LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

January 2016

The 7 Biggest Social Media Mistakes that Everyone Should Avoid

Why Small Businesses Need Professional Security Monitoring

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Danger of Using Public E-mail Addresses

Infographic:
2016 Marketing Snapshot

FREE!

LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

Welcome!

2015 is now behind us, and the opportunity for having a great 2016 is in front of us. Our hope is that the information you find in our magazine will help you achieve (and exceed) all of your goals.

We've packed this month's issue full of interesting articles and tips that you can apply immediately to help you grow your business.

In this issue, we're providing you another variety of articles covering many topics that are important to business owners. We hope you enjoy the articles on Customer Service, E-Mail Marketing, Social Media, Networking, and other topics.

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.

As always, we welcome any comments or questions you might have, as well as the opportunity to explain how we've been able to help businesses just like yours.

To A Fantastic 2016!

David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

Inside This Month's Issue

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, large business or an ad agency, our programs can help you find greater success.

If you are a small advertising agency, or an independent marketing consultant, you're a perfect candidate for our LMS Solutions Partner Program. Find out more by visiting our website.

Did you know that we are a full-service ad agency? Did you also know that we specialize in helping small and medium sized businesses? We customize a program that meets the needs and budgets of each of our clients, and we offer Free Initial Consultations. Give us a call to learn how we've helped businesses like yours grow revenue:

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- Web Services
- Reputation Management
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- Outdoor Marketing
- Online Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Direct Mail
- Email Marketing
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LMS Solutions is a proud member of:

If you have any questions, or would like to know how we can help you meet and exceed you marketing goals, please contact us.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

January

Cervical Health Awareness Month
Eye Care Month
Family Fit Lifestyle Month
Financial Wellness Month
Get Organized Month
International Brain Teaser Month
March of Dimes Birth Defects Prevention Month
National Glaucoma Awareness Month
National Staying Healthy Month
National Volunteer Blood Donor Month
Thyroid Disease Awareness Month
Walk Your Pet Month

January 1 - New Year's Day
January 18 - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1st - Polar Bear Plunge Day
1st - World Day of Peace
2nd - Science Fiction Day
4th - Spaghetti Day
9th - National Take the Stairs Day
14th - Dress Up Your Pet Day
15th - Humanitarian Day
17th - Ben Franklin's Birthday
18th - Winnie the Pooh Day
19th - Popcorn Day
20th - Inauguration Day
21st - National Hugging Day
23rd - Pie Day
24th - Compliment Day
24th - Peanut Butter Day
26th - Spouse's Day
27th - Chocolate Cake Day
28th - Have Fun at Work Day
29th - National Puzzle Day
31st - Backward Day

February

Black History Month
American Heart Month
International Boost Self Esteem Month
International Expect Success Month
International Friendship Month
National Cancer Prevention Month
National Children's Dental Health Month
Spay/Neuter Awareness Month

February14th - Valentine's Day
February 15th - President's Day

1st - National Freedom Day
2nd - Groundhog Day
2nd - Rheumatoid Awareness Day
3rd - National Singing Day
4th - Facebook's Birthday
4th - Homemade Soup Day
4th - World Cancer Day
5th - National Wear Red Day

7th Super Bowl Sunday
8th - Boy Scout Day
9th - Pancake Day
9th - Pizza Pie Day
10th - Ash Wednesday
12th - Lincoln's Birthday
14th - Autism Sunday
14th - National Organ Donor Day
16th - Almond Day
17th - Random Acts of Kindness Day
20th - Love Your Pet Day
20th - National Cherry Pie Day
21st - Daytona 500
22nd - Washington's Birthday
22nd - World Thinking Day
23rd - International Dog Biscuit Day
23rd - National Banana Bread Day
23rd - World Spay Day
27th - International Polar Bear Day
28th - Rare Disease Day
28th - Academy Awards
29th - Leap Year Day

Customer EXPERIENCE

Why Customer Experience is the New Customer Service

The relationship between a business and its customers has evolved greatly over recent decades. Commercial organizations have long understood that the customer is central to their success, but the way many businesses have developed their service offerings has often left customers feeling short-changed. The customer experience has suffered in the pursuit of the holy grail of customer service.

There was a time when the term "customer service" was almost synonymous with "complaints." It was commonly used to describe the function within an organization where dissatisfied customers were sent. It might have been a desk within a retail outlet or possibly a remote call center, but its most frequent users were those wanting to vent about poor service or faulty goods. It was as though customer service was only necessary once something had gone wrong.

Times have changed. Customer service departments have become more rounded. No longer are they just there to clear up the aftermath of a bad experience, but also to offer the customer a cheerful welcome and make sure they are dealt with quickly and efficiently, getting everything they came for and possibly more. An entire service industry has flourished, with bespoke outsourcing companies providing their expertise through customer service call centers.

The world has gone target crazy in an effort to ensure customers receive a better service than the competition -- "better" usually being defined as quicker, cheaper and higher quality. Retail outlets have targets on queue

lengths and wait times. Call centers have targets on speed of answer, average handle time and quality. Managers will be under pressure to ensure these ever-increasing targets are achieved within ever-diminishing budgets. But are these targets driving the desired effect? Does achieving them mean an organization is creating happy customers?

The answer is no, not in isolation. But to understand why, you have to answer another question, "what is customer service?" Herein lies the problem: too many businesses interpret the answer to this question within the narrow confines of a single transaction. They consider customer service as being something that starts when a customer engages with the organization to obtain a product or service, and ends at the point of delivery.

The reality for a customer is quite different. Their relationship with an organization starts long before they choose to make contact, and extends long after a transaction concludes. For a customer, it is all about the experience, not the service.

The service happened at a point in time, possibly more than once. Each touch point may be perceived as good or bad. But the experience encompasses the whole, and is ongoing. Ultimately, this determines how a customer

feels about the organization, and what they tell their friends and family.

Many businesses are now waking up to this reality and expanding their legacy customer service departments to consider the entire customer experience. Doing this right involves collaboration between a lot of business functions, such as marketing, customer services, IT, recruitment and training teams.

Mapping the "customer journey" is critical to understanding how customers perceive the organization and why. How do they first find out about the business? How do they compare competing providers? How do they make contact and what does that feel like? How well are they treated after the point of delivery? What keeps them engaged and retained?

Typical customer service targets are good at creating good first impressions, but they don't help much with the initial customer attraction or with customer retention.

Sadly, there are still many examples of businesses targeting their resources toward a narrow slice of the customer experience. For example, telecommunications companies might offer sensational deals to tempt a steady stream of new customers into long contracts,

while alienating swaths of existing customers already locked into contracts, by excluding them from the same deals.

Those organizations that are willing to invest in understanding the end-to-end experience of their customers, and build their business models around this, are the ones that will score most highly in customer rankings.

They will attract customers through their reputation for treating people well (employees and customers) and operating in environmentally and community-friendly ways. They will secure customers through clearly communicated and competitively priced products and services, tailored to their individual needs. They will retain customers through comprehensive aftercare and fair treatment that gives them no reason to consider looking elsewhere.

In short, customer service is dead. This is a new era, where customer experience is king. Aided by the power of the Internet, customers are more savvy and their expectations are higher as a result. Businesses that choose to ignore this do so at their peril.

Getting the Best out of Networking

It is a truth universally acknowledged that if you are in business, you need to be networking. Yet there are so many networking groups available that, for the newbie, it can be difficult to spot the best networking groups and make the most of time spent with them.

Just how do you get the best out of networking?

Be selective

When you start your own business, especially if it is a small business, you will probably be invited to join various networking groups by people who are already part of them.

This is because part of networking is bringing in new people to extend the network as much as possible.

However, before accepting all invitations, you should weigh up each group's pros and cons.

For example, most networking groups levy a membership fee, which may be on top of a charge you will have to pay for food and refreshments every time you meet. Join too many groups and you will probably find that these charges are not equal to the

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money you make through group referrals and sales leads. To avoid this, research each group by visiting their website and finding out the sectors that are represented to see if they will be of benefit to your business. There is little point joining an IT sector networking group if your small business is a bakery. Most networking groups will give you the chance to attend a few meetings as a visitor to discover if the group is the right fit for you. Always do this before becoming a full, paid-up member.

Broaden your contact base

It is important to remember that networking is not just a socializng activity, but a business activity. You should, therefore, cultivate as wide a range of contacts as possible rather than focusing on making contacts who all offer the same thing. For example, most people often need only one IT expert they can call on or recommend, one accountancy firm, one graphic designer. Do not limit your contact base by cultivating several people in the same sector. If you find yourself engaging with a fellow networker who does not seem to offer you anything that you don't already have covered, politely cut the conversation short and focus on someone else. This is not being rude, but practical. Networking can easily cut into business time, and it is easy to find yourself spending more time schmoozing than selling.

Collaborate

One of the best aspects of networking is the opportunity to improve your offering by collaborating with a person or company who can provide services that supplement and enhance your own. For instance, if you are a copywriter, you could seek out a web designer or graphic designer, who may require your services or recommend you to their clients, or even better, team up with you to offer bespoke packages.

Collaborations of this kind are mutually beneficial, extending your network, enhancing your offering and being more attractive (because you are have become a complete package) to potential clients.

Networking is not just a chance for you to get out of the office and have a few sociable chats, but rather a means for you to make a success of your business. To ensure you are not wasting your time, only attend those networking groups that are suited to your personality and your business offering.

Top Signs You Need Help With Your Marketing

- **You're Overworked**

- **You're Confused**

- **What You're Doing Isn't Working**

- **You Can't Focus On The "Real Work"**

HELP is a call away!

We can develop a custom marketing program to meet both your needs and your budget. Call TODAY!

(484) 893-4055

The Quick Guide to Email Marketing for Small Businesses

According to the Radicati Group, 196 billion emails are sent daily around the world, and 109 billion of these are business emails. If you think email marketing is a thing of the past, think again. The worldwide use of emails is predicted to rise again in the next few years. Even alongside the rise of social media and mobile marketing, email marketing still deserves its place as one of the most effective marketing strategies.

Emails are one of the most personal ways of communicating with potential customers; people open their inboxes and see messages from friends next to your company's email. Consumers have also grown tired of the constant stream of information on the Internet. Email offers people something more specific and recognizable; it brings order to all the chaos.

The Benefits of Email Marketing

Some marketing trends come and go, but email marketing remains one of the most powerful and cost-effective strategies for the modern marketer. This is because:

• It's inexpensive. You don't need to invest in new technology, and you can still reach a wide audience for little or no cost.
• It's shareable. Emails are an efficient ways to deliver useful, shareable content to customers, meaning you can reach an even wider audience, increase backlinks to your website, and drive more traffic.
• It's versatile. You can personalize emails to include recipients' names and more. You can also tailor each email to a particular audience segment to ensure your messages are even more relevant.
• It's mobile. People now check their emails throughout the day on mobile devices. This means your messages can reach potential customers when they're in their home, office, or on the road.
• It's popular. Email marketing is well suited to e-coupon offers and sales promotions, so it's perfect for reaching the growing number of online bargain hunters.

• It's measurable. Accessible analytics tools make email campaigns easy to measure. Find out your open rates, which links were clicked, the number of unsubscribes, and more. With this data, you can discover what's working and make any necessary adjustments to future campaigns.

10 Quick Email Marketing Tips

If you want more people to open your emails and respond to your calls-to-action, here are some tips to keep in mind:

1. Make a positive first impression. To build a stronger relationship with potential customers, get your tone right from the outset. Use an autoresponder tool to send a welcome message to subscribers, and create a series of relevant follow-up emails.
2. Show what you sell. Use emails to show best-selling and new product lines, or products being used.
3. Know the objective of each email and include a clear call-to-action. Repeat the call-to-action mid-content and at the end, so people have multiple opportunities to take action.
4. Research how to create more powerful subject lines, and then monitor which headlines perform best.
5. Collect emails at every opportunity. Your website and social media channels are obvious channels for collecting email addresses, but if you have a physical store, encourage sign-ups here too.
6. Offer exclusive content to encourage subscriptions.
7. Personalize your emails. Divide your contacts into separate groups, depending on demographics and customer behavior, and deliver targeted, personalized content.
8. Be concise. The first paragraph of your email is crucial for capturing the attention of your audience. Keep sentences short, use bullet points, and highlight the main benefits of your product or service early on.
9. Use your analytics tools to discover which

emails are getting more opens, and when they are being opened.
10. Make every email shareable. Ask people to forward emails to friends and colleagues. Include sign-up links and social sharing buttons in every email.

Email Marketing Tools

Here are four of the most popular email marketing tools to help you get the most out of your email campaigns:

• Benchmark. This tool makes designing professional-looking emails very easy, with over 400 responsive design templates to choose from. It features autoresponder and analytics tools, and a mobile app for email management.
• GetResponse. The cost of using this tool depends on the size of your contact list, but there are plans to suit every budget. Its design editor is simple to use and features more than 500 templates. It also includes list-building tools and much more besides.
• Mail Chimp. With an easy-to-use dashboard, simple email creation tools and segmenting tools, this is a favorite with many small business, especially as it's free to use if you have a smaller contact list.
• VerticalResponse. With simple creation tools and seamless social media integration, this tool makes it easy to create, send, and track emails that look good on every device.

The Future of Email Marketing

Email marketing has evolved into one of the most powerful marketing channels, especially with the rapid growth of the mobile sector. However, as consumers become more demanding and expect more value from businesses, delivering effective emails is becoming more challenging. What can you do today to make sure your email marketing campaigns continue to be effective in the future?

• Be more personal. As marketing tools become

cheaper and more accessible, businesses will need to deliver more customized emails. Using analytics tools, start collecting data about your audience today, so you can send more relevant, personalized emails in the future.

• Ask your audience directly. There's a limit to tracking customer behavior, and trends are unpredictable, so ask your audience what kind of content they want, and try to exceed their expectations.

• Focus on quality, not quantity. It's easy to send out automated emails every other day, but this can just annoy subscribers and you'll end up in their email spam folders. People want quality solutions, not constant interruptions, so make sure every email has a clear goal, contains quality content, and addresses the real needs of your audience.

• Consider hiring a professional content writer. More businesses are hiring third-party professionals who have more time to create effective email content.

The Bottom Line

Email marketing is still one of the most cost-effective ways to deliver benefit-driven content to the right people at the right time. When it's done right, it can result in better leads, increased sales, and more loyal customers.

This quick guide to email marketing will hopefully help you see the importance of email marketing, and improve the effectiveness of all your future email campaigns.

Remember that behind every email address is a person, so focus on creating engaging content that resonates with every reader and you'll reap the rewards of email marketing for years to come.

Danger of Using Public E-mail Addresses

In mid-2012, then-Presidential candidate Mitt Romney found himself in the midst of an embarrassing email hacking debacle. Romney formerly worked for a large financial institution and therefore should have understood the necessity of quality email security, but he was allegedly using a Hotmail account at the time. The hacker who breached the account was able to do so by guessing Romney's favorite pet in response to a "security" question.

Surely, Romney should have known better, but he and other high-profile citizens are not the only ones who need secure, professional email accounts.

It is equally important for business owners and marketers to have well-secured, private email accounts that allow them to put their best foot forward with correspondents and potential clients.

In terms of security and professionalism, consumer-grade email accounts such as Hotmail, Google, AOL and Yahoo, are inadequate for conducting business online. A public email account can hurt your credibility with prospective clientele, cost you sales, and do your marketing campaign more harm than good.

Loss of Credibility

A professional email address immediately boosts your company's image. It shows contacts that your company has a strong web presence and marketing initiative and is fully ready to do business. Conversely, a public email

address creates the idea that you took the path of least resistance or lacked the resources to secure a professional address.

In this way, a public email address undermines your professionalism and credibility immediately. It leaves clients to wonder whether your company is legitimate enough to have its own website and, if it does, why you are not using it.

Missed Opportunity to Establish Brand Identity

A branded email address can be a marketing tool in itself. When a potential client or contact sees your company's name in your email address, they can immediately navigate to your site and learn more about you and your business.

However, seeing "you@aol. com" is an immediate turn-off to most clients, immediately killing their interest in what you have to say. What's more, even if they remain interested in your offer despite your pedestrian-looking email address, they do not know where to look.

Most will delete your email rather than hunt for context clues and launch a search on you and your business. This can even be true of people you have worked with before. Without your brand where they can clearly see it, they may forget who you are and what company you represent.

Risk of Being Overlooked or Viewed as a Scammer

Security around public emails is not extremely high. Spammers and scammers take full advantage of these vulnerabilities by signing up for accounts and using them to embezzle, harass and hack other users. When a potential client sees "you@gmail. com," they have no way of knowing you from a common scammer. Having your email identified with spam culture is a quick way to get your lovingly-crafted query, correspondence, contract or sales letter sent to the trash bin.

Lack of Username Control

With public email accounts, you could be left having to fill out your desired screename with a convoluted series of numbers, letters and symbols because the name you truly wanted was unavailable.

What self-respecting professional would want to entertain an inquiry from a "janedoe1%8$2291AAJ@ hotmail.com?" This contributes to the spammer look that you are trying so hard to avoid.

Account Vulnerability

Consumer-grade email services are rife with risk. Most free email providers do not have a dedicated IT department to oversee email security upgrades. For example, in late 2011 a celebrity-loving Florida hacker known as "hackerazzi," hijacked the email accounts of 26 celebrities. They were able to change the account owners' passwords using information easily obtained from their fan sites. High-profile, consumer email providers Apple, Google and Yahoo were involved.

With such lax security standards, it was no wonder that the hackerazzi was able to pull off such a feat. None of the major public email providers offer private email with encryption or public key cryptography for messaging, and they fail in three other major ways.

Firstly, you do not know when you are being hacked. These companies fail to notify you when an unknown person makes multiple attempts to log into your account.

Secondly, because they do not allow you to specify what devices can access your account, anyone is free to make as many log on attempts as they wish to your account from anywhere.

Finally, you have no idea who has tried to hack you, how many email accounts the company has lost to hackers or other useful pieces of information because there is no publicly available audit data.

Cost-Effective Alternatives

Fortunately, there are several low-cost alternatives to a public email account. The first is to secure a "you@ yourdomain.com" address through your chosen web hosting company. Usually they provide your custom email through a third party such as Rackspace, PoBox, Google Apps or Fastmail.fm. These services cost from $2-4 per month and sometimes include special features such as calendars or cloud storage. Simply purchase or transfer a domain name to your chosen hosting company, and follow the steps they provide for setting up private email forwarding.

Alternatively, with a little technical skill, you can create a custom email yourself by adding add any third party's MX record to the DNS manager for your domain. While instructions vary, you can usually access this option from your cpanel and have a email address within a few minutes. You can connect the address to a personal, public email account if you so desire. You can also sign up for Zoho. Zoho is a secure, ad-free, third party email service that allows you up to five custom email addresses for one domain name at no cost. Additional domains cost extra.

Mail.com, another free service, is unique in that it provides over 200 domains to choose from when signing up. For instance, you may select "@ graphic-designer.com" if you run a graphic design firm or "@petlover.com" if you are offering pet-sitting services. This affords you a free, semi-custom email account with spam and virus protection, mobile service and calendar integration.

The success of your business depends greatly on how well you present it to potential clients. When reaching contacts via email, every detail - the timing of the email, its wording and the email address itself - is of great importance. Take the time to invest in your company's growth by securing a private email address. It helps your business look credible and professional, makes it more likely to get noticed and gives your correspondent a favorable image of you before they have even read what you have to say. Boost your business by taking control of your online identity today.

Why Small Businesses Need Professional Security Monitoring

You have probably heard about the high-profile security breaches at companies like Target, Sony and T.J. Maxx, as well as the IRS and other government agencies. What you may not know, however, is that small and midsize companies are also at risk of data breaches and hacker break-ins.

If you run a small to midsize business and are not taking proactive steps to protect your data, you are living on borrowed time. Hackers are just as likely to target smaller firms, and signing up for active security monitoring is one of the best ways to protect yourself and your data. Here are just a few reasons all businesses, no matter how small, can benefit from professional security monitoring.

You Keep Customer Data
Whether you have a dozen customers or several thousand, simply keeping their information on the company server or in a database puts their identity at risk. Without professional monitoring to keep your data safe, your customer information could be stolen by an enterprising hacker.

Hiring a professional security-monitoring service is the best way to ensure that your network is properly protected and the data it contains is safe. No company is too small to benefit from professional security monitoring, and there is a solution for businesses of all sizes.

You Could Run Afoul of the Law
The laws governing data security have become increasingly strict in recent years, as a response to large, high-profile data breaches involving major companies. That means you could run afoul of the law unintentionally if you fail to properly safeguard your customer data.

Professional data-monitoring firms can review your network security protocols and make sure you are in compliance with all applicable laws. The peace of mind you will gain is well worth the cost of the service.

Your Reputation is Everything
When you operate online, your reputation is everything. If you fail to safeguard your customer data and keep it safe from hackers, you will live to regret it.

Customers are extremely unlikely to give your firm a second chance if their security is breached and their identity is stolen. Hiring a professional security-monitoring service is the best way to avoid damage to your reputation and safeguard yourself and your companies from financial loss.

Hackers are not going away, and the data breaches they create seem to get worse with every passing year. No matter what type of business you run or how many employees you have, professional security monitoring can keep your firm safe and your reputation protected.
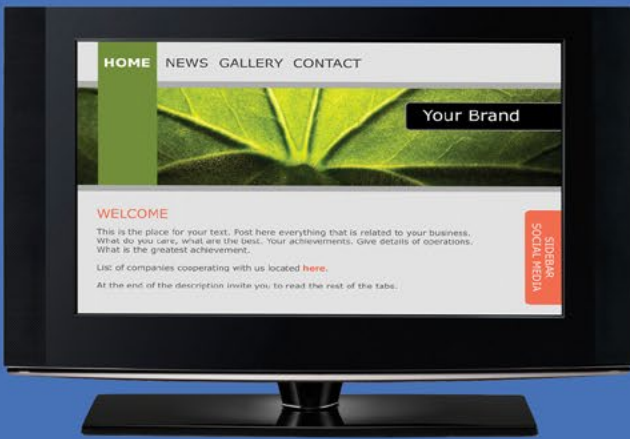
The 7 Biggest Social Media Mistakes that Everyone Should Avoid

Every business needs access to social media. Social media marketing is one of the best ways to reach new audiences. Facebook and Twitter in particular have millions of users who are just waiting to hear about what you have to offer. But you can't just go to social media and expect a sudden surge of new visitors. Once you do get a sizable audience, you'll have to find ways to keep their attention.

Failing to take advantage of social media can damage your brand and reputation. Here are seven social media mistakes that can be harmful for your brand.

Focusing on the wrong platform

A Facebook page and a Twitter profile are a must for any type of business. Among all social media platforms, Facebook and Twitter cater to the most of users and widest demographics. Tweets and status updates are powerful marketing tools regardless of what type of business you're running.

On the other hand, such platforms as Instagram, Pinterest, and LinkedIn have fewer users but are more accommodating to specific niches. If you produce visual-

centric content like artwork, handcrafted clothes, or food recipes, you may want to focus your attention on Pinterest and Instagram. If you produce written content or digital goods, then you can stay on Facebook and Twitter. Putting effort into the wrong platform is a waste of time and energy, because there's a good chance your target audience isn't even on that platform in the first place.

Using the wrong hashtags and promoting insensitively

Be tactful when promoting your business. It's important to join trends when tweeting about your latest product or promo, but don't just join trends haphazardly; for example, when using popular hashtags on Twitter, make sure that hashtag is related to your business. Avoid involving your business in national issues, tragedies, and controversies. Doing so can leave a bad taste in your followers' mouths.

Using your business Twitter for personal use

Feel free to use your personal Twitter account to promote your business' Twitter account. Retweet all of your business tweets if you want to. However, don't do the opposite. Avoid tweeting a birthday greeting to your nephew, sharing opinions on politics, and holding non-business-related conversations

on your business' Twitter profile. Doing this makes you look unprofessional. Don't post things that have little to no connection with your content, product, or brand. Don't breach your followers' trust by posting content they don't care about.

Buying likes or follows

You should never, under any circumstance, buy fake fans. Bolstering your numbers on Facebook and Twitter does nothing for you in the long run. The likes and followers you purchase will never interact with your content. They will never translate to sales and genuine impressions. Worse still, purchased followers will eventually disappear after some time. The worst case scenario is Facebook or Twitter finding out about what you did. Buying fans can be considered as an indirect form of spam, and can lead to your account being suspended or banned.

Responding unprofessionally to feedback

Remember to share or retweet positive things that people say about your business. On the other hand, address complaints privately and professionally. If someone says something negative, offer to talk to them through official channels, or at least through private messages. The last thing you want to do is to lash out at your

fans or respond sarcastically.

Failing to utilize images

If you can, include images into your posts. Images can help your tweets and status updates stand out. You don't have to use images all the time, but do so if you think they can complement your post. Don't rely only on stock photos; it you can, try using unique images such as infographics instead.

Doing nothing but promote your products

Don't just use social media to promote your products. Remember that social media allows you to build relationships with your followers. You won't be building any relationships if all you do is talk about your product. Engage your users. Communicate with them by creating or linking relevant content. Talk to them once in a while.

Social media is not merely an online newsletter. Social media is a powerful marketing tool. Avoiding these mistakes will not only help you grow your audience, but will also help you build lasting relationships with your fans.

APP Watch

Be My Eyes

Price = FREE

Availability: Apple
(Android under development)

Be My Eyes makes life easier for people with a visual impairment by connecting them with sighted helpers through a smartphone app. This allows people with a visual impairment to handle big and small tasks, while the sighted get the joy of helping someone in need in an easy and informal way.

For you, it only takes a minute to choose the right can from the shelf, look at the expiration date on the milk or find the right thing to eat in the fridge. For the visually impaired, small domestic tasks are big challenges. Be My Eyes is changing that!

Be My Eyes is the first app on the market, which allows people with a visual impairment to get in contact with sighted helpers via a direct video call. The system is built as a shuffle-call system that forwards the call until answered, establishing a connection to the first available helper.

Find out more information by visiting bemyeyes.org.
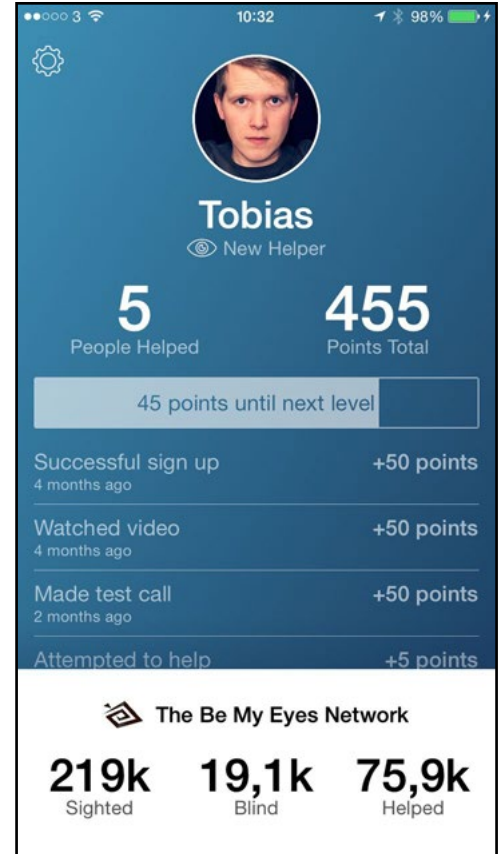
2016 MARKETING SNAPSHOT

What's in store for marketing in 2016?
As a local business owner, what trends should you be aware of?

Content Marketing

Creating and distributing valuable, relevant and consistent content to attract and retain a clearly defined audience.

77% of organizations say they will produce more content in 2016 vs. 2015

67% Companies running an active blog generate 67% more leads each month than those who don't

76% of organizations use content marketing

Only **38%** of organizations report they are using it effectively.

Video Marketing

Video advertising has grown by 35% year over year and now accounts for $5 Billion in spend.

74% of all internet traffic in 2017 will be video

96% of B2B marketers plan to increase their use of video in 2016

80% increase in coversion when using video on a landing page

46% of consumers say that video ads shouldn't be longer than 15 seconds

Online Marketing

76% of organizations use promoted posts and online ads

64% of B2C marketers say online ads are effective

Social Media

94% of B2C marketers say they use Facebook

66% of B2C marketers say Facebook is effective