to as franchisees,

to use your brand name, model, trademarks, and processes.

Venturing into franchising is the best technique to expand your brand without spending money. This is because the franchisees will basically fund the expansion. They will finance their stores, employees, supplies, and daily operations. You will only provide them with training, knowledge, and suppliers, and in turn, they will pay you for using your brand.

9. Invest in Your Employees

Your employees play a crucial role in the growth of your company, so you should invest in them. You can take them through training programs to keep them informed. You should also allow them to attend networking events to learn more about the industry. It is crucial to pay your employees fairly to keep them motivated.

Business growth is the goal of every entrepreneur. The discussed tips can help you take your business to greater heights. However, it is essential to be patient and persistent to see the results.



FUN FACTS

The Romans gave this month the Latin name Aprilis but the derivation of this name is uncertain. The traditional etymology is from the verb aperire, "to open," in allusion to its being the season when trees and flowers begin to "open," which is supported by comparison with the modern Greek use of anoixis (opening) for spring.

- April 4, 1975 - Microsoft was founded as a partnership between Bill Gates and Paul Allen in Albuquerque, New Mexico
- April 12, 1955 - The polio vaccine, developed by Dr. Jonas Salk, was declared safe and effective
- April 15, 1947 - Jackie Robinson, became the first African-American player in Major League Baseball when he played at Ebbets Field in Brooklyn, for the Brooklyn Dodgers.
- April 17, 2011 - Game of Thrones premiered on HBO
- April 20, 1926 - Western Electric and the Warner Brothers film studio officially introduced Vitaphone, a new process that would enable the addition of sound to film
- April 23, 2005 - The first YouTube video was uploaded, titled "Me at the zoo".

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Understanding Google Analytics

Why Use Google Analytics?

Google Analytics helps answer many questions about the performance of your website.

About Users That Visit Your Site

- How many users visit your site?
- What device are they using?
- What browser are they using?
- What demographics do they have?

About the Actions Visitors Take on Your Site

- How long do visitors stay on your site?
- How many pages do they visit?
- How does the visitor behave on your site?
- How many users fill out forms or leave their info?

About Sites that Send Traffic to Your Site

- Which sites refer to the most traffic & conversions to your site?
- Which social media channel refers the most traffic?
- How successful are your paid ad campaigns?
- What keywords are driving your site traffic?

About the Pages on Your Site

- How long do the visitors spend on each page?
- Which pages are most popular?
- How effective is your landing page?
- Which pages do visitors navigate away from without exploring your site any further?

Homepage Reports: A quick look at your site

- **Users** - This shows the unique visitors on your website. Each time a new visitor lands on your site, Google Analytics assigns them an ID so it can track how many times a visitor comes back to your page. But if you use a different browser, it will count your two visits as two separate users.
- **Sessions** - Google Analytics records a session every single time someone visits your website. It tracks every pageview, click, transaction, etc. per user during their period of activity, which makes up one session.
- **Bounce Rate** - The bounce rate shows the percentage of visitors who navigate away from your site after viewing only one page. If your bounce rate is high, then you need to look at what pages are causing people to immediately leave your site. It could be because of slow loading times, wrong keywords, or your site isn't mobile friendly.
- **Session Duration** - This tells you how long, on average, visitors are staying on your website.
- **Traffic Report** - This gives you a picture of where your traffic has come from, which can be helpful in terms of your marketing strategy.

Google Analytics Reports Breakdown

- **Real-Time Reports:** This shows how your audience is interacting with your website in real-time. You can find out where they're located, what content they're viewing, and more.
- **Audience Reports:** Learn about your audience by looking at the demographics of your visitors, how they engage with your content, how many visitors are new or existing, when do your users visit, and what devices they're using to access your site.
- **Acquisition Reports:** Find out where your traffic is coming from (social, organic, direct, etc.), how people are reaching your site, and how each traffic source is behaving on your site.
- **Behavior Reports:** Learn how people behave and move through your website. This report will show you your top pages and show you what content is performing and what pages aren't.
- **Conversion Reports:** This lets you track specific actions that your visitors take, and how effectively your site gets people to take those actions.



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