

LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

December 2022

**6 Ways to
Leverage Your
Brand and
Stand Out
from the
Competition**

***5 Strategies to Get
More High-Quality
Referrals for Your
Business***

***5 Powerful
Ways to Brand
Yourself on
Social Media***

***How to
Create a
Digital
Marketing
Strategy in 5
Steps***

**Infographic:
2022 Promotional
Product User
Guide**

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LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

Greetings!

Here we are in December once again. Another year is almost put to rest. Hopefully you've already been thinking about 2023 and how you're going to grow your business. What are your goals for the coming year? How did you do with your goals for this year?

This month's articles and infographic cover many topics that we hope will be relevant to your business, including How to Stand Out Among The Competition, Social Media Branding, and more! These tidbits will hopefully help you as you plan and execute your plans for the coming year.

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 find the magazine helpful, 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.

Have a topic that you'd like to see us cover? We welcome any suggestions, comments or questions you might have.

Wishing you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year!

Alyssa Engle
Marketing Specialist
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.

December

International AIDS Awareness Month
Impaired Driving Prevention Month
Write A Business Plan Month
Universal Human Rights Month
Worldwide Food Service Safety Month

December 18th to 26th - Hanukkah
December 24th - Christmas Eve
December 25th - Christmas
December 26th to January 1st - Kwanzaa

1st - Christmas Lights Day
2nd - Mutt Day
2nd - World Pollution Prevention Day
2nd - Special Education Day
3rd - International Day of Persons With Disabilities
4th - Cookie Day
5th - International Volunteer Day
6th - Walt Disney Day
9th - Pastry Day
9th - Christmas Card Day
10th - Lager Day

10th - Salesperson Day
11th - App Day
12th - Universal Health Coverage Day
12th - Gingerbread House Day
14th - Free Shipping Day
15th - Cupcake Day
15th - National Re-Gifting Day
16th - Chocolate Covered Anything Day
17th - Maple Syrup Day
17th - Ugly Christmas Sweater Day
18th - Answer The Phone Like Buddy The Elf Day
19th - Hard Candy Day
21st - Crossword Puzzle Day
21st - Humbug Day
21st - Winter Solstice
23rd - Christmas Movie Marathon Day
25th - Pumpkin Pie Day
26th - Day of Goodwill
27th - Fruitcake Day
28th - Chocolate Candy Day
31st - New Year's Eve

January

National Blood Donor Month
Poverty Awareness Month
Glaucoma Awareness Month
Cervical Health Awareness Month
Eye Care Month
Birth Defections Prevention Month
Family Fit Lifestyle Month
Financial Wellness Month

January 1st - New Year's Day
January 16th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1st - Polar Bear Plunge Day
2nd - Science Fiction Day
4th - Spaghetti Day
4th - Trivia Day
5th - Bird Day
9th - Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
11th - Clean off Your Desk Day
14th - Dress Up Your Pet Day
14th - World Logic Day
15th - Hat Day

15th - MLK's Birthday
16th - Hot & Spicy Food Day
18th - Winnie the Pooh Day
19th - Popcorn Day
20th - Cheese Lover's Day
20th - Take a Walk Outdoors Day
21st - National Hugging Day
22nd - Lunar New Year
23rd - Pie Day
24th - Compliment Day
24th - Peanut Butter Day
25th - Opposite Day
26th - Spouse's Day
27th - Chocolate Cake Day
27th - Holocaust Remembrance Day
28th - Pediatrician Day
28th - Lego Day
29th - National Puzzle Day
30th - Croissant Day
31st - Backward Day
31st - Hot Chocolate Day

6 Ways to Leverage Your Brand and Stand Out from the Competition

A photograph of a yellow mug filled with dark coffee on the left. A silver and black pen lies diagonally on the right. In the center, a white paper napkin is spread out, featuring the handwritten text 'How can you be different?' in a blue, cursive script. The background is a wooden surface.

How
can you
be
different?

As a business owner, you know that it takes a lot of hard work and dedication to get your company off the ground. Did you know that one of the most important aspects of growing your business is establishing and promoting your brand? That's right - by leveraging your brand, you can help your business achieve new levels of success.

Everyone has a brand. You might not think about your personal brand often, but it's there whether you like it or not. Even if you don't have a business or product, you still have an image that people perceive when they see you. But if you have a product or service-based business, branding matters even more.



brand?" or "who are you?", there's a clear answer. Your brand should be fun and easy to understand but also convey the qualities that make up who you are as a business.

important for making a strong brand statement you can leverage.

Why is branding so important? It ensures that what customers see matches what your business represents. The more consistent your brand is with what it's trying to achieve, the easier it will be for customers to recognize what makes your products or services special enough for them to buy into again and again. Let's look at some ways to leverage your brand to bring in more business.

1. Research the market.

The first step in leveraging your brand is to research the market. Find out who your audience is, what they want, and what they're buying. Research your competitors as well. Remember that you need to know yourself before you can figure out how to best represent yourself in the world.

You need to know exactly who you are and what you want so that when someone asks, "what's your

2. Ensure your brand is consistent.

Consistency is one of the most important elements of a strong, recognizable brand. When you are consistent with all aspects of your brand, it shows you have thought through every detail and will ensure a great customer experience.

This starts with the visuals -- such as logos, colors, fonts, and photos -- but also includes written word (copy) on all your materials (including social media). A consistent look and feel throughout everything you create reinforces how customers should expect to be treated when they engage with your business.

Consistency also helps employees understand what "your brand" means -- from wearing uniforms to greeting customers in person or over the phone or email. Consistency is

3. Network strategically.

As you may have heard, networking is a powerful tool in your arsenal. But what does that even mean? It's connections with people who can help you grow your brand, whether they're working in your industry or not.

It's easy to feel intimidated by networking events and other opportunities where you're surrounded by a sea of faces -- especially if you're introverted or unfamiliar with the space. Don't worry! It gets easier over time. The key is not to be afraid to reach out and connect with others. For example, don't be afraid to network with someone who isn't in the same field as you on LinkedIn or Twitter (or wherever else).

4. Stay aligned with what you want to be known for

As a business owner, it's important to stay true to your brand and what you want it to be known for. This can be difficult when there are so many demands on your time and resources. However,

by taking a few simple steps, you can ensure your brand stays aligned with your goals.



a subject without sounding like a boring know-it-all!

You can also take advantage of personal experiences and

First, take the time to clearly define what your brand is and what you want it to be known for. What are your core values? What makes your business unique? Once you have a clear understanding of your brand, it will be easier to stay true to it.

Next, ensure that all your marketing and communications reflect your brand. Every touch point should reinforce your core message and values. From your website to your social media posts, strive for consistency.

Finally, don't be afraid to evolve your brand as your business grows. As you gain more experience and learn more about your customers, you will gain additional insights into the direction your business should go.

5. Don't be afraid to evolve your brand.

Consistency matters, but times change, and brands must evolve too. Think about how Apple has evolved its brand over

the years. When Steve Jobs ran the company, he was known for his dark turtleneck and jeans -- but today, Apple's products are ubiquitous in daily life, and their logo is everywhere (even on your iPhone). And while it might seem counterintuitive that a strong brand would evolve into something so widespread and recognizable, it's part of the long-term growth strategy. The key is to stay true to who you are at heart while expanding outward into new markets and demographics.

6. Don't be afraid to embrace other elements of your brand's personality.

Stay authentic in your marketing and branding efforts. But don't get too bogged down in the details. There are ways to leave your mark on the world without being too serious. For example, inoffensive humor is a great way to stand out from the crowd and establish yourself as an authority figure on

opinions to build rapport with potential customers -- and show them that you're like them! If you have any funny stories from childhood or college days (or even more recent times), it's an opportunity for self-deprecation. People love laughing at themselves! If it fits with your brand, don't be afraid to add some humor.

A strong brand identity is important because it's the foundation of everything you do. It helps people identify with your company, know what they can expect from it, and feel good about being associated with it. You should now appreciate the importance of branding. It's not just about getting good at what you do; it's about being able to communicate with others in a way that they understand what you're all about. Branding will help you stand out from other people doing similar work or selling similar products. That's important if you want to succeed over time.

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How to Create a Digital Marketing Strategy in 5 Steps

Digital marketing has become an essential component of any organization. It is tied to who a company is, what it promotes, and how it grows. And because of the unlimited access customers now have through the internet to the backstage operations of a business, any success-oriented company should advertise its brand and image in a transparent and efficient way. But in order to do that, and to provide your business with solid and consistent growth, you need a digital marketing strategy.

What is a digital marketing strategy?

A digital marketing strategy is a plan of action that explains how to reach your target audience using one or more online marketing platforms. It includes a step-by-step guide as well as particular digital marketing goals. It establishes objectives, ranks audiences, detects consumer demands and habits, and determines channel and platform requirements. More simply said, it lays out how you plan to make your business relevant to the public.

The purpose of a digital marketing strategy is to build a foundation for continued marketing growth. In order to see that through, you need to devise the perfect strategy that is most suited for your brand.

So here are 5 strategic steps you need to follow to develop an efficient digital marketing strategy:

1. Define clear business goals

The reason why the first thing you need to do is to set clear goals for your business is

that measurable and attainable objectives help you understand exactly how far away or close to success you are. It's important to be as specific as possible and to set clear benchmarks and timeframes. This can provide you with a deadline and actions you need to take to ensure you will reach your milestones.

A good example of a goal you can set is stating that you want to double organic traffic by the end of the year, and that will give you a specific frame and will allow you to think clearly about what actions you can take to achieve that.

2. Identify your target audience

A target audience is defined by specific data points, such as gender, age, education, location, occupation, and so on.

The best thing to do when trying to identify your target audience is to make an in-depth analysis of the market. Determine if the market you are operating in is a developing or a well-established one. Find out who your key competitors are and how they operate in the digital market.

A good rule of thumb is to think of a buyer persona, a customer avatar, instead of a larger group of targeted people. So, picture a specific customer, and establish what age group they belong in, what their background is, how much they earn, and what their pain points could be, and work from there.

Sometimes, marketing for a specific type of person can help you understand the interests and needs of a customer, and that can resonate with a wider variety of people.

From there, you can define different segments in your target audience and build a persona for each of them in order to understand how your product or service can fit each specific demographic.

3. Find your digital channels

Finding out what social channels your target audience uses is a smart next step in the development of your digital strategy. The channels you use should be dependent on your target audience, goals, and budget.

Certain tactics, such



to your original plans and goals. This can help you understand what your target audience responds to best and how to manage your marketing budget more efficiently. If the findings are not what you expected, you can always alter and optimize them before measuring again.

as pay-per-click advertisements, can help you drive more targeted traffic if that is your objective. Influencer marketing, on the other hand, might be a great method in your digital marketing plan if your target audience is younger. Focus on how you can provide value to your audience's lives by going directly to the source.

After all, the benefit of social media is that it lets people blog or write or post about their interests and thoughts. And you can use that information to understand your audience better.

4. Develop a digital calendar

Once you have defined your goals, your target audience, and your

channels and you have decided which tactics are best for you, you need to start thinking about how you will implement your strategy. A calendar can help turn strategy into execution by making sure you hit deadlines and meet your objectives.

You can try to plan your digital material months ahead of time and divide your calendar into months of the year. This will give you an overarching structure, as well as enough time to plan and execute each delivery.

5. Measure the results

As a final stage in developing your digital marketing plan, you should track your key performance indicators (KPIs), in which you compare the results of your marketing activities

Make sure to track each channel so that you can see what's performing best for your business and what has to be cut out.

There are several advantages to having a digital marketing strategy. To begin with, its success is easy to monitor, as is locating the appropriate audience for a certain brand or product. It employs cost-effective marketing techniques, and because digital platforms have grown in popularity, it may reach a diverse spectrum of people and generate revenue in a variety of ways. An effective digital marketing plan may serve as the cornerstone of your organization, so take your time establishing your own approach that accurately represents your brand.



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5 Strategies to Get More High-Quality Referrals for Your Business

REFER A FRIEND

GET STARTED!



Generating referrals is a key part of growing any business. If you're not actively pursuing referrals, you're missing a valuable opportunity to expand your customer base. Referrals are vital for growing any business and should be a key part of your marketing strategy. Let's look at some effective ways to boost referrals to your business.

Don't Be Afraid to Ask

Asking for referrals isn't easy. If you're new to it, you might feel uncomfortable at first. But the more you do it, the easier it gets. Soon enough, you'll be proud of your ability to ask people directly for their help spreading the word about your business. Asking for a referral doesn't have to be an awkward experience either.

Don't worry about being pushy or annoying if someone says "no." They might just not be ready yet. It takes practice before you're comfortable asking anyone for anything! Be proactive about asking your current clients if they would recommend your services to anyone else in their network who may need them.

Create a Business Referral Partner Program

A referral partner program is a way to build a network of businesses that are incentivized to refer customers. Building a community of like-minded professionals who can send each other leads and referrals ensures a steady flow of customers for everyone. Reach out to people in your network and ask them if they would be willing to share their contact information with other professionals in their industry for everyone's mutual benefit.

To create a successful referral partner program, define the parameters of your strategy. Decide who should be included in the program. Once you have established a core group of people, you can start sharing each other's information by posting on social media, sending email blasts, or even hosting joint events where everyone can talk about what they do and meet new people. The key is that everyone has a stake in the success of this community and can help each other grow.

Support a Cause

Giving back to the community is one of the

most rewarding things a business can do, and it builds goodwill and credibility. Not only does it make the world a better place, but it also supports a cause that you care about. When you support a cause, you are more likely to get high-quality referrals from others who care about the same thing.

When you stand up for a cause, you also get the added benefit of positive publicity. This can help you attract new customers and grow your business. Choose a cause meaningful for the customers you do business with and want to attract.

For example, if your customers are animal lovers, support an animal-related cause like a local humane society. Avoid controversial causes that polarize people, like gun rights, religion, or other causes that people have strong, and sometimes negative, opinions about.

Create a Customer Referral Program

If you're looking for ways to get higher-quality referrals for your business, create a customer referral program. By offering rewards and incentives

for customers who refer new business your way, you can encourage them to continue spreading the word about your company.

A loyalty program is a method of encouraging repeat business, customer retention, and brand loyalty by offering incentives to customers who engage with your brand. To be effective, a loyalty program should have three key components:

- An incentive for customers to engage with your company
- An easy-to-use interface that allows them to access their benefits
- An automated system that tracks their activity and delivers rewards.

Once you have a system in place, you can start rewarding your customers for sending new business your way. This can create a domino effect and requires little time or energy to maintain.

Be So Exceptional That Referrals Come Naturally

The best way to get higher-quality referrals for your business is to be so exceptional that people naturally spread the word. There are a few key ways to

make this happen:

- Focus on providing an exceptional customer experience.
- Make sure your products and services are truly top-notch.
- Build strong relationships with your clients and customers.
- Keep your marketing and branding top of mind.
- Keep in touch with your customers and ask for their feedback.
- Ask for referrals!

If you focus on providing an exceptional experience for your customers, you'll be well on your way to getting higher-quality referrals. People love to spread the word about phenomenal businesses and products. Give them the chance to do so by being extraordinary! Keep these tips in mind and watch your business grow. And remember, referral traffic is more cost-expedient than advertising and builds goodwill.

In the end, it all comes down to one thing: getting more high-quality referrals! Keep these tips in mind, and watch your business grow organically without spending money on advertising.

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5 Powerful Ways to Brand Yourself on Social Media

In the digital age, you can brand yourself online without spending money on advertising. But what does that mean? As the digital world evolves, it's increasingly important to brand yourself. Your brand is the unique identity you create for yourself and what sets you apart from the competition.

There are many reasons it's important to build an online brand. First, it allows you to control how you're perceived by others. What you put out is what people will think of you, so it's essential to be strategic about your personal brand.

Second, your brand can help you stand out in a crowded marketplace. With so many people competing for attention online, having a solid personal brand can make you more visible and memorable.

Finally, your brand can help you build trust and credibility with your audience. People who know who you are and what you stand for are more likely to trust and respect you. Now let's look at ways to build a strong brand on social media.

Develop a Social Media Voice That Reflects Your Brand

Developing a social media voice that reflects the voice of your brand is a critical step to success. A social media voice is more than what you say. It's also about what you don't say and how you choose to say it. The goal is to create consistency in all aspects of your online presence -- both in verbal communication and visual design -- so that people can easily identify with you.

If consistency is important, why do so many businesses fail to create unique voices? It's because they don't put enough thought into building their brand or try too hard to be different when they should focus on staying true to themselves. But you should also know what the competition is up to.

Check out samples from other people with similar interests as yours; see what works for them and what doesn't work so well for others. Then experiment with combining different elements until something sticks. Then keep doing the same thing.

Showcase Your Expertise on Social Media

It's no secret that personal branding is important. In today's digital world, your online presence is often the first thing potential employers or clients will see. So, ensure you're putting your best foot forward online.

One way to do this is by showing off your expertise. If you're an expert in your field, ensure your online presence reflects that. Share blog posts, infographics, or articles that showcase your knowledge. By doing this, you'll not only build your personal brand but also position yourself as an authority in your industry.

Focus on Consistency

A strong brand is consistent across all channels, including social media. The way you post, the messages you send, and the personality you put forward should be consistent with how people think of your company.

If you're an energy drink company, posting about dogs and cats might not be a good idea for your brand because it won't fit

with what people expect from an energy drink company. If a viewer likes one thing you did, they'll be more likely to return for more if you offer more of the same.

Consistency is important, but don't be afraid to try something new once in a while. If you're lucky to have a good following and have built up some trust with them, they'll be more likely to follow along as you experiment with different things.

Be Authentic

The best way to brand yourself on social media is to be yourself. This means being true to who you are and your beliefs and how you communicate with others. It also means being transparent and consistent in your actions and words.

People are attracted to authenticity because it is a rare quality in today's world. So, be clear, consistent, and direct with your message and voice, but keep some space for new trends and unexpected things.

When you are authentic, people know they can trust you and that you're genuine. They will also

respect you for being honest and genuine. Being authentic is not about being perfect; it's about being yourself. So be proud of who you are, and don't be afraid to show it to the world.



Post Engaging Photos That Are Real

When you take a photo of yourself, make sure it's clear and well-lighted. Use a good camera or phone camera with a good lens so your photos come out looking crisp and clear. If you use an older device, chances are the camera isn't as good as what people use today. So, you could end up with blurry images or ones that look fuzzy due to graininess (though some phones have better cameras than others). Investing in a better camera may give you an edge with your online postings.

Don't use filters if they don't need them. They

give an unrealistic view of what you look like. People crave realism in a world of over-enhanced images. Don't try to portray yourself as different than what you are.

Monitor Your Online Reputation

Building a brand online also means managing your reputation. Be aware of what is being said about you and your company online. Then take steps to ensure the information is accurate and positively reflects on your business.

You can do this by monitoring social media and review sites, responding to negative feedback, and proactively promoting positive customer experiences. With a little effort, you can ensure that your online reputation is an asset to your business.

Social media is a constant learning process. If something doesn't seem like it will work well for your brand at first glance, try something else instead and see if that works better for you. If not, go back again -- and keep going until you find what works.



FUN FACTS

December was originally the 10th month of the Roman calendar until 153 BC. December comes from the Latin word decem, meaning "ten." December originally had just 30 days according to the ancient Roman calendar. When the calendar was changed for the Julian calendar, December gained a day, making it the seventh and last month in the year with 31 days.

December Milestones:

- Dec. 1, 1885 - Invented by Charles Alderton, Dr Pepper was first served at the W.B. Morrison & Co. Old Corner Drug Store in Waco, Texas
- Dec. 5th, 1901 - A little magic came into the world along with the birth of Walt Disney. Disney released his first cartoon, featuring Mickey Mouse, called Steamboat Willie at the age of 27. By the time he was 54, the Disney empire grew in size with the construction of Disneyland in Anaheim, California.
- Dec. 17th, 1843 - A Christmas Carol by Charles Dickens was published
- Dec. 19th 1917 - The first NHL Game took place with the Montreal Canadians playing against the Ottawa Senators
- Dec. 24th, 1814 - The first performance of Silent Night took place in the church of St. Nikolaus in Oberndorf, Austria
- Dec. 31st, 1907 - The first New Year's Eve celebration was held in Times Square (then known as Longacre Square) in Manhattan

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2022 Promotional Product User Trends



- 80% of American Consumers surveyed claimed to have received a promotional product from a brand
- 51% use promotional products in their day-to-day lives
- 40% are more likely to write a positive review online after receiving a promotional item from a brand
- 76% say their perception of a brand has changed in a positive way after receiving a promotional product
- 49% prefer to receive promotional products from small businesses or unknown brands

What's Most Important to Customers When They Receive a Promotional Product

- 38% care how unique it is
- 38% care how useful the product is
- 34% care how sustainable the item is



Top 5 Places to Hand Out Promotional Items

- Job Fairs (28%)
- Product Launches (27%)
- Trade Shows (25%)
- College Open Days (25%)
- Venue Openings (22%)

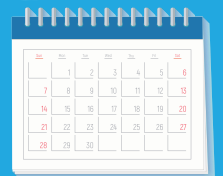


Top 10 Promotional Products U.S. Customers Want to Receive



1. T-Shirts
2. Pens
3. Mugs
4. Water Bottles
5. Headphones

6. Tote Bags
7. Sunglasses
8. Hoodies
9. Calendar
10. Umbrella





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