MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

July 2017



5 Ways to Grow Your Instagram Following

> 10 Ways to Spot a Credit Card Fraudster

Three Major Video Marketing Trends You Need to Be Aware Of

Infographic: Top Promotional Items

Blog Posts

With Impact

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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 month, we've included an in-depth article about effective social media. In addition, we discuss blogs, video marketing, Instagram and credit card fraud 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.

David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

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A Little About Us

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



LMS Solutions was developed to give businesses of all sizes the ability to leverage the same cuttingedge 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.

July

National Blueberry Month National Anti-Boredom Month National Cell Phone Courtesy Month

National Hot Dog Month National Ice Cream Month National Picnic Month

National Independent Retailer Month

July 4 - Independence Day (U.S.)

1st - Creative Ice Cream Flavors Day

3rd - Fried Clam Day

3rd - Chocolate Wafer Day

4th - Caesar Salad Day

4th - Barbecued Spareribs Day

5th - Graham Cracker Day 6th - Fried Chicken Day

7th - Father Daughter Take a Walk Day

7th - Strawberry Sundae Day

8th - Chocolate with Almonds Day

9th - Sugar Cookie Day

11th - Cheer up the Lonely Day

11th - Pet Photo Day

11th - Blueberry Muffin Day

12th - Different Colored Eyes Day

12th - Eat your Jell-O Day

13th - French Fry Day

14th - National Nude Day

14th - Mac and Cheese Day

15th - Pet Fire Safety Day

15th - Give Something Away Day

16th - Ice Cream Day

17th - Emoji Day

19th - Hotdog Day

20th - Lollipop Day

21st - Junk Food Day 23rd - Parent's Day

24th - Drive-Thru Day

25th Hat Friday Crustes

25th - Hot Fudge Sundae Day

27th - Chili Dog Day 29th - Lasagna Day

30th - Father-In-Law Day

30th - Cheesecake Day

31st - Mutt Day

August

Children's Eye Health and Safety Month

Foot Health Month

Happiness Happens Month

Medic Alert Month

Motorsports Awareness Month

National Golf Month

National Immunization Awareness Month

Bargain Hunting Week - August 7-13

International Clown Week - August 1-7

International Assistance Dog Week - August 6-12

Elvis Week - August 11-19

Be Kind to Humankind Week - August 25-31

1st - National Night Out

1st - Minority Donor Awareness Day

1st - Spider-Man Day

3rd - Watermelon Day

4th - Chocolate Chip Cookie Day

4th - International Beer Day

5th - International Hangover Day

6th - Friendship Day

8th - International Cat Day

10th - Lazy Day

10th - S'mores Day

10th - Spoil Your Dog Day

11th - Worldwide Art Day

12th - Vinyl Record Day

12th - National Garage Sale Day

13th - International Lefthander's Day

18th - Serendipity Day

19th - International Homeless Animals Day

19th - World Honey Bee Day

21st - Senior Citizen's Day

22nd - Eat a Peach Day

25th - Daffodil Day

25th - Banana Split Day

26th - Women's Equality Day

28th - National Bow Tie Day

30th - Frankenstein Day

31st - Eat Outside Day



10 Ways to Spot a Credit Card Fraudster

With credit card fraud reaching its highest level since 2003, business owners must take action to prevent financial loss. Embedded chips have failed to stop thieves from stealing credit card information, outlining the need for businesses. to ramp up their own security measures to halt fraudsters in their tracks. Failure to investigate large credit card purchases can be particularly devastating, especially to a small business. Below are 10 red flags that suggest fraudulent credit card activity.

1) The order seems too good to be true. If the daily sales average for your small business is \$2,500 and you suddenly receive an order for \$50,000 from a new customer, your initial reaction might be to jump for joy. However, the first thing you should do is contact the customer and carefully examine the order details to confirm the order's legitimacy.

2) A new customer places an abnormally large order without asking any questions. Most consumers want to make sure that they are dealing with a trustworthy establishment before they make a large purchase. Many people who place large orders will also try to negotiate with you to receive a discount. It is not normal for a new customer to place a large order before speaking with someone at

your business.

- 3) The customer aggressively demands immediate delivery. People who use stolen or fraudulent credit cards know that they have a tight window of time to buy products before their scheme is discovered. They are therefore more likely than the typical customer to insist upon overnight delivery and demand that their order ship immediately.
- 4) The customer's billing address and shipping address do not match. While a discrepancy between billing and shipping addresses does not automatically signal fraudulent activity, business owners should recognize

that most credit card fraud involves shipments of products to an address that is different than the billing address associated with the card.

- 5) Cost seems completely irrelevant to the customer. Most people will inquire about the possibility of receiving a discount or other perks if they place a high-dollar order. Proceed with caution with customers who seem completely unconcerned with the cost of a large order.
- 6) The customer tries to pay with multiple credit cards for a large purchase. While this practice does not necessarily signal fraud, you should be wary of customers who try to use several different credit cards to complete their purchase. You should be extra cautious processing orders for customers seeking to pay with multiple credit cards that all bear different cardholder names.
- 7) The customer tries to buy your most expensive products but seems to know nothing about them. A key goal for fraudsters is to purchase any products they can easily resell to other consumers at a high

price. People who engage in fraudulent activity often do not care about a product's quality or features.

They usually look for the following types of products:

- Small items that are lightweight and easy to ship
- Items that are in high demand
- Non-serialized products that cannot be traced back to the buyer

8) The phone number the customer provides does not appear to be legitimate. If a customer provides a suspicious-looking telephone number, you should refrain from shipping the customer's order until you obtain a valid telephone number.

Examples of questionable telephone numbers are (012) 345-6789 or (111) 111-1111. While there is sometimes a good reason a customer is not able to provide a valid telephone number, a customer's failure to provide a working telephone number may suggest fraud.

9) The customer states that he or she is with a major institution or company. Fraudsters will often hide under the guise of a major company to earn the trust of unsuspecting customers.

Carefully analyze the customer's email address and telephone number to see if either is associated with the referenced organization. You can also check the location of the shipping address to see if the delivery location is associated with the company or institution referenced by the customer.

10) The IP address is from a country associated with a high rate of fraudulent activity. Check the IP address associated with the customer prior to dispatching products to a customer. If the IP address is from Latvia, Egypt, Nigeria, Cameroon or Ukraine, you should utilize extra caution before proceeding with a shipment.

Credit card fraud is alive and thriving across the globe. Your failure to recognize the signs of fraudulent activity could be financially disastrous for your business. By familiarizing yourself with the red flags outlined above, you can help shield your business from the devastating effects of credit card fraud.

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5 Ways to Grow Your Instagram Following

In today's fast-paced, technological world, the business of marking and advertising has evolved to more of an art than a skill. You've got to finesse your strategies so that you're not being an overt, in-yourface kind of advertisement, but you still want to get all the great qualities of your product across to the consumer. One of the best ways to this is to harness that technological world via social media. Instagram, in particular, has

become a wildly popular platform for marketing and increasing the audience for a business. Once you have an account in place, you can promote and feature the services and products your company offers. However, once you've hit a plateau in terms of expanding your audience, what can you do next?

Here are just a few strategies to help you gain a larger following for your Instagram marking campaign: Make the most of your comments.

Try to find 10 or 20 different accounts who have a similar audience to you. You can keep a memo of their names on your phone to refer back to if needed. Then, hit them first. Leave genuine comments on their recent posts, but nothing brand new. The goal is to be the last person to comment on the picture so that your name and comment remain in view when users are

scrolling through their feed. Remember to be genuine. Your comments should just be a simple "nice pic" or "cool." Try to mention something that'll spark the interest of your potential audience, and don't be afraid to drop a few emojis.

Add to your story.

One of the latest features of Instagram is the "Story." In that, you can add images that last about a day, creating something interesting can help land you on the Instagram Explore page. There, your content will be exposed to an even larger audience, hopefully gaining you more likes and followers. The key to getting onto the Explore page is to become focused. Your story should include images and videos that are relevant to your business, and the more targeted you make your content, the more likely it is that you'll get featured.

Feature videos on your Instagram.

This social media platform isn't just for pictures. You can create interesting,

engaging videos that will make your followers want to like and comment. When this happens, Instagram will notice that your content is highly engaging and that people are interested in what you're offering. If your posts are consistently highquality, they'll be shown to more users, since they'll appear higher in search and browse results. Videos are just plain more engaging than a static photo. They catch the attention of the audience and make them more likely to interact with your post. Don't miss this opportunity to engage your followers.

Hold a contest.

You can offer just about anything for a prize: money or store credit, products, vacations... there's no real limit to the opportunity. But, how does this help you expand your audience? It's all about the entry. In order to enter the contest, your followers just need to tag people in the comments. It can be just one, or it can be a specified amount, like three or four. By the end of the contest, you'll likely have more followers based on

the larger number of people viewing your post.

Become the Hashtag King.

Hashtags are great ways to expand your audience because they'll lead potential followers to your posts. Don't be afraid to do a little research to find out what hashtags your audience uses most, or ones that your competitors prefer. Then, each time you post, you can add those tags to your content, making them more relevant to those who'll be most likely to follow you. You might also get creative and generate your own hashtag. It can be a version of your business name, slogan, or goal. Plus, it's a great way to have all your posts show up in a single search. Add that hashtag to promotional materials, such as things you hand out in person or posts on other social media, to spread the word.

Instagram isn't just for selfies and quick snapshots of your lunch. It's a real marketing tool that, if used the right way, can expand the audience and grow the potential for your business.



7 Fundamental Tenets of Practical, Effective Social Media Marketing

Social media has grown to such intimidating proportions that it's understandably challenging for businesses and marketers to stay abreast of developments in the space. Worse, when it comes to social media marketing, many might not even know where or how to begin. After all, it's one thing to gain digital points like a Facebook "Like" and something else entirely to make sure that thumbs up leads to actual impact on the bottom-line.

Fortunately, there are some fundamental concepts you can follow to avoid getting lost in the wilderness of social media.

1. Strategize

Today, social media marketing can be a crucial and significant part of a company's entire marketing and branding effort – not just an "icing on top," optional marketing channel. If you intend to succeed in social media, you need a strategy. Preferably, one that goes well beyond just creating social networking accounts and posting random updates every so often

Consider this very simple but cohesive two-step approach:

 Craft your social media strategy around a specific, realistic objective – something concrete, measurable, and obtainable, such as increasing conversion rate through social channels by X%.

- Choose in which social networks to interact with your target market and apply a specific consumer-level strategy.
- Your consumer level strategy will dictate what types of posts to put up and when, as well as how often.

This same strategy will guide performance monitoring, though of course your social platform of choice will have their own native analytics platforms, most likely. For instance, HubSpot research indicates that Google+ is ideal for a strategy that revolves

around organic search and markets to a technologically-savvy male demographic that does not spend much time in the site. Pinterest, on the other hand, attracts more female users who spend an average 100 minutes browsing boards, and is perfect for referral traffic.

2. Optimize

Methods of social media optimization may not be as refined as the technical aspects of search engine optimization, which has become a staple of modern digital marketing campaigns. There are ways,

however, to optimize your social endeavors. Each social networking platform offers its own advertising program and business page or profile options. When it comes to optimizing social ads, the task is similar to tweaking paid search campaigns. In optimizing business profiles and pages, there are varied tips and tricks for different social networking sites. Facebook Fan pages, for instance, can easily reach three levels of consumers: the fans themselves, their friends, and whoever can access their Facebook Timeline and view their

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activities. From here, it is only a matter of optimizing social content to draw in as much of this three-tiered audience as possible.

3. Listen

As social media marketing continues to evolve, so too does social media analytics. Data from social media comprises what is typically called "social intelligence" – a collection of social signals that show, among other things:

- How well you're doing on social media
- How much your company is being talked about
- How much buzz is negative and positive

Both the overall picture that social intelligence can provide as well as the more granular bits of information it consists of can help you better understand consumer behavior on social media. If you're not listening in on social interactions regarding your brand – conversations, comments, shares, and blogs – you're missing out on actionable data.

4. Engage

Research by European digital marketing firm Reevoo shows that in the new sales process, social engagement can account for as much as 177% increases in conversion rates. Your conversion rates almost triple when you have effective social content that consumers interact with and engage.

This is why social engagement is a powerful medium of marketing and ecommerce. Engage your audience – social media is all about sharing, connecting, and interacting. Many companies do just one of these things: sharing. All they do is spam posts on social profiles and hope that something comes of it. You need to do all of the above; not just one, and definitely not with halfhearted effort.

5. Measure

Measuring social data gathered through listening and engagement completes a self-contained cycle, and also restarts it anew.

Social media is a constantly shifting industry, and the consumers within it are also a crowd that can be loyal one moment and fickle the next. To be consistently successful in your social campaigns, you need to listen, engage, measure, and

from analysis of measured data, tweak your efforts and then repeat the cycle.

Listen, engage, measure. You can then re-strategize and re-optimize, and then go through the cycle again. Measuring campaign performance tells you your strengths, weaknesses, and opportunities.

6. Research

Social media is an everchanging landscape of networking, shares, and trends dictated by two major power players: the brands and the consumers. This means that tactics you employ in social efforts today might not be so effective a few months from now. You need to consistently research the industry, your market, and your consumers to figure out the right time to perform the right move.

You don't have to launch a social media R&D team. Your current level of business development research will suffice, just make sure to also prioritize information regarding social media, current events in the social networking space, trends and patterns, and of course, your own brand's place in

all the chatter (remember: social intelligence!).

Procter & Gamble found out through their own research that social media is a sound investment. According to the Wall Street Journal online, Procter & Gamble wants to shave \$10 billion off of its expenses by 2016, and \$1 billion of that will come from their marketing budget - cost cuts achieved through researching where they can spend more efficiently, such as low-cost digital marketing like social media.

How much can you save or gain through proper social media research?

7. Outsource

It's plain to see that social media is not limited to setting up social profiles. Depending on how much you want to prioritize social in your digital marketing campaigns, it can turn into a business process of its own that demands significant investments of time, effort, and human resources.

Small to mid-level businesses typically don't have the capability to keep up with the demands of a holistic, gainful social media strategy. This is where they outsource what they do not have the time, resources, or expertise to manage soundly. Luckily, like other aspects of digital marketing, social media also lends itself well to outsourcing.

Social media marketing can be a lucrative venture for those who know how. These seven fundamental tenets are meant to show you a high level, conceptual approach to social media marketing that you can then use for your own purposes.



VIDEO MARKETING



Three Major Video Marketing Trends You Need to Be Aware Of

When YouTube launched in early 2005, internet video was still a novelty. Internet speeds at that point were slow, with browsers grinding to a halt if a website featured too many images.

As speeds improved and more people gained access to cameras, YouTube was built to capture the attention of a new breed of creator and consumer.

Nowadays, videos are

the centerpiece for most internet experiences. Social media platforms have seen text posts lose effectiveness as videos become the preferred mode of communication. In this media-rich environment, your brand needs to deliver high quality video content to get noticed.

You can't afford to wait any longer before crushing your video strategy. The first step to winning the game of

video marketing is to assess the current trends in online video.

If you act with these concepts in mind, you'll be able to win big in the next decade.

Online Video Ads are More Valuable than TV Ads

Television networks and media buyers have been watching the online ad space with bated breath for years. Everybody knew that it was only a matter of time before online advertising outgrew television ads.

All signs point to 2017 as the year that this finally happens. Online advertising is now a bigger industry than TV advertising. This has huge implications for your video strategy in the future.

In the past, marketing yourself with video was all about getting onto TV. For many decades, it only took a few minutes of airtime on a prime-time talk show to turn your brand into a household name. Nowadays, in a world with fractured TV and internet audiences, it isn't so easy.

It is as important to be on Facebook as it is to be on the major TV networks. Brands would do well to focus on their social media audiences rather than worry about traditional marketing opportunities. The disparity between online ad spending and TV ads will keep growing, making TV less and less relevant over time.

It's impossible to say if broadcast TV will survive past the next few decades. For now, new brands will do well to avoid it in favor of more modern video platforms.

2. Live Streaming is Growing Fast

Live streaming has sneaked up on video marketers over the last few years. It first became popular in the e-sports scene, with competitive gamers live broadcasting practice sessions and professional matches to build an audience. YouTube's purchase of major e-sports streaming site Twitch signaled the start of the live streaming gold rush, with Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube all adding the feature to their platforms.

Many brands have used live streaming to great effect over the last few years. Live Q&A sessions, concert broadcasts, and many other tactics have led to significant viewership for people, some of whom had no prior media experience. There's a "Wild West" mentality in the current era of live streaming.

Nobody knows the definitive best way to use live streaming yet. If you want to position yourself to be ahead of the curve,

experiment with live streams its soon as possible. The brands that are courageous enough to play around with live video now will reap serious rewards in the future.

3. New Video Technology Is Moving Fast

The human brain has a habit of avoiding the future. Most people have a natural feeling that whatever works now will keep working for a long time.

It's easy to fall into this trap with video content. After all, video has evolved into a mature form over the last decade.

A lot of independent video bloggers have banded together to form production companies, bringing real money into the space. It's tempting to think that it will continue to work like it does right now. However, it's crucial to keep an eye on new technologies.

Virtual reality is the most prominent new technology in the video space. VR has gotten a lot of hype in the last few years, but there is little data available to measure its practical success so far. After all, 2016 was the first year with significant sales data for consumerfacing VR devices.

Google's \$10 "Google Cardboard" VR headset, built to work with mobile devices, is by far the most popular VR device so far. Although it isn't a full VR experience like the Vive or Oculus, it's a great introduction for people who are new to the technology. Excluding Google Cardboard, there were only about 3 million VR headset sales in 2016.

With only a few million active VR users, most brands

aren't putting resources towards the technology. Only 8 percent of social media marketers are advertising on VR in 2017. That's a sign that VR is still in its early days.

In the future, VR could become a major part of the video content ecosystem. Keep an eye on the news for developments in this area.

Change is Natural

The video marketing ecosystem has undergone tremendous change over

the last fifteen years. There's no reason to think this will stop any time soon. With every major technology company focusing on video, innovation will be immense in the coming years.

If your brand is going to win the game of video marketing, you need to stay on top of the trends. Don't let business as usual turn into an excuse to avoid the future. Be bold and explore new strategies to achieve huge success with your video content.





How To Write Blog Posts With Impact

Blog posts are a good way to increase your audience and enhance your relationship with your veteran audience members. By discussing new ideas and how they relate to your product, you keep your product's image relevant. You don't want to give away all of your thoughts via your blog, but rather, provide a taste that leaves the audience wanting more.

Effective blogging isn't just about writing great posts. Though you know how to communicate your great ideas, they won't satisfy and spread if your blog isn't easy to find, consume, and share. You need to know how to make a search engine work for you, how to catch

and keep your audience's attention, and the best practices for content, both visual and textual.

Search engines depend on the frequency of new posts, keywords, and tags. When a person types a word into a search engine, the search engine returns links that provide the most instances of that word. You can tag your post with relevant words, but what a search engine looks for are instances of that word appearing throughout the body of the page. The writing style that makes a search engine pay attention is called search engine optimization, or SEO.

Unfortunately, this writing

style's efficiency can backfire when it meets a live, human audience. Too much repetition of a keyword can be irritating and make a post look poorly written, which makes the audience trust you less. You want to build and maintain trust. Effective SEO writing uses keywords as about 3% of the total text, which means you have to make sure that you use the keyword once in every 33 words. Learning to write good SEO blog posts takes practice, but you can reap the rewards if you use your new skill carefully.

Search engines also look for content with a recent posting date. The search engine wants to make sure it's providing fresh content, and so should you. Therefore, you'll want to release your blog posts frequently and regularly.

Most website services will allow you to schedule your blog posts in advance. Use a calendar to choose when you want your blog posts to be available to your audience; upload the posts and set them to publish at specified times and dates. You can also opt to share each newly released blog post across social media.

Having such options doesn't mean your blog will take care of itself, however. You'll want to check to make sure it looks right and says what you intended. You'll also want to read and respond to comments. Remember, this blog is a sample meant to engage your audience; you don't want to spend all of your time on it. Use a search engine's need for recent posts and recurring keywords to your benefit.

When giving your audience a taste of your blog, break it up into bite-sized samples of different types that will get them engaged and pique their curiosity. Website templates can show your blog one post at a time, or show just the beginnings of

many posts at a time, like a table of contents. Showing a single, entire blog post, and nothing else, won't engage as many audience members as you would if you were to show first snippets of several posts.

By using a cut in your post, you can promise your audience an expansion of the ideas mentioned in those opening sentences. Many bloggers use the phrase "after the jump," as a way of enticing readers to click to read the full article, promising further information. By providing a page with short snippets of many posts, each leading to a deeper read, you give a wider variety of audience members the opportunity to engage with you.

Your blog post's text must be well organized; rambling only alienates readers. Make sure your post offers a solution to a problem or an answer to a question, using short, clear sentences and commonly used words that will appeal to the widest number of people possible. Of course, you'll want to end with a call to action that leads back to your main website or your product.

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good read, but combining dynamic images with the text makes each blog post more interesting and compelling. The task should be easy if you're a graphic designer, photographer, or sort of visual artist.

There might be more of a learning curve for everyone else. For example, never use images without permission from the creator or owner. You will not be hard for them to find via your post. Again, blogging is about engagement, not alienation. Some people will engage an artist or agency to create images for them, through a service like fiver.com or

99designs.com. There also are free images available on the internet, both in the public domain and for use with a Creative Commons license.

Search for an image using Google Image Search, typing in keywords that suggest the kind of image you want. At the top of the search results page, there is a horizontal bar of search options. Click "Tools" to open a new bar of choices (such as size, type, etc.), which will focus your search. Select "Usage Rights," and from the subsequent drop-down menu, click on "Labeled for reuse"

When you explore the new search results, check to see what the usage rights are. Sometimes the creator has an attribution license, which allows you to use the photo as long as you give them credit. It never hurts to do this anyway, and it lets you build a relationship with an artist.

Through regular scheduling, focused writing, and judicious use of images, your blog post will catch the interest of new audience members while honoring your existing fan base.

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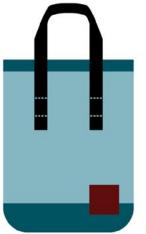
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50% of consumers own promotional Writing Instruments









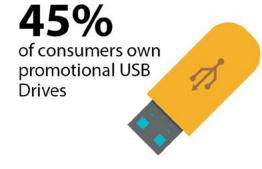
53% of consumers own promotional Drinkware

1/2 of consumers who own logoed drinkware use it 2-3 times a week or more



of consumers have a more favorable opinion of an advertiser if the Promotional Product they receive is **Environmentally Friendly**

50% of consumers own promotional Outerwear and Fleece



58%

of consumers own

promotional Shirts





Today's Marketing Platforms Have You Not Sure Which Way To Go?

