LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

November 2023

10 Ways to Encourage More Customer Reviews

Email Marketing Metrics That Every Small Business Owner Should Know

The Art of Personalization - Harnessing Automation for Tailored Customer Experiences

How to Support and Retain Neurodivergent Employees - A Guide for Small Business Leaders

Infographic:
7 Proven Tips to Increase Your Facebook Engagement in 2023

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LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

Welcome!

Like it or not, the holiday season is here. Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and Small Business Saturday are just a few of the national events that you can leverage to grow your business. Now is the time to develop and execute your holiday marketing strategy.

If you aren't already using Email Marketing as part of your holiday strategy, we strongly recommend looking into it. Used correctly, Email Marketing can work well for local businesses - helping you capture your share of the seasonal spending.

We really believe you'll enjoy the information in this month's issue.

If you're not already receiving this magazine regularly, we suggest you add your email to our subscriber list.

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.

Alyssa Engle
Marketing Manager
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, medium business, or non-profit organization, our programs can help you find greater success.

LMS Solutions has been recognized by the Philadelphia Business Journal as one of the area's Top Marketing Agencies for the last seven years straight!

LMS Solutions is a proud member of:

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 their revenue:

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- Social Media Marketing
- Direct Mail
- Email Marketing
- Graphic Design
- Promotional Products

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.

November

COPD Awareness Month
American Diabetes Month
Veterans & Military Families Month
Adopt A Senior Pet Month
National Adoption Awareness Month
Native American Heritage Month
Epilepsy Awareness Month
Alzheimer's Disease Month
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

November 7 - Election Day
November 11 - Veteran's Day
November 23 - Thanksgiving
November 24 - Black Friday
November 25 - Small Business Saturday

1st - World Vegan Day
1st - Author's Day
1st - Cinnamon Day
1st - Day of the Dead
2nd - Stress Awareness Day

2nd - All Souls' Day
2nd - International Stout Day
4th - Candy Day
5th - American Football Day
5th - Daylight Saving Time Ends
6th - Nachos Day
10th - Marine Corps Birthday
11th - Sundae Day
13th - World Kindness Day
14th - Pickle Day
14th - World Diabetes Day
15th - Recycling Day
16th - Fast Food Day
17th - Hiking Day
18th - Apple Cider Day
18th - Mickey Mouse's Birthday
18th - National Adoption Day
19th - Women's Entrepreneurship Day
26th - Cake Day
28th - French Toast Day
30th - International Computer Security Day

December

International AIDS Awareness Month
Impaired Driving Prevention Month
Cat Lovers' Month
Human Rights Month
Worldwide Food Service Safety Month
Made in America Month

December 7th to 15th - Hanukkah
December 24th - Christmas Eve
December 25th - Christmas
December 26th to January 1st - Kwanzaa

1st - World AIDS Day
1st - Christmas Lights Day
2nd - Candle Day
2nd - Mutt Day
3rd - International Day of Persons With Disabilities
4th - Wildlife Conservation Day
4th - Cookie Day
5th - International Volunteer Day
8th - Brownie Day

9th - Pastry Day
9th - Christmas Card Day
10th - Lager Day
11th - App Day
12th - Universal Health Coverage Day
12th - Gingerbread House Day
13th - Cocoa Day
14th - Free Shipping Day
15th - Ugly Sweater Day
15th - Cupcake Day
16th - Chocolate Covered Anything Day
17th - Maple Syrup Day
17th - Wright Brothers Day
18th - Answer The Phone Like Buddy The Elf Day
21st - Crossword Puzzle Day
21st - Winter Solstice
26th - Day of Goodwill
27th - Fruitcake Day
28th - Chocolate Candy Day
31st - New Year's Eve
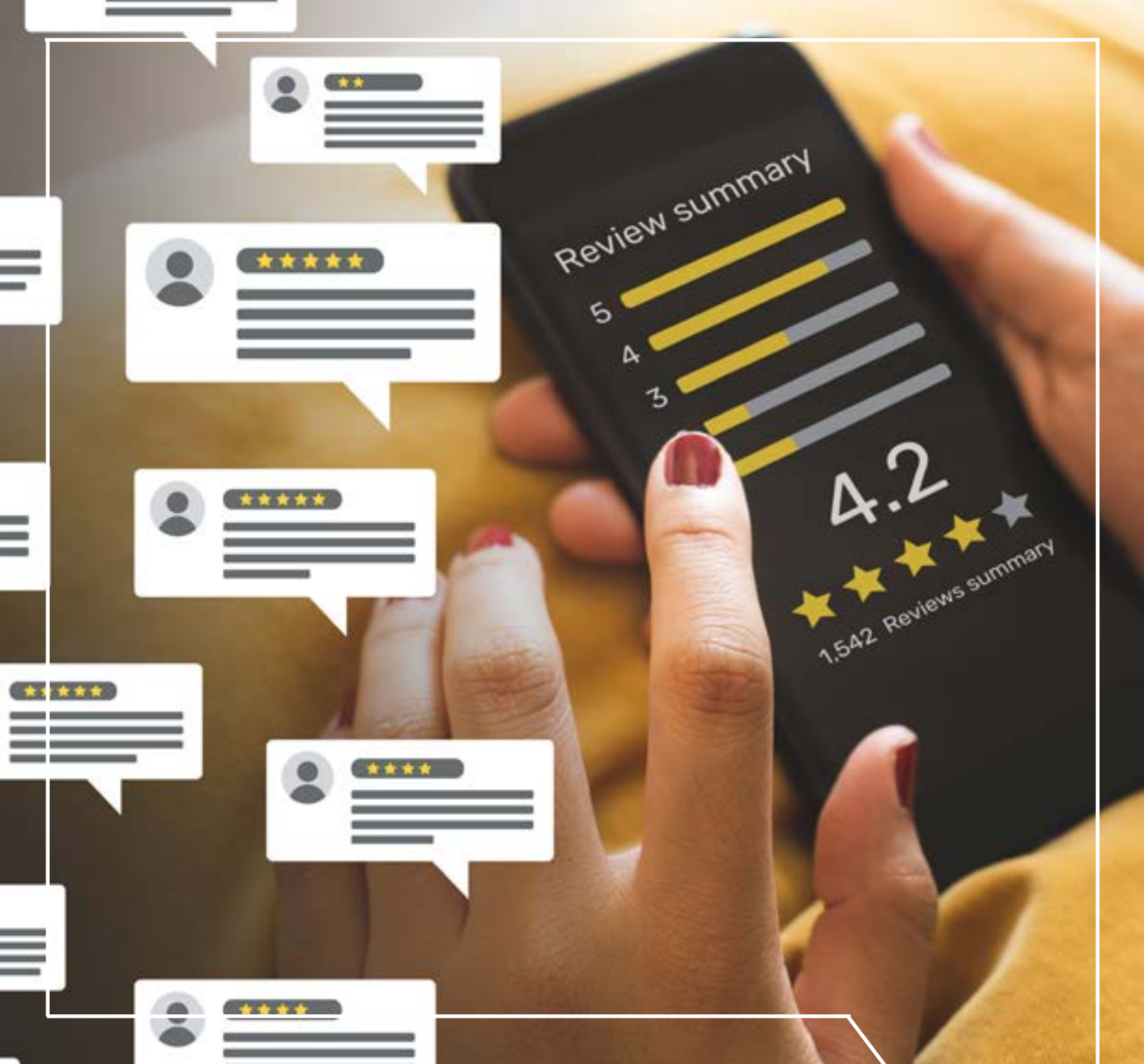
10 Ways to Encourage More Customer Reviews

In today's digital age, the success of a business often hinges on its online reputation. Customer reviews play a pivotal role in shaping this reputation, making them a cornerstone of modern marketing strategies. As a marketing manager working with small to medium-sized businesses, you're well aware that customer reviews are more than just feedback – they're social proof, trust signals, and a path to growth.

In this article, we'll delve into the profound significance of customer reviews and then explore seven effective ways to encourage them.

The Power of Customer Reviews

Customer reviews are the digital equivalent of word-of-mouth recommendations. They provide a platform for your existing customers to share their experiences with potential ones. Here's why they matter:

Building Trust and Credibility

When prospective customers stumble upon your business online, they often turn to reviews for reassurance. Positive reviews instill trust and credibility, making it more likely that visitors will convert into customers.

Influencing Purchase Decisions

Reviews wield incredible influence over buying decisions. Studies have shown that the majority of consumers read reviews before making a purchase.

A collection of positive reviews can be the tipping point that convinces a potential customer to choose your business over a competitor.

Improving Search Engine Visibility

Search engines like Google consider customer reviews a valuable factor in determining a website's ranking. More positive reviews can boost your SEO efforts, helping your business appear higher in search results.

Now that we've established the importance of customer reviews, let's explore ten effective strategies to encourage them.

1. Provide Exceptional Customer Experiences

The foundation of any successful referral program is exceptional customer experiences. Consistently exceeding expectations leaves a lasting impression on your clients. When customers are delighted with your products or services, they are more likely to become enthusiastic advocates,

sharing their positive experiences with friends and family.

2. Ask for Reviews Politely

Don't be shy about requesting reviews from satisfied customers. Send follow-up emails or messages thanking them for their business and kindly ask if they would consider leaving a review.

3. Make It Easy to Review

Make it easy for customers to refer your business by streamlining the referral process. Develop a straightforward referral system that allows customers to refer friends and family with just a few clicks. Simplify the review process by providing clear instructions and links to review platforms. The easier it is for customers to leave reviews, the more likely they are to do so.

4. Incentivize Reviews

Consider offering incentives like discounts, exclusive access, or small gifts in exchange for reviews. Be transparent about this practice and ensure it complies with

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the guidelines of review platforms.

5. Engage with Existing Reviews

Acknowledge and respond to existing reviews, both positive and negative. This shows that you value customer feedback and are committed to improving.

6. Leverage Social Media

Utilize your online platforms to encourage customer referrals. Share success stories, testimonials, and user-generated content. Encourage customers to share their experiences and tag your business.

7. Showcase Reviews on Your Website

Highlight the positive feedback and referrals you receive. Create a dedicated section on your website or social media profiles where you showcase customer testimonials and stories.

Seeing real-life examples of satisfied customers can influence potential clients to choose your business.

8. Cultivate Strong Relationships

Building strong relationships with your customers is key to fostering trust and loyalty. Take the time to get to know them personally, address their needs, and offer solutions. The stronger the connection, the more likely they are to recommend your business to others.

9. Implement a Loyalty Program

Rewarding customer loyalty can go a long way in generating referrals. Establish a loyalty program that offers exclusive perks and benefits to repeat customers. This not only encourages them to continue doing business with you but also motivates them to refer others to enjoy the same advantages.

10. Request Referrals Strategically

Timing is crucial when asking for referrals. Identify key touchpoints in the customer journey where satisfaction is at its peak. This could be after a successful purchase, a positive customer service interaction, or the achievement of a milestone. Politely request referrals when customers are most likely to oblige.

In the digital age, customer reviews are the lifeblood of your online presence. They build trust, influence purchase decisions, and enhance your visibility in search engines.

By providing exceptional experiences, politely asking for reviews, simplifying the process, offering incentives, engaging with existing reviews, leveraging social media, and showcasing reviews on your website, you can harness the power of customer reviews to propel your business to new heights. Encourage your customers to become your advocates, and let their voices amplify your success.

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Email Marketing Metrics That Every Small Business Owner Should Know

Email marketing remains one of the most cost-effective strategies for small businesses looking to engage and retain customers. But to get the full impact, closely tracking key email metrics is essential. Monitoring open rates, clickthrough rates, conversion rates, and other metrics allows you to optimize campaigns over time and improve results.

This guide explores some of the most important email metrics every small business owner should be tracking. It outlines the benchmark targets to aim for and also

provides tips to improve each metric.

Why Email Metrics Matter

Email marketing analytics give valuable insights into audience behavior and engagement. Without tracking metrics, you miss out on data to significantly improve the performance of your emails. For example, low open rates may indicate problems with subject lines or send times. Or high bounce rates could mean your list needs cleaning.

Optimizing is an ongoing process. You need to continually track metrics over time to identify trends and refine your approach - it's this consistent optimization that gives you a competitive advantage.

Below are some of the key metrics every small business should be tracking:

Keep Close Tabs on Open Rates

The open rate shows the percentage of recipients who opened your campaign. It's calculated as: (Opens / Total Emails Sent) x 100

This reveals how appealing your subject lines and previews are to subscribers.

According to a September 2023 Constant Contact study, the average open rate across industries was about 34 percent, so aim for at least this figure.

If your rates fall short, try these optimization tips:

- Test different subject line lengths and styles.
- Personalize subject lines using first names.
- Use recognizable sender names.
- Add calls-to-action in previews.
- Optimize for mobile.

Continually A/B test subject lines to discover what resonates most with your audience.

Click-Through Rates Reflect Engagement

The click-through rate (CTR) shows the percentage of recipients who clicked links in your email. It's calculated as: (Clicks / Emails Sent) x 100

A higher CTR indicates your content is providing value that readers want.

According to the previously mentioned study, the average CTR across industries is 1.33 percent.

To boost CTR:

- Place important links near the top of emails.
- Use action-driven call-to-action copy.
- Only include one or two links to avoid overload.
- Make links visually distinct.
- Test different link text and placements.

Pay attention to which links get the most clicks. This reveals the offers and content that resonate most with your audience.

Monitor Conversion Rates

The conversion rate shows the percentage of subscribers who took your desired action after receiving your email. This could include:

- Purchasing a product.
- Signing up for a webinar.
- Downloading content.

It's calculated as: (Conversions / Emails Sent) x 100

Average rates vary widely by industry. For small business retail, 2-5 percent is a decent range to aim for.

To increase conversions:

- Personalize with names, company names, etc.

- Send cart abandonment reminders.

- Make CTA buttons prominent.

- Test different thank you/receipt pages after signups or purchases.

- Optimize signup forms and CTAs for mobile screens.

Closely monitor conversions on promotions, lead magnets, and calls-to-action. This reveals what converts readers most effectively.

Growing Your Email List

Having a larger email list expands the reach of your campaigns. However, rapidly expanding your list with disengaged or uninterested contacts can backfire. If your list grows too fast, it may indicate many of the new additions are low quality leads or subscribers that won't actually engage.

According to a Data and Marketing Association study, the average list growth for email marketers is 2.5 percent.

To calculate list growth rate:

1. Subtract unsubscribers from new subscribers.

2. Divide that number by total emails.

3. Multiply by 100.

There are a few ways to boost growth:

- Offer lead magnets in exchange for emails.

- Provide exclusive discounts or freebies for subscribers.

- Use quality content to attract sign-ups.

Avoid buying lists, as those contacts lack connections to your brand.

Focus on building genuine, personal relationships with new subscribers to improve retention and engagement.

Track Engagement Metrics

Metrics like opens, clicks, and shares indicate interest. But also monitor negative indicators:

Bounce rate: Percentage of emails failing to deliver due to invalid addresses. Aim for under 5 percent.

Unsubscribe rate: Percentage who opted out of your list. Aim for under 0.2 percent per campaign. Spam reports: Percentage marking emails as spam. Your goal should be under 0.1 percent.

Monitoring engagement reveals issues and maintains list health.

Deliverability Matters

Deliverability is the percentage of emails reaching inboxes. To maintain high deliverability:

- Keep bounce rates low.

- Build a good sender reputation through engagement.

- Avoid spam trigger words.

- Slowly increase sending volume when using a new email address.

The reason to gradually increase sending from a new email address is because inbox providers will see that address as an unknown sender at first. So it's best to slowly ramp up sends to build a

good reputation, rather than blasting out a ton of emails right away from the new address.

Aim for at least 85 percent deliverability. Use email verification tools to catch issues before sending.

Strong deliverability means your emails actually reach subscribers. Don't let deliverability problems reduce open and click rates.

Calculating Return on Investment (ROI)

Analyzing campaign costs versus revenue generated provides your ROI. The formula is:

ROI = (Revenue - Cost) / Cost

ROI gives you hard numbers on your campaigns' financial performance.

Tools like Mailchimp and Omnisend calculate ROI based on costs and sales data, eliminating profitability guesswork.

A/B test different segments, offers, and content to find what provides the highest ROI. Eliminating unprofitable campaigns can improve overall ROI.

Key Takeaways to Remember

- Closely monitor open, click, and conversion rates to optimize campaigns.

- Track engagement and deliverability metrics to gain insights into list health.

- Regularly calculate return on investment to gauge profitability.

- Use industry benchmark data to evaluate email performance.

- Test subject lines, content, timing and segments to boost results.

- Promptly cut unprofitable efforts dragging down ROI.

- Maintain list health by vigilantly monitoring engagement.

Next Steps

Begin by researching benchmarks for your niche so you can set realistic goals. Audit your email marketing efforts to identify areas lagging behind that need improvement.

Initially focus on one or two of those lagging metrics. Brainstorm fresh ideas to test, like new subject line styles, engaging content approaches, or different segmentation strategies.

Closely track performance data to see what's working. Testing small tweaks consistently over time can drive major gains. Stay laser focused on metrics and keep refining your campaigns. With this results-driven mindset, any small business owner can more effectively connect with customers through email.

The Art of Personalization - Harnessing Automation for Tailored Customer Experiences

In today's ever-evolving business landscape, connecting with customers on a personal level has become a game-changer. Gone are the days of generic marketing messages that fail to appeal to people. Customers now expect tailored experiences that cater to their unique needs and preferences.

But here's the catch: achieving this level of personalization at scale is no small feat. It requires smart strategies and tools that can handle vast amounts of customer data while delivering timely, relevant interactions.

That's where automation is your secret weapon. By harnessing the power of technology and automation, you can streamline your processes, analyze data effectively, and offer personalized experiences to a large customer base. Imagine understanding your customers' behavior, segmenting your audience with precision, and delivering targeted messages that truly hit the mark.

In this article, you'll discover the magic of automation in achieving personalization at scale. Get ready to discover practical insights and strategies that will help you wow your customers and drive unparalleled business success.

Understanding the Role of Automation

Automation in sales and marketing is the clever use of technology and software to simplify repetitive tasks, gain insights from data, and deliver personalized experiences to your valued customers. It's like having a trusty digital assistant that takes care of the nitty-gritty, time-consuming stuff, allowing you to focus on what truly matters -- building authentic connections and creating tailored content.

Automation is a game-changer when it comes to personalization at scale. One of its most significant advantages is the boost in efficiency it brings. By taking care of mundane tasks like data entry and content distribution, automation frees up your time and resources. This means you can respond faster to customer inquiries, provide timely interactions, and ultimately leave your customers feeling satisfied and valued.

Another powerful benefit is the power of data analysis. Automation tools gather, organize, and analyze customer data, giving deep insights into their preferences, behaviors, and purchasing patterns. Armed with this knowledge, you can effectively segment your audience and create personalized messages, offers, and recommendations. By speaking directly to the individual needs of your customers, you build stronger connections, foster loyalty, and witness higher conversion rates.

Data Collection and Analysis

At the heart of personalization lies a treasure trove of valuable information -- customer data. Data is the foundation on which businesses build tailored experiences and meaningful connections. From demographic details to browsing behaviors, each piece of data provides a glimpse into the unique preferences and needs of your customers. By understanding and harnessing this data, you can deliver personalized experiences that gain traction.

Collecting and organizing customer data can be a daunting task, especially when dealing with a large customer base. This is where automation can be transformative. By leveraging automation tools, you can effortlessly gather data from various sources, whether it's website interactions, social media engagement, or purchase history. These tools streamline the process, ensuring valuable data doesn't slip through the cracks. With automation, you can create a centralized repository of customer information, making it easily accessible for analysis and personalized outreach.

But what good is data if you don't derive insights from it? Analysis becomes the guiding light, illuminating the path toward true personalization. With the help of advanced algorithms and data analytics tools, you can delve deep into the data, spotting patterns, trends, and correlations that would otherwise go unnoticed. These insights become the compass that guides your marketing strategies and allows you

to tailor experiences to individual customers.

By analyzing the data, you uncover the preferences, behaviors, and pain points of your customers, making it possible to craft personalized messages, recommendations, and offers that truly speak to their needs. Through the power of data analysis, you transform raw information into personalized experiences that leave a lasting impact. The journey toward personalization starts with data, and the insights gleaned from this data guide you toward the holy grail of tailored experiences.

Segmentation and Targeting

Segmentation plays a crucial role in ensuring that the right message reaches the right audience. Customers are diverse, with unique preferences, needs, and behaviors. By segmenting your audience into distinct groups based on relevant characteristics, you can tailor your

marketing efforts to resonate with each segment on a deeper level. This level of customization goes beyond generic mass messaging and allows you to address specific pain points and desires of your customers.

Segmentation empowers you to create targeted campaigns that speak directly to the interests and motivations of each segment. By understanding the distinct personas within our customer base, you can craft messages, offers, and recommendations that are highly relevant and personalized. This level of precision not only enhances customer engagement but also increases the likelihood of conversions. In essence, segmentation is the key that unlocks the door to meaningful

connections and effective personalization.

Segmenting Your Customer Base Efficiently

Efficiently segmenting a large customer base can be a daunting task without the right tools and systems in place. Automation provides the horsepower necessary to streamline the segmentation process. By leveraging automation, you can easily gather and analyze data from multiple sources to identify key attributes and characteristics that define each segment.

Automation enables you to apply predefined rules and algorithms to automatically categorize customers into specific segments based on their demographics, behaviors, purchase history, and any other relevant criteria. This not only

saves valuable time and resources but also ensures accuracy and consistency in your segmentation efforts. With automation at your side, you can continuously update and refine your segments as new data becomes available, keeping your targeting strategies sharp and adaptive.

Moreover, automation lets you personalize your marketing efforts at scale. Once you have segmented your audience, automation tools can dynamically deliver tailored content and experiences to each segment, ensuring the right message reaches the right audience at the right time. Automating the delivery of personalized communications, you can efficiently nurture customer relationships, drive engagement, and boost conversions.

Creating Personalized Customer Journeys

Creating a seamless and personalized customer journey is crucial for delivering exceptional experiences and driving customer satisfaction. To achieve this, map out the various touchpoints

and interactions that customers have with your brand throughout their journey. By understanding the different stages and decision-making points, you can design tailored experiences that guide customers toward their desired outcomes.

Mapping out personalized customer journeys involves considering the specific needs and preferences of each segment. When you segment your audience and understand their unique characteristics, pain points, and motivations, you can identify the most effective touchpoints and messaging for each stage of the journey. This personalized approach ensures that customers feel understood and supported at every step, increasing their likelihood of conversion and fostering long-term loyalty.

With the help of automation tools, you can deliver targeted and timely messages, recommendations, and offers that align with each customer's stage in the journey. By automating these touchpoints, you ensure consistency and

accuracy while saving valuable time and resources.

Automation tools allow you to trigger specific actions or communications based on customer behaviors or predefined criteria. For example, when a customer completes a purchase, you can automatically send a personalized follow-up email or recommend complementary products based on their previous purchases. These automated interactions not only enhance the customer experience but also streamline the process, ensuring that customers receive the right information and support precisely when they need it.

Automation tools also enable us to test and iterate on different elements of the customer journey to find the most effective approaches. Experiment with different messaging, offers, or channels and track the impact on customer engagement and conversion rates. By continuously optimizing and refining the customer journey through automation, you can enhance the experience,

improve customer satisfaction, and drive business results.

Balance Automation with the Human Touch

While automation brings numerous benefits to personalization efforts, know its limitations. Automation excels at handling repetitive tasks, data analysis, and delivering targeted messages at scale. However, it falls short in terms of the human touch and emotional nuances of customer interactions.

Understanding these limitations helps identify where human intervention is essential for building meaningful connections.

In a world increasingly driven by technology, the human touch remains invaluable. Genuine human interaction adds a personal and empathetic element that cannot be replicated by automation alone. By incorporating human touchpoints, such as personalized customer support, live chat, or one-on-one interactions, you can

address complex inquiries, build trust, and create memorable experiences that foster strong customer relationships.

Now it's up to you to find the right blend of automated touchpoints and human interaction to maintain authenticity and connection. By leveraging automation for repetitive tasks and data-driven personalization, you can free up human resources to focus on high-value, personalized interactions that deepen customer engagement and loyalty.
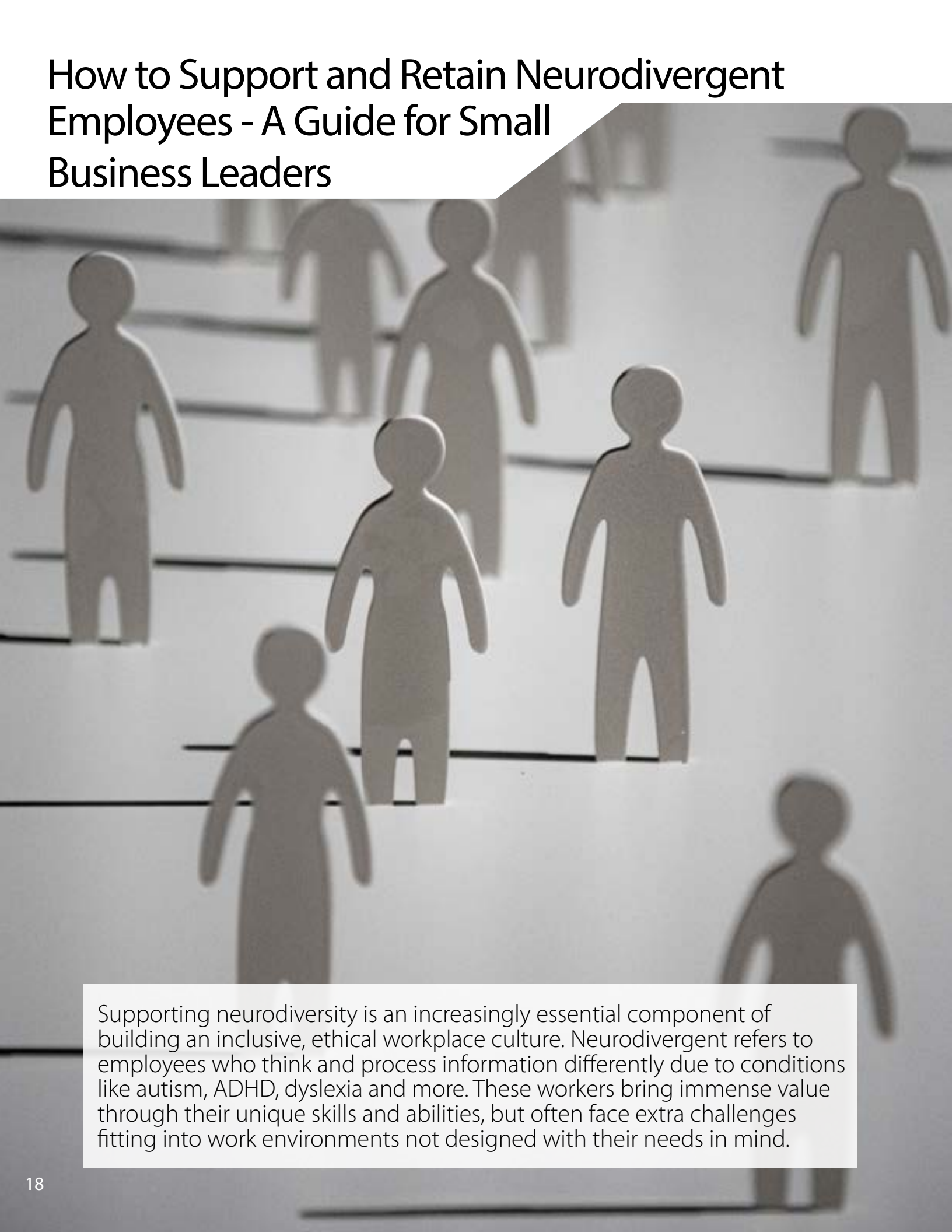
How to Support and Retain Neurodivergent Employees - A Guide for Small Business Leaders

Supporting neurodiversity is an increasingly essential component of building an inclusive, ethical workplace culture. Neurodivergent refers to employees who think and process information differently due to conditions like autism, ADHD, dyslexia and more. These workers bring immense value through their unique skills and abilities, but often face extra challenges fitting into work environments not designed with their needs in mind.

As a small business leader, you have a great opportunity to implement strategies that enable neurodivergent staff to thrive. Building an environment where neurodiversity is welcomed and supported benefits your entire organization - increased innovation, better retention, reduced bias, and more diversity of thought across teams.

With the right attitude and strategies in place, you can create a new normal where neurodivergent employees are valued and empowered to meaningfully contribute their unique skills. Here are some key steps to take:

Educate Yourself and Your Staff on Neurodiversity

The first step is learning what it means to be neurodivergent. There are various conditions that fall under this umbrella term:

- Autism spectrum disorder.

- ADHD or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder.

- Dyslexia.

- Dyscalculia.

- Sensory processing disorders.

- Tourette Syndrome.

- Auditory processing disorders.

- Nonverbal learning disabilities.

Each of these conditions comes with unique strengths as well as potential workplace challenges. For example, autistic individuals often excel at focused tasks but may struggle with overstimulation, communication norms, and forming social connections. People with ADHD can grasp concepts rapidly but frequently have difficulty sustaining focus on tasks, managing distractions, staying organized, and controlling impulses.

Understanding these various thinking and working styles helps you support employees more constructively. Providing thorough neurodiversity training for managers and staff is crucial, so set aside dedicated training time for this. It's also a good idea to bring in outside experts and speakers to conduct engaging sessions. Reputable online courses can then reinforce and supplement the in-person workshops.

Create In-Depth Training Programs

Don't just gloss over the topic of neurodiversity - create or utilize training programs that offer real depth and actionable strategies. Provide overviews of various conditions, making sure to highlight associated strengths and abilities. Include perspectives from real neurodivergent individuals on what they experience in the workplace.

In the training, cover best practices for making accommodations smoothly in all areas of the workplace. For example, provide guidelines on respectful language, reducing sensory stimulation, sending meeting agendas in advance, dividing large tasks into pieces, and allowing noise-canceling headphones. Ensure all employees recognize their role in cultivating inclusion.

Foster an Inclusive Culture

Formal training is just the first step. You also

need to integrate neurodiversity into your workplace culture. Set the expectation that neurodivergent minds are welcomed and valued in tangible, meaningful ways. Include neurodiversity in your organization's core values, policies, and mission statements.

Promote open discussion through:

- Hosting speaker panels to share diverse perspectives and experiences.

- Sharing educational resources like books, videos, and articles.

- Bringing neurodiversity into team talks and everyday conversations.

The main idea is to create opportunities for employees at all levels to engage in open dialogue about neurodiversity.

Update Your Hiring Practices to Attract Neurodiverse Applicants

Standardized hiring practices often unintentionally screen out qualified neurodivergent applicants. Rethinking some key aspects of your recruiting and onboarding process can go a long way toward building a neurodiverse talent pipeline.

Partner with Disability Advocacy Organizations

Connecting with disability advocacy nonprofits, schools, vocational programs, and other organizations provides access to qualified neurodivergent candidates. Develop partnerships for internships, mentorships, apprenticeships, training programs, or other pipelines that allow you to hire and support qualified individuals from these groups.

Rethink Traditional Interviews

Do away with standardized interviews focused on grilling applicants under pressure, which can disproportionately trip up neurodivergent candidates. Instead, allow applicants to demonstrate their skills and qualifications through:

- Interactive exercises or simulations.

- Video submissions showing their abilities.

- Work samples like past projects or writing.

- Alternatives to traditional question-and-answer style interviews.

In short, move away from standardized interviews focused on grilling applicants. Consider offering options for remote video interviews, sharing questions ahead of time, or providing written instructions. Look beyond academic credentials to ask about other relevant skills and experiences. The key is to remain flexible and open-minded throughout your hiring process.

Make Workplace Accommodations

Once neurodivergent employees are on board, taking steps to actively accommodate their needs is key for retention and unlocking their talents. Start by streamlining processes for staff to privately request adjustments and accommodations.

Leverage Assistive Technology

Provide or allow assistive devices that enable focusing, communicating, collaborating, and working more efficiently. Examples

include noise-canceling headphones, smart pens, digital calendars, project management tools, captioning or transcription software, and more. Offer options like remote work that utilize technology for accessibility.

Create Spaces for Focus

Have low-sensory, quiet spaces or rooms available for times when employees need a retreat from too much stimulation. Allow use of noise-canceling headphones or devices as needed. Permit flexible remote or hybrid work options to support productivity and focus.

Update Policies and Procedures

Evaluate your current policies with neurodiversity in mind. Can employees work flexible hours or shift schedules? Is the use of noise-canceling devices allowed? Is there flexibility around sick time or mental health days? Look for small tweaks that can make a big difference.

Manage Workloads

Check in regularly about workloads and burnout.

Be open to adjusting expectations around things like social events or last-minute changes. Offer flexible breaks so staff can recharge. Even a 10-minute sensory break can really boost energy and productivity.

Encourage Ongoing Communication and Feedback

Maintain open channels so employees can share needs as they arise. Send out anonymous surveys to identify problem areas and maintain an open door policy.

Provide Mentorship Programs

Match neurodivergent staff members with mentors or coaches to help navigate organizational culture, social nuances, professional development, and work towards leadership opportunities. A mentor can provide guidance tailored to the individual.

Check In Regularly

Managers should connect one-on-one with employees to discuss workloads, challenges,

successes, and ways to better offer support. Provide regular feedback in a compassionate yet direct manner. If performance issues arise, focus on mentoring and support before discipline. Checking in routinely is key for retention and growth.

Building an Inclusive Culture Unlocks Potential

Even small steps toward these strategies will set you on a path to becoming a more neurodiversity-inclusive workplace. You'll likely see positive ripple effects in innovation, problem solving, productivity, and teamwork. However, truly embracing neurodiversity requires evolving your mindset as much as your policies.

When you recognize that neurodivergent minds are assets, with the potential to accomplish incredible things given the right environment, you unlock their potential. With understanding, structural changes, and the inclusive culture you build, your small business can flourish as neurodiversity becomes your new normal.

The name 'November' is believed to derive from 'novem' which is the Latin for the number 'nine'. In the ancient Roman calendar November was the ninth month after March.

Unlike today's feast consisting of turkey, stuffing, cranberry, etc; the original Thanksgiving menu probably consisited of the following items: Boiled Lobster. Roasted Goose, Boiled Turkey, Fricase of Coney, Pudding of Indian Corn Meal with dried Whortleberries, Seethed Cod, Roasted Duck, Stewed Pumpkin, Roasted Venison with Mustard Sauce, and Savory Pudding of Hominy.

November Milestones:

- Nov. 7th, 1972 - Home Box Office (HBO) was launched, in Wilkes-Barre, PA.

- Nov. 18th, 1928 - Walt Disney's Mickey Mouse first appeared in NY in "Steamboat Willie.

- Nov. 25, 1920 - The Philadelphia Thanksgiving Day Parade is the oldest in the US, starting on this date.

- Nov. 27, 1924 - Macy's department store held its first Thanksgiving Day parade.

- Nov. 28, 1895 - America's first auto race started: 6 cars, 55 miles, the winner averaged 7 MPH.

- Nov. 30, 1979 - Pink Floyd released "The Wall" double album.

7 PROVEN TIPS TO INCREASE YOUR FACEBOOK ENGAGEMENT IN 2023

1. Post at the Best Times When Your Audience is Online

Leverage your Facebook Page insights to see when your followers are on each day of the week!

2. Focus on User-Generated Content (UGC)

One of the biggest mistakes brands make is only posting about their own brand and product. UGC can be used across all stages of the buyers purchase funnel to increase engagement & conversions. UGC can come from customers, brand loyalists, employees, influencers & more.

3. Level Up Your Photo Game

Visual content is what the people want to see! But, be strategic about what kind of visual you share. The types of posts that get the most engagement on Facebook is user testimonials, memes and GIFs, behind-the-scene photos, product images, and images with a pretty landscape or striking colors.

4. Leverage Video Marketing

When it comes to user interation, nothing compares to video content. Make sure to upload your videos directly on Facebook to provide a higher engagement rate. Also, be sure to add captions to your videos since 85% of Facebook videos are watched with sound off.

5. Avoid Engagement Baits

Facebook has been cracking down on clickbaits recently, so it's smart to stay away from explicitly asking for likes or shares. Try asking for the audiences opinion instead.
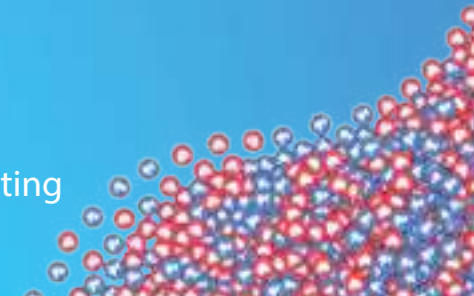
6. Go Live

According to a Facebook report, people spend 3x more time watching a Facebook live video on average compared to a video that is no longer live. People also comment 10 times more on Facebook Live videos than on regular videos.

7. Boost Your Popular Posts

In this digital age of social media, you got to pay to play. Consider boosting your page's top-performing posts to reach an even larger audience.