

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Businesses

July 2015

5 Mistakes to Avoid With Your Small Business Website

Marketing to Millennials

Website Organization: Why It Matters

Five Essential Elements of a Homepage That Will Get Results

Six Steps to Convert Page Views into Profit

Five Basic SEO Tips for Organic Traffic

5 Steps for Creating Effective Content

Infographic: Marketing to the Generations



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Welcome!

We thank you for taking the time to read our magazine. We hope you find it full of interesting articles, and more importantly, that you are able to immediately apply some of our tips, and that they help your business.

This is our annual small business website issue, and you'll find a good variety of articles that provide tips on optimizing your website so that it works on behalf of your business.

We've also included an in-depth article that explains how to reach the Millennial generation - a large market that is coming to age and is becoming a preferred target for many businesses. As always, you'll find new versions of our popular Marketing Calendar and Infographic.

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.

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.

Regards,
David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

July

National Blueberry Month
National Anti-Boredom Month
National Cell Phone Courtesy Month
National Hot Dog Month
National Ice Cream Month
National Picnic Month

July 4 - Independence Day (U.S.)

1st - International Joke Day
1st - Creative Ice Cream Flavors Day
2nd - I Forgot Day
3rd - Stay out of the Sun Day
4th - National Country Music Day
5th - Build A Scarecrow Day
5th - Work-a-holics Day
6th - National Fried Chicken Day
7th - Chocolate Day
8th - Video Games Day
11th - Cheer up the Lonely Day

11th - Pet Photo Day
13th - Barbershop Music Appreciation Day
13th - Embrace Your Geekness Day
14th - National Nude Day
15th - Cow Appreciation Day
18th - National Caviar Day
19th - National Ice Cream Day
20th - National Lollipop Day
20th - Moon Day
21st - National Junk Food Day
21st - Racial Harmony Day
23rd - National Hot Dog Day
23rd - Vanilla Ice Cream Day
24th - Amelia Earhart Day
24th - National Drive-Thru Day
24th - Cousins Day
26th - Aunt and Uncle Day
26th - Parent's Day
28th - National Milk Chocolate Day
29th - National Lasagna Day
30th - National Cheesecake Day

August

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month
Family Fun Month
Foot Health Month
Happiness Happens Month
Medic Alert Month
National Golf Month
National Immunization Awareness Month
National Runaway Prevention Month
Psoriasis Awareness Month
Water Quality Month

Be Kind to Humankind Week - August 25-31
Elvis Week - August 8-16
International Assistance Dog Week - August 2-8
International Bat Night(s) - August 29-30
International Clown Week - August 1-7
World Breastfeeding Week - August 1-7

1st - National Minority Donor Awareness Day
1st - Spider-Man Day
2nd - Friendship Day

3rd Watermelon Day
4th - National Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
6th - National Night Out
7th - International Beer Day
8th - International Cat Day
10th - International Biodiesel Day
10th - National S'mores Day
12th - Vinyl Record Day
13th - International Lefthander's Day
14th - Worldwide Art Day
15th - International Homeless Animals Day
18th - Serendipity Day
21st - National Hug Your Boss Day
21st - Senior Citizen's Day
22nd - Eat a Peach Day
23rd - Go Topless Day
25th National Banana Split Day
26th - Women's Equality Day
28th - Daffodil Day
29th - Chop Suey Day
30th - Frankenstein Day
31st - Eat Outside Day

Marketing to Millennials:

How to effectively reach this generation



Contributing authors: Kristi Szczesny, Amanda Michelson & Kelly Reiff

Trying to market to the millennial generation is easier said than done. Millennials, or those born between 1981 and 2000, amount to approximately seventy-two million Americans; this is a colossal market of consumers. However, despite their size, the millennial generation is known for its immunity to traditional forms of marketing.

Gone are the days of newspaper and billboard advertising as millennials are being consumed by technology. The growth of technology, and more specifically social media, has made it difficult for marketers to keep up with and connect to millennials. Statistics from the Huffington Post show that sixty five percent of millennials describe losing their phone or computer as having a worse impact on their

lives than losing their car. To successfully attract the attention of millennials, marketers must understand where and how a majority of young adults spend their time online.

Social Media Usage

Social media is used as a universal form of communication among the millennial generation. According to Forbes and Millennial Marketing, eighty seven percent of millennials use more than one technological device every day and eighty four percent of millennials can be found using social media. Social networks are appearing more and more on television and in business; therefore, it is important to understand each network's benefits for small businesses.

Trilogy of Networks

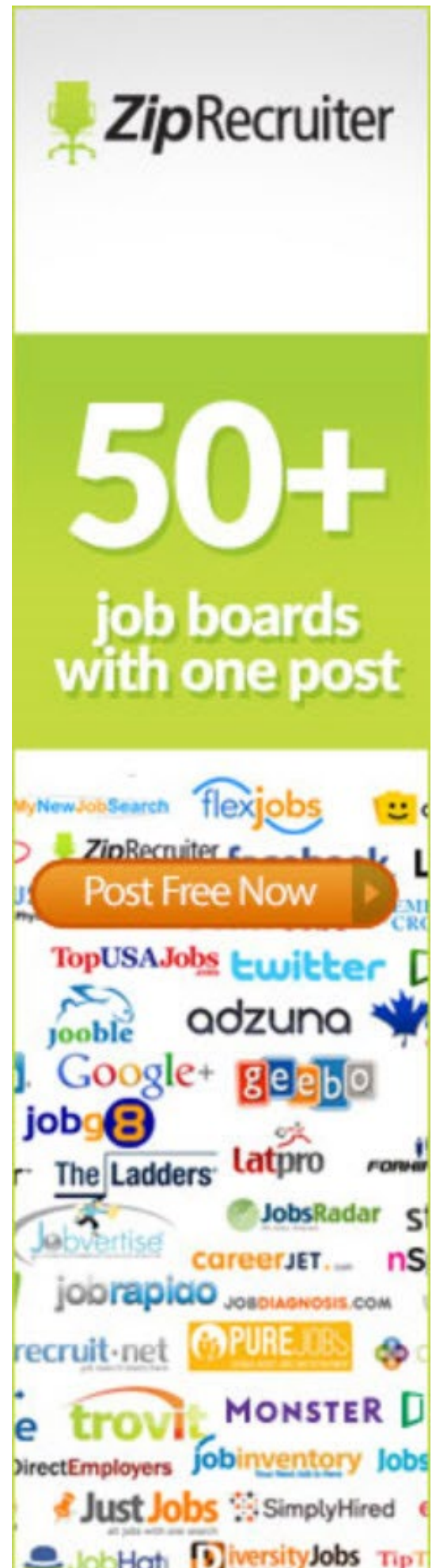
Three of the biggest social networks used for small business advertising are Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. Facebook has 699 million daily active users and provides background information on millennials, such as their gender, likes and interests, education, employment, and location. Small businesses can use the background information provided on social media to better target users. Photographers, travel agencies, caterers, and ecommerce retailers have shown to benefit the most from Facebook advertising. Twitter has 271 million active members and provides background information on its users such as their gender, interests (through their twitter ID's), searches, and location. With 300 million monthly active users, LinkedIn is a rapidly expanding source of networking as two professionals join every second. Each network offers three different advertisement options for businesses.

Other Growing Networks

Other networks are gaining traction in the advertising world. Google + has 300 million active members each month. This however could be skewed on account of Google's various other products, such as Google maps, Gmail, and Google Drive. Google + only offers one advertisement option, but ads are very flexible and accept a wide variety of content. Other social media sites include Instagram, with approximately 200 million active members and Pinterest, with 20 million active members per month. As a growing business, it can be very beneficial to target new social networks as it will enable you to keep up with popular trends and better connect with millennials.

Message through Music

Millennials do not respond to the same marketing tactics used on previous generations. Therefore, it is crucial for marketers to learn ways to convey their message in an engaging and effective way. It is most beneficial to speak on the terms of young adults, such as through music. As a small business it is a great idea to



advertise on music platforms, especially on free music sites like YouTube, Pandora, and Spotify. Regardless of their income, millennials live in a musical culture and can easily be engaged through music.

Engaging the Age

Attaining involvement and attracting attention is another key tip when marketing to the millennial generation. Instead of using commercials, travel to high traffic areas such as malls, fairs, or schools. If a person is engaged by a business or product, they will be more likely to use them. It is also important to maintain a trustworthy reputation. Being worthy of a teen, adult, or parent's trust goes a long way because they will be more willing to use your services and products. Gaining the generation's attention and curiosity is crucial. An interesting picture or fact that really pulls on the heartstrings is a good way to pull millennials in.

Short is Better

To successfully market to millennials, it is important to keep it short. Young adults today are known to have very short attention spans. They live in an age of virtual communication where everything is minimized and abbreviated, hence a

maximum of 140 characters on Twitter and Instagram pictures. Graphics, short sentences, and pictures will catch the attention of millennials rather than long sentences and lengthy explanations.

Always remember to be relatable and relevant when marketing your product to young adults. This will enable your message to be more easily understood.

Age of Extreme Couponers

As millennials spend an increasing amount of time on their computers, tablets, and other mobile devices, they are more likely to be exposed to available products for purchase. Statistics from Teens and Technology show that forty-three percent of teens who use the internet purchase products online. With the growth of online shopping has come the popularity of coupons. Both teens and adults use coupons for clothes, food, entertainment, and beauty products. Printable coupons are more popular than mobile coupons and more than half of people get their coupons through email.

Think Realistic

Often times, millennials are on limited budgets with

school expenses, starter jobs, and families to provide for. Therefore, coupons can greatly affect their ability to purchase products. A major influence to young adults while they are shopping online is feedback from blogs and reviews. Additionally, millennials are more likely to become loyal customers to brands if they are engaging with them on social media.

With the rapid change in technology, marketers have had to alter traditional marketing techniques to effectively convey their message to millennials. It is important for business to stay up to date on all the latest social media trends. This will help businesses to more effectively convey their products and services to consumers. The usage of coupons and other forms of consumer interaction can greatly attract consumers and increase their likelihood to choose a specific product or business.

As times have significantly changed from the beginning of the millennial generation in the 1980's, it will continue to change in the future. By focusing on current trends and technology, businesses can ensure that they do not get left behind.



5 Mistakes to Avoid With Your Small Business Website

Many business owners operate under the assumption that having a website for their small business means converting leads by the barrel.

This is not necessarily true. If you are having difficulty converting page views into credible leads, you could be making one--or all--of the following five mistakes:

Slow loading time

Your visitors have clicked onto your site because they want information, and you have promised them they

will find it there. If your home page takes too long to load up, visitors are apt to click off your site and go somewhere else.

Avoid using excessive .jpg images on your main page. The fewer graphics and images you have on your website, the sooner you can begin making a case for your business.

Incompatibility

Another costly mistake that business owners make with their small business website is failing to stay compatible.

Many Internet users now access websites on their mobilephones. If your website is not compatible with mobile viewing media, it will appear cluttered and unorganized when it finally loads. Content may be missing or moved to represent something else. Ensure that you are running both a PC and mobile version of your small business website.

Navigation isn't up to par

Visitors need to know where to go to get the information that they are looking for on your page. Without careful

attention to this crucial element of maintaining a website that works for you, you may be inadvertently deterring visitors. Most visitors expect to find the information they are looking for within a relatively short amount of time -- that is, before the baby starts screaming or the phone rings again. Use icons to keep your website as viewer friendly as possible.

cluttered, something that many consumers equate with a lack of professionalism. Visitors expect clear, concise and correctly formatted text. They may become bored if they need to read through an entire paragraph with text in different colors, fonts and sizes before arriving at your point. Scrutinize every item on your website and ask yourself if it really needs to be there.

that you display. Content needs to be engaging and inviting. Update your website regularly with new content to keep visitors coming back and engaging with your content offers.

Failure to do so indicates a lack of growth for the business, and will drive away many credible leads. Text is often considered monotonous and unengaging, so use it as a supporting agent rather than a point of interest. Instead, use pictures, videos and content offers to tell your story.



Too much clutter

Having too much content on your small business website can cause it to appear

Non-engaging content

Sometimes the answer to your conversion problem lies in improving the content

Keeping an eye out for these costly errors could mean the difference between closing a sale and losing one. As you learn to avoid these errors, you will enjoy higher conversion rates, more credible leads, and ultimately more profit.



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Website Organization: Why It Matters

Many websites have great content in a popular niche but still struggle attracting a large audience. They don't realize that it doesn't matter how valuable their content is if no one can find it, and this is why many web professionals stress the importance of web organization. Thankfully, anyone can improve their website's traffic by applying a few basic navigational principles.

Create the right content

In order to attract viewers, and keep them coming back, you need to publish content they want. A site that doesn't appeal to their needs and desires will always fail, no matter how attractive and professional it looks and feels. But what type of content should you create? Remove

the guesswork by answering the questions listed below.

- Who is my target audience?
- Am I selling an online product or service?
- What is the purpose of my website?
- How will I make my website different from my competitors?
- Is my content interesting enough to attract my desired demographic?

Use headers

Using headers is an easy way to streamline your website. Although their primary purpose is to help your viewers navigate, they can make your

site more scannable if you use them to break-up text and other content.

Always organize your headers so they help your viewers find the quickest path to their desired content. Imagining you are one of your visitors and asking friends and family to find specific areas of your site are both great ways to figure out if your organizational structure needs changing.

Appeal to your demographic

People want to do many things online, and each area of your site will attract a different audience. As an example, someone interested in buying a specific product will want to navigate to the sales page quickly, while a different viewer may want to read an author bio.

Creating a home page with distinct, easy-to-read links will help your viewers find what they are looking for. Actively communicating with

your viewers through social media, email, or a comments section is a great way to recognize and correct any navigational problems, such as dead or confusing links.

Make it unique

Boring websites are easy to create, which is one reason they are so popular. Using videos, graphics, and artistic designs can help your site stand out from the crowd. It is easy to overdo it, however, and creating a site that is too visually distracting will only irritate and alienate your audience. If you are struggling to find the right balance between usability and visual appeal, getting second opinions from friends, family, and web professionals can be a real help.

Organization is vital for the success of any website. Can you afford to hide your great content behind a wall of clunky design and confusing layouts?

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Five Essential Elements of a Homepage That Will Get Results

The homepage is the virtual doorway to your website. What you put here will determine whether or not your readers open the door and investigate what you have to offer. It's the foundation of your website; it must be compelling.

Today's consumers have a lot of options. When people click on this page, you only have a few seconds to make your case, or they will move on to one of your competitors.

Your homepage must contain the following five elements, so visitors will know they've come to the right place.

Be concise

The copy on your homepage must be easy to scan, so people will know immediately whether or not they want to dig deeper. They will be turned off if they're greeted with large chunks of text; it needs to be concise, no more than 150 to 250 words. It should consist of a headline

and a few short, well-spaced paragraphs.

Write an effective headline

Successful copywriters know that five times as many people read the headline than the rest of the copy. The headline must hook your visitors by telling them what you have to offer, how your product or service can be beneficial to them, and why they should buy from you and not someone else. First, make a list of your product's benefits

and what differentiates you from the competition. Based on this information, craft ten or more potential headlines. From that list, choose one and then write the rest of the content. Later, you may decide to use a different headline or just tweak the original one. With all your best efforts, you don't know which headline will work; you'll need to run an A/B test to find out.

Target your ideal customer

You'll fail if you try to appeal to everyone that land on your homepage. Write it for the people that will be drawn to your product and most likely to benefit from it. They're also the people who will recommend it to others.

Use language and an appropriate tone of voice that will connect with this group. Be enthusiastic but avoid using hype. Develop a rapport and build trust, so they'll want to do business with you.

Make the layout appealing

Make the navigation clear, so readers will know where to click next. The design should be simple but attractive and complement the content. You don't want to clutter the page; however, you can entice your readers by presenting them with a couple of special offers.

The homepage is the perfect place to let them know about guarantees and other benefits, such as free delivery.

Add call to action buttons

Once you've gotten your visitors interested, you want to make it easy for them to take the next step. You can do this by adding clear call to action buttons. By clicking on a button, they can get more information about your special offers and other products or you can offer a free trial or demo. The call to action buttons should stand out. Use a color that contrasts well with the other colors on the page.

The homepage is crucial, as it can make or break your website. Getting it right isn't easy. You may want to consider hiring a professional writer. Once your site is up and running, test it regularly to make sure it's still doing the job.

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5 Steps for Creating Effective Content

By now you're probably well aware of the fact that content marketing is an essential strategy in any online marketing campaign. However, just because you understand that creating content helps to increase brand awareness, loyalty, trust and identity, and is vital in helping to create more leads, doesn't mean that it's going to do all that.

A lot of factors determine whether or not your content marketing strategy will be successful. The following are five steps that you need to follow to ensure that your content does what it's supposed to do.

- Figure out your buyer persona - This is the very first step that you should accomplish. How can you write content if you don't know who you are writing for? If you don't know who your buyer persona is, then

you're effectively writing for everyone, which basically means that no one will be reading. The buyer persona is a generalized representation of your ideal customer that includes things such as gender, age, income, education background and more. Knowing what your buyer persona is allows you to understand your customers better, thereby allowing you to tailor your content to them.

- Use relevant and effective keywords - Surely you've heard of the strategy of using keywords before. Anyone that has done any kind of marketing online is familiar with SEO -- or at least its basics. However, don't be misled into thinking all you have to do is stuff your content with keywords in order to help increase your content's web ranking. That's not how that works. Your

keywords not only have to be relevant, they have to be high in quality. A vague keyword might bring in more traffic, but that traffic isn't going to be very high quality. You want to attract potential customers, not just random visitors who may have no interest in your products or services. That's why you should consider using more detailed, longtail keywords. For example, for this particular piece, "creating an effective content strategy" is a strong longtail keyword, whereas "marketing" is a vague, weak keyword. Knowing your buyer persona is also an important step to figuring out what the most effective keywords will be.

- Create relevant and varied content - No content marketing strategy is going to be effective if the content is poor. You need to focus on creating strong content first and foremost. Content should provide insight to your readers and relevant to your brand without coming off as promotional. The better your content is, the more authority you'll build.

A reputation for knowing what you're talking about goes a long way in strengthening your brand identity. It also will help build trust and loyalty with readers who will keep returning to continue reading or viewing new content.

Don't just stick with a blog either. Videos, podcasts, webinars, email content and visuals (such as photographs or infographics) are all excellent forms of content. In fact, visual content is often more effective than written content. Vary your content and you'll reach more of your target audience.

- Release new content regularly - There's a fine balance that you'll have to find here.

You don't want to release so much content that the quality begins to suffer or that readers simply can't keep up with new content, but you also don't want to release so few pieces of content that readers forget that you even exist. You want your readers to know when new content will be released, which means you should release it at the same time every day or every week. A steady release of content will keep your brand in the minds of your readers and will help build your reader base as well.

- Create exposure for your content - Even if you've been doing everything right in terms of creating the content, from researching your audience and keywords to creating high quality, relevant content on a regular basis, that doesn't mean anyone is going to read it. Sure, your readership might increase a little bit due to the use of keywords, but you'll need to kickstart your content in order for it to begin gaining more exposure.

One way to do this is to always use links. Link to new content on your social media pages so that followers can not only read new content as it's released, but share it with others in their social circles. Publish your content with social buttons so that content can be shared directly from your website. Link to your blog when you do guest posts on other websites.

Content marketing is something that every business should do, no matter what their size. However, knowing how to create a successful content strategy is an entirely different matter. Follow these five steps to create a content marketing strategy that works.



Six Steps to Convert Page Views into Profit

Many business owners have a website dedicated to promoting their product or service, and allowing customers to purchase their product or service from a venue outside of physical points of sale. What many business owners fail to understand, however, is that their website can both attract leads and convert customers in their absence. Here is a six step process which can help you convert page views into profit.

Content

One of the most important things to focus on with respect to lead generation is the type of

content that you display on your page. Identify your best content using tools like Hubspot and check the number of page views that your website earns against the content which you have displayed historically. Is your content unique and engaging? Is it compatible with numerous servers, including mobile?

Landing Page

Once you have an idea of the content that your audience likes the best, you can begin to focus on your landing page, where you will post your Call to Action. Ensure that your landing page correlates to what is promised

in its parent link. If your landing page fails to meet these basic criteria, you will have little hope of moving visiting patrons through the conversion funnel.

Express Gratitude

Customers expect to be thanked on the next page. This will make them feel appreciated, as a simple 'thank you' acknowledges your appreciation for their participation in the sales process. Personalize the thank you. Certain tools allow you to thank the individual using the first and last name collected from the form on the previous page. If your visitors feel

appreciated, they are more apt to receive your content personally rather than as if they were just another number.

Create Your Call-to-Action

The CTA code can be easily embedded into the code for your landing page. Ensure that your call to action correlates to where consumers are in the conversion funnel. Many business owners have multiple CTA's throughout their conversion funnel. You do not want to bombard a potential lead with an expedited sales pitch, where they are asked to enter their credit card information in exchange for your product or service without having been given any information about it. Ensure that the visitor is made aware of your requirements of them as a consumer, keeping the CTA based on this precept rather than what they will receive as a result of doing what is being asked of them.

Workflows

Workflows are email campaigns directed at visitors in various stages of the conversion funnel. They operate based on triggers. One workflow, for example, might be triggered once an individual has finished entering their personal information into the form on your landing page in exchange for more information. Another

may be triggered when a customer visits your main page three times or more. Your email server will automatically send your visitors emails designed to move them from one stage of the conversion funnel to the next based on their current location therein, based upon said triggers.

Place Your CTA Above the Fold

The last step is to embed your CTA into the code on your landing page. This is relatively easy to do using tools like Hubspot. It is critical that you place your CTA above the fold. This is to say that visitors should be able to see the entire CTA without needing to scroll down, as scrolling down will effectively break the continuity of influence that the CTA is designed to deliver. Keeping this in mind will also ensure that customers need enter only the necessary information, which keeps the form short.

This simple six-step process has worked for many business owners and will continue to do so, though the efficacy that it will hold with you depends entirely on how much effort you put into each step. Continue to benchmark your campaign at various intervals to narrow down which steps need work, and adjust them accordingly.

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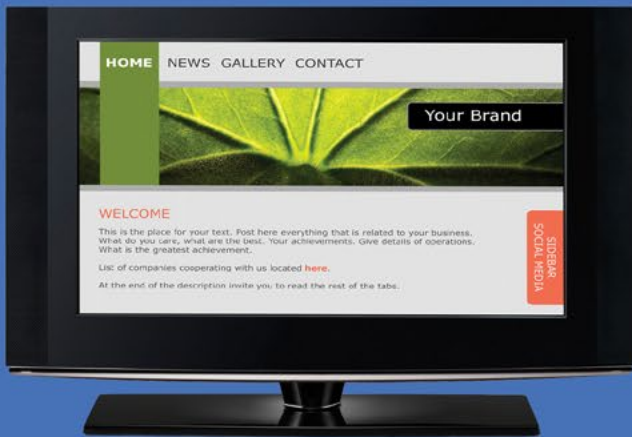
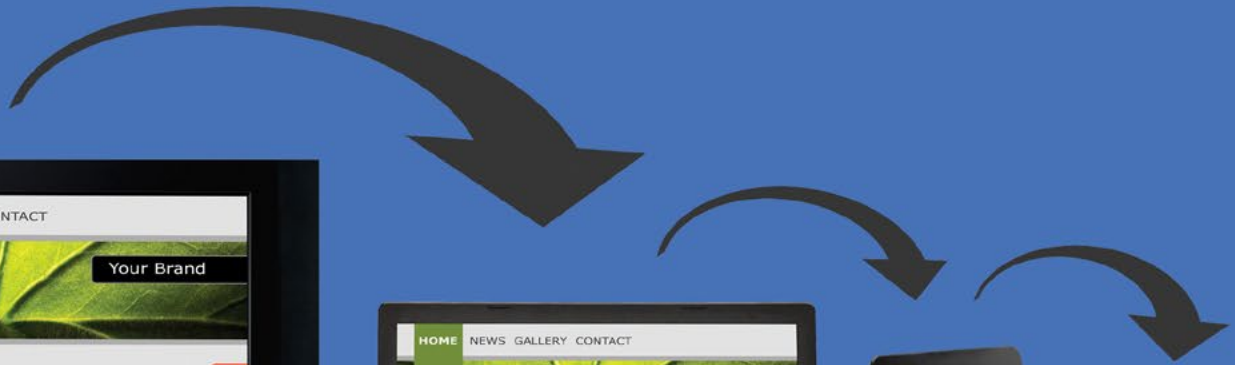


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Natural Links Are Important

Backlinks are important to ranking high in Google's search results. Backlinks are like validation in the virtual world. The more backlinks your website has, the more important Google thinks your site is.

Getting links to your website is great, but make sure that the links you are getting are from other reputable websites.

Try linking up with other website masters or you can just let the backlinks come naturally. If you provide insightful, unique content, backlinks will come.

Speed up Your Site

Speed is everything in today's modern and always-going society. If your site is slow, you are likely to lose a ton of traffic.

Your readers will just go to a competitor's website and forget about your site. In addition to losing valuable traffic, Google will rank your site lower in their search results because of slow website speeds.

Try testing the speed of your site by using Google. Also, try to avoid using tons of pictures, embedded videos, and loads of plugins because these things slow down your load time.

Be Friendly to Mobile Users

Over fifty percent of users on the net are using mobile devices so it only makes sense to optimize your website for these users.

If your website isn't mobile-friendly, then you will lose an exponential amount of traffic and Google will rank you lower in their search results. Try to avoid mobile-specific 404s, annoying pop-ups, and slow mobile loading times.

Google isn't trying to punish you with all of their complex algorithms; they are simply trying to provide the best search results for their users.

Is Your Website Mobile Friendly?

Over 50% of all online searches are now performed on a mobile device.



With Google's Recent Algorithm change, having a mobile-friendly website is more important than ever!

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News You Should Know

New Google Tool Makes Checking My Business Listings Easy

Many businesses adjust their business hours during the summer. A recent Google study showed that 25% of businesses change their hours, yet Google My Business shows that just 1% of businesses adjust their listed hours since Memorial Day.

With more than 50% of consumers using search to look specifically for business hours, now's the time to make sure that when people search on Google your business listing says you're open during your adjusted summer hours.

Google recently launched gybo.com/summer, allowing businesses to quickly check how their Google My Business listing is displaying, including whether they are currently open or closed.

Set a reminder to change your hours back in the fall.

ICANN considering removal of Domain Privacy

ICANN is currently considering a domain name policy change that would make domain owner information for commercial sites public record. This proposed change was recently reported by The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF).

Currently, domain owners can choose not to have their contact information publicly listed in the domain registration database WHOIS – instead, replacing details with proxy information to protect their privacy.

Under the proposed policy changes, a domain owner's information would no longer be kept private for commercial sites. There was no date reported as to when ICANN will make a final decision, but they were accepting comments through July 7th.

LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

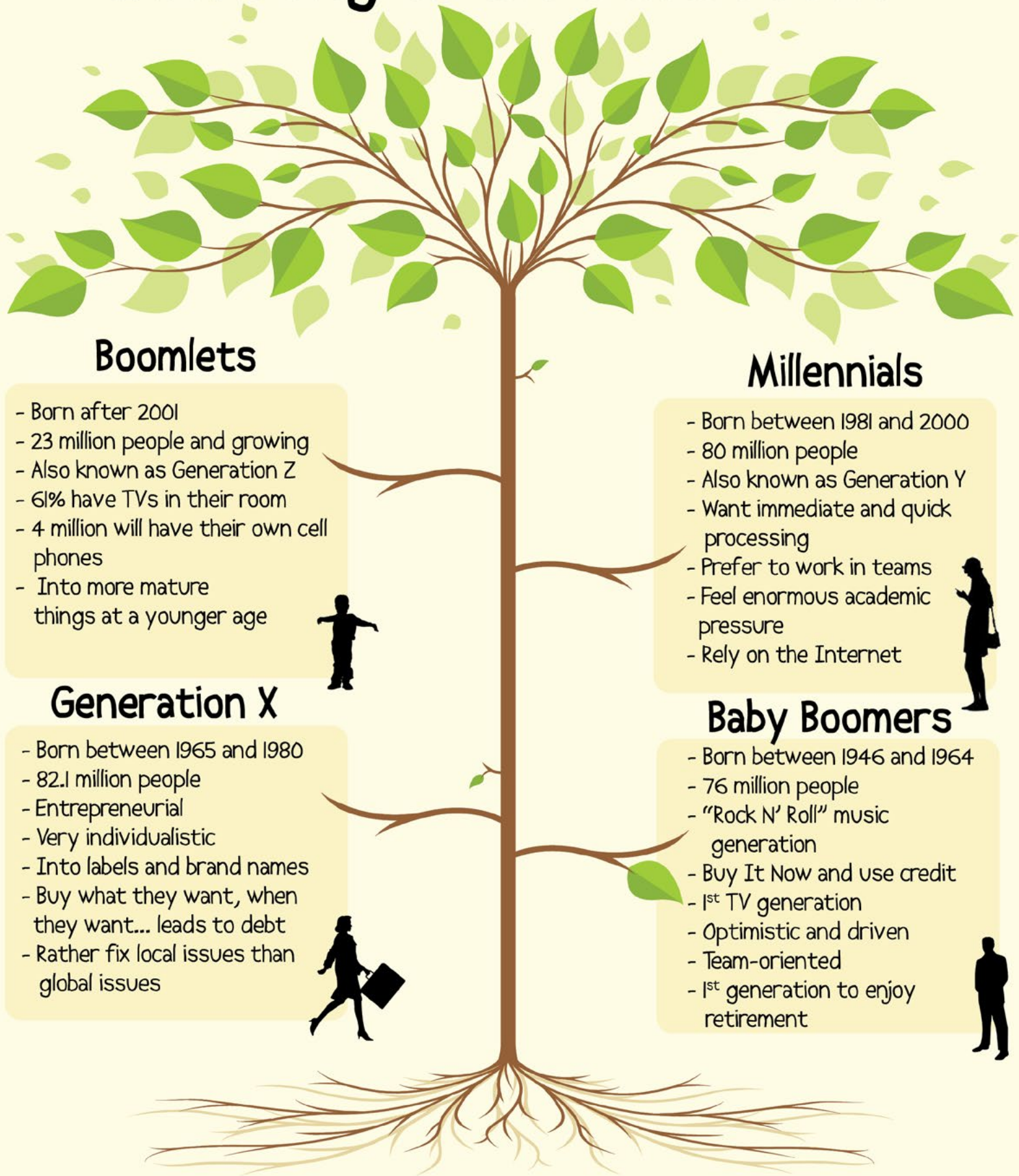
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