

LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

October 2015

5 Essential Tips for Growing Your Facebook Brand Page

The Benefits of Frequent Press Releases for Online Marketing

Content Marketing - Grow Your Business With Free Advertising

5 Reasons To Use Responsive Web Design

5 Effective Tips for Improving Your Customer Service

7 Ways to Gain Hundreds of Social Media Shares in Just a Few Days

7 Tips to Spice Up Your Company's Online Presence

Infographic:
Instagram

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Welcome!

It's October - which means many things. The temperatures are dropping, the leaves are turning, and the holidays are right around the corner. Are you going to make this holiday season a successful one for your business? We hope so, and are providing a variety of articles that may help.

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

This month, you'll find a good variety of articles covering many topics that are important to business owners including improving customer service, improving your online presence, and gaining more exposure through the effective use of Social Media.

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.

To Your Success!

David Akers
President / CEO
LMS Solutions, Inc.

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Inside This Month's Issue

- 4 Marketing Calendar
- 5 7 Tips to Spice Up Your Company's Online Presence
- 7 5 Effective Tips for Improving Your Customer Service
- 10 5 Essential Tips for Growing Your Facebook Brand Page
- 12 Content Marketing -- Grow Your Business With Free Advertising
- 14 Seven Ways to Gain Hundreds of Social Media Shares in Just a Few Days
- 16 The Benefits of Frequent Press Releases for Online Marketing
- 18 5 Reasons To Use Responsive Web Design
- 21 Infographic - Instagram Stats & Tips

A Little About Us

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LMS Solutions was developed to give businesses of all sizes the ability to leverage the same cutting-edge marketing platforms that the Fortune 500 organizations use, at extremely affordable rates.

We offer an extensive catalog of cutting-edge Local Online, Mobile, Social, Pay-Per-Click, Video, Web and Direct Marketing Media Programs. Whether you're a small business, large business or an ad agency, our programs can help you find greater success.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

October

Adopt A Shelter Dog Month
Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Bullying Prevention Month
Blindness Awareness Month
Celiac Disease Awareness Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Down Syndrome Awareness Month
Dyslexia Awareness Month
Emotional Wellness Month
National Dental Hygiene Month
National Pizza Month

Oct 12 - Columbus Day (U.S.)
Oct 31 - Halloween

1st - Homemade Cookies Day
2nd - World Smile Day
3rd - Techies Day
4th - Taco Day
4th - Vodka Day
5th - Do Something Nice Day

5th - Child Health Day
8th - Poetry Day
10th - Motorcycle Ride Day
11th - Coming Out Day
12th - Kick Butt Day
13th - Train Your Brain Day
14th - Stop Bullying Day
15th - Grouch Day
15th - Get to Know Your Customers Day
16th - Boss's Day
16th - World Food Day
18th - National Chocolate Cupcake Day
18th - National No Beard Day
24th - National Food Day
24th - Make A Difference Day
25th - World Pasta Day
25th - Mother-in-Law Day
28th - Chocolate Day
29th - Cat Day
30th - Candy Corn Day
31st - Knock-Knock Jokes Day

November

Adopt A Senior Pet Month
Aviation History Month
Epilepsy Awareness Month
Lung Cancer Awareness Month
Military Family Appreciation Month
National Adoption Month
National Alzheimer's Disease Month
National COPD Month
National Diabetes Month
National Family Literacy Month
National Pet Cancer Awareness Month
Pancreatic Cancer Awareness Month

November 3 - Election Day (USA)
November 11 - Veteran's Day (USA), Remembrance Day (Canada, Ireland, UK)
November 26 - Thanksgiving (USA)
November 27 - Black Friday
November 28 - Small Business Saturday
November 30 - Cyber Monday, St. Andrew Day (UK)

1st - Daylight Saving Time Ends
3rd - Housewife's Day
4th - Candy Day
5th - Doughnut Day
5th - Men Make Dinner Day
5th - Bonfire Night (UK)
10th - Marine Corps Birthday
11th - National Sundae Day
11th - Armistice Day
14th - National Pickle Day
16th - Fast Food Day
17th - World Peace Day
18th - Mickey Mouse Birthday
19th - Great American Smokeout
19th - International Men's Day
20th - Universal Children's Day
21st - Adoption Day
21st - World Television Day
26th - National Cake Day
28th - French Toast Day



ONLINE PRESENCE

7 Tips to Spice Up Your Company's Online Presence

Your online presence is an integral part of your brand. The manner in which you present yourself through your website and social media profiles greatly influences the likelihood of your visitors turning into customers. Let us look at a few things you can do to take your company's online profile to the next level.

1. Engross viewers with your 'About Us' page.

Too many businesses have a vanilla, boring looking 'About Us' page. There are entertaining ways to tell your readers about the story of your company. Create a powerful,

engaging narrative that weaves in your philosophy and vision while letting people know how you got here. Include relevant imagery and test different layouts to see which one looks the best.

2. Have a readable, frequently updated blog.

Maintaining a regular posting schedule on your blog is great for your SEO, but it also has numerous other benefits. If the quality of your content is stellar, you will attract a lot of repeat viewership. Your blog is a great place to use your audience as a sounding board and to discuss upcoming

ideas and products. Keep the tone of your content consistent with the overall attitude of your company.

3. Be active on social media.

Social media profiles are absolutely crucial for businesses. Social media platforms give you a direct line of communication with your audience. You can build a large audience by regularly posting interesting content on your Facebook or Twitter pages. You can also leverage the power of social media to establish partnerships with other companies or blogs in your market.

4. Talk about your team.

You should feature your team prominently on your website. By having a separate page where you profile your team members, you are offering your customers a little window into your world. They can see that you aren't just a faceless corporation which exists only to make profit. To make things even more personal, you can have your team members write their own bios.

5. Don't ignore the power of emails.

A lot of businesses don't include any kind of lead capture mechanism on their pages. Getting your visitors to

give you their email addresses opens up a new channel of communication for you. Since most people check their email daily, you can keep your viewers coming back by sending them emails about new offers or blog posts.

6. Include a short video on your website.

The internet is an extremely visual medium. You can talk about your story through text, but if you include a well-produced video to supplement it, the impact your message has increases dramatically. You should include a video that showcases your team, what kind of business you are and what your vision is.

7. Include testimonials.

One of the most powerful ways to lend credibility to your business is to include testimonials from satisfied customers. It's very easy to make bold claims, but not everyone can deliver on their promises. When you let your customers talk about the benefits of using your product, it is exponentially more effective than any ad copy you can produce. A lot of people make buying decisions based on customer reviews, so having testimonials is great for your business.

Your online presence is important. Use the above tips to help your brand stand out from the rest.

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They will find your
competition**



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5 Effective Tips for Improving Your Customer Service

Even in the age of automation, efficient customer relationship management (CRM) software solutions, mobile web, big data, smart wearables, and the Internet of Things, a human touch still remains relevant and crucial in customer service interactions. In fact, a Gartner study estimates that by 2017, one-third of all customer support communications will still need a human agent.

No amount of good PR and advertising machinery can remedy an ailing customer support system. Your company's customer service program is usually the first or only direct contact with customers, so make that rare customer interaction a pleasant one. Here are five effective ways for ensuring that your frontline employees offer positive and meaningful experience to customers and would-be customers.

Emoticons for Your Chat and SMS Text Support

"Can synchronicity and visual modality enhance social presence in mobile messaging?" appeared in a 2015 issue of the journal *Computers in Human Behavior*, and detailed a way for businesses to have their online agents foster a favorable emotional connection with customers--allow them to use emoticons.

The study showed that the use of emoticons in instant messaging, as well as promptness of reply, might cultivate customer loyalty through a positive customer service experience.

Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Does your company support charitable institutions and worthy causes like environmental preservation and animal welfare rights? Then you're on the right track toward improving your customer support.

Your company's corporate social responsibility has a powerful sway not only to customers but also to your customer service workers.

According to the paper "Corporate Social Responsibility, Customer Orientation, and the Job Performance of Frontline Employees," published in a 2014 issue of the *Journal of Marketing*, CSR activities deeply motivate customer service workers and enhance their job performance.

Gratitude

Your email support system can flex a muscle and gain some loyal customers in the process. A landmark Michigan State University

study, "Managing Post-Purchase Moments of Truth: Leveraging Customer Feedback to Increase Loyalty," demonstrated the value of a sincere, personalized, and expertly timed "thank you" to customers. You might want to have your email support team compose heartfelt "thank you" letters for people who took time to answer your company's online surveys or tagged you on social media because they were satisfied with your product. Then have a supervisor or a top executive affix his name as the letter sender.

The impact of this to your bottom line is tremendous. In a 12-month period in the restaurant industry, for example, repeat visits soared 57 percent for women and 50 percent for men. On top of repeat visits, women brought others with them--an increase of 79 percent, according to the results of the study. With men, it's also an upward trend with an increase of 42 percent. This is all because of a sincere "thank you" message signed by the company president.

Self-Service Portal

You wouldn't want to keep your customers waiting, especially for an answer to a simple inquiry. A self-service portal makes your customers

feel empowered as it equips them to resolve basic product or service issues on their own. It also minimizes the workload of your agents. Your self-service portal must contain key FAQs and detailed information, as well as sport an easy-to-navigate menu system.

Multi-Platform Ticketing System

Your ticketing system can use some work to accommodate the ever-expanding multi-channel digital environment. For example, a customer tweeting at your company's Twitter account about needing assistance for a troubleshooting issue should not be asked to log his complaint to a Web form that's processed by your ticketing system. The ticketing system should be able to take in the customer's tweet and turn it into a ticket. In short, make it easy for customers to file support cases in many possible platforms and social media channels.

Massive and continuous spending for advertising and other branding initiatives can't ever make up for bad customer service. A little effort on the latter goes a long way, because your satisfied customers can bring something priceless in return: a good word of mouth.



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- ***You're Confused***
- ***What You're Doing Isn't Working***
- ***You Can't Focus On The "Real Work"***

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5 Essential Tips for Growing Your Facebook Brand Page

If you're one of the 15 million businesses on Facebook, you've already made the first step towards establishing a presence on social media. However, managing your brand page takes time and effort, and you'll need to be committed for the long term lest your page fade into obscurity. Growing your audience on the world's largest social network, as well as keeping them engaged, requires a persistent effort.

1 - Use Consistent Branding

Every successful brand represents itself with a certain style and voice, and these need to be consistent across every platform you use for your marketing efforts. For example, people

will come to recognize you not just by your logo, but also by the colors you use and the style of your written content. For your brand to become successful, you need to work hard to give it a distinct human face, particularly in the case of social media.

2 - Offer Incentives

By offering a small incentive to encourage people to follow your brand page, you'll likely get a lot more attention. While you'll need to work hard to keep their attention, offering incentives is a good way to initially reach out to a larger audience. One particularly effective method of growing your Facebook page is to run a contest, since this also serves

to encourage actual engagement with your brand. It will cost a bit of money, but it's a great way to establish an audience quickly.

3 - Share Original Content

Content is king with any digital marketing strategy, and the vast majority of the time and effort involved in building up your brand on social media will be the creation and publication of original content. However, many brands make the mistake of being too promotional on their Facebook pages when, in fact, they should focus on offering genuine value to their target audiences. Be sure to diversify your content by sharing stories from sources other than your own and by using a variety of media formats.

4 - Integrate Social Media

Businesses need to make every effort to integrate social media into all areas of their digital marketing strategies. Adding social sharing buttons to your blog, website and any other online content is a good place to start. However, to further raise awareness of your brand page, you should also add it to your email signature, to your business card and

any other online or offline publications you maintain. You can even leverage your own personal profile to further draw attention to your brand page.

5 - Invest in Paid Advertising

Facebook provides many options for paid advertising, and given that recent Newsfeed algorithm changes decreased the reach of unpaid promotional content on brand pages, paid advertising has become even more important. To reach out to more followers, try using Facebook's Sponsored Stories. This campaign will advertise your brand page to friends of your current fans, providing social proof of your active presence on the network.

Although the above tips will help boost the size of your audience, it is important not to put too much weight in the number of likes alone. After all, getting people's attention is only half of the battle. The biggest part of the job is yet to come; holding onto your audience and making sure your content is engaging enough for them to stay interested. A like means nothing unless it is followed by shares, comments and, ultimately, conversions.

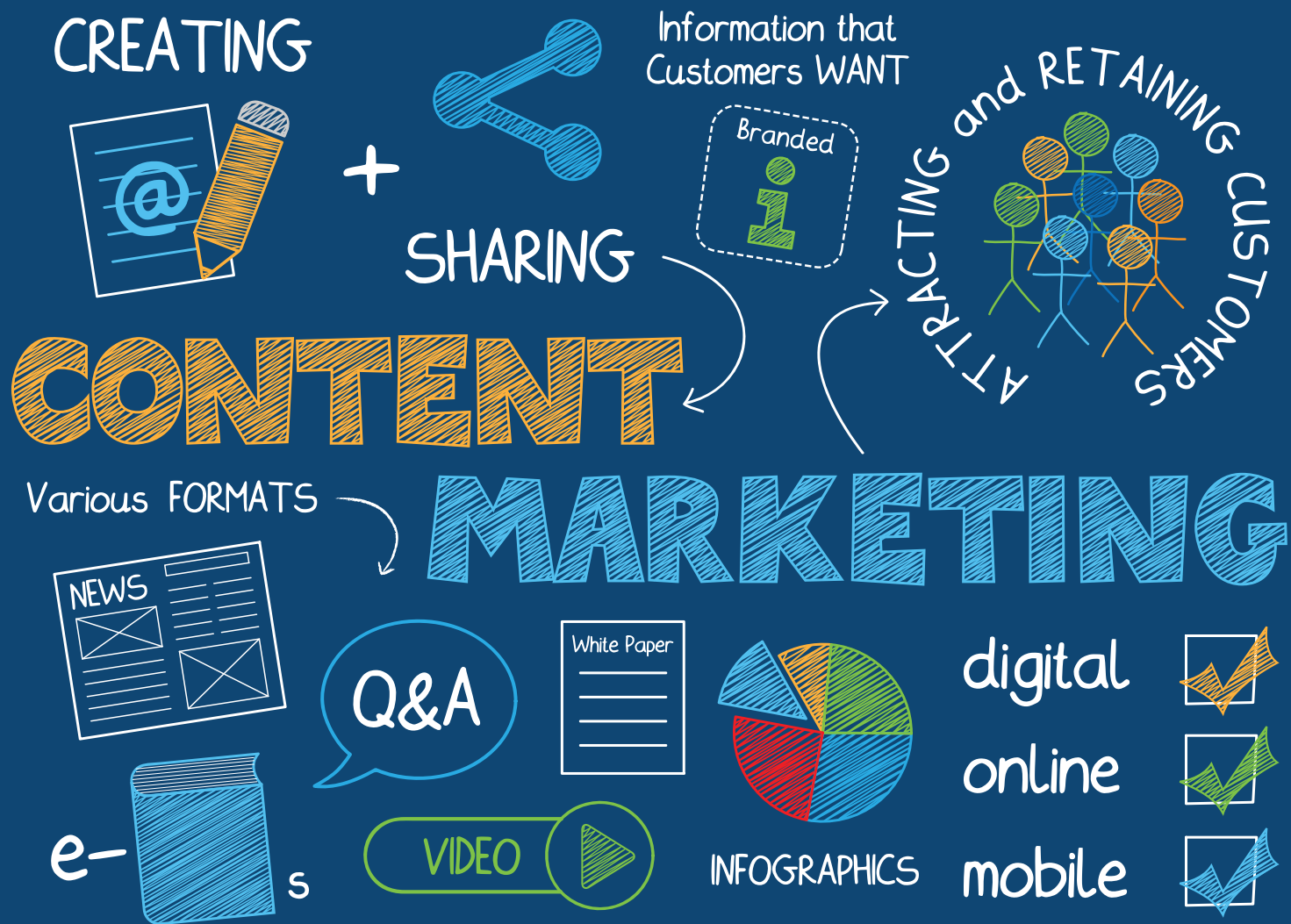
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Content Marketing -- Grow Your Business With Free Advertising

The world of marketing and advertising has seen massive changes over the past decade. Developments in technology and changing consumer habits are two of the main reasons for these changes, and businesses need to understand and react to what's happening. Consumers are less likely to read newspapers and magazines, so print advertising is no longer as effective. Billboards,

mailings and television commercials have to be far more sophisticated to catch the attention of modern consumers.

One of the most effective ways to influence modern customers is by content marketing, which involves communicating and engaging with potential customers on an ongoing basis. It uses a mixture of email, social media, blogs

and other online platforms. The objective is to provide consumers with information and establish your business as being able to offer expertise and solutions to their needs. There are no direct sales messages; content marketing is about influencing over time and allowing customers to come to you when they need you. Here are some tips that will help you to understand how to create content to market

your business.

1) Keep it interesting.

Boring content simply won't engage people, and they won't follow you or read the content you distribute. You may not think it's easy to make something like plumbing supplies interesting, but there are ways you can do it. It's fine to use humor as long as it doesn't dilute your core message. Using personal experiences and telling stories can make mundane subjects more entertaining. Remember that the subject you are communicating about will be of interest if you've got the right audience.

2) Keep it simple.

Content marketing communications should be presented in a conversational style, with use of technical jargon kept to a minimum. You may be writing about technical subjects, but keep the language and tone simple. Articles and blog posts should be structured with headings, paragraphs and spacing to make them easy to read. You'll lose the attention of many potential

readers if they see large blocks of boring text.

3) Vary the format.

Blog posts and articles are just one form of content marketing. Visual content is popular, so look for opportunities to share and distribute photographs to promote your business. Social media sites like Pinterest and Instagram have millions of users and are great for content marketing.

Short video clips showing practical demonstrations can also work well. For example, a plumbing business could share a video on how to unblock a sink.

4) Make it easy to share.

One of the great things about content marketing is that it can go viral. A single article or photograph can reach thousands of people. Adding social sharing buttons to your content means that a reader can pass it on to their friends and followers with a single click. Remember that people will only pass your content on to others if it's of high quality and offers value.

5) Make content mobile-friendly.

It's estimated that over 70 percent of Internet access is now made from mobile devices. Google has recently updated its search engine to reflect this change in user habits. Any content you produce should be mobile-friendly. If it can't be viewed easily on a smartphone, you may be losing out on a large portion of your potential audience.

6) Share opinions and be controversial.

As well as facts and information, consumers like to hear personal opinions and controversial views. Don't set out to offend people, but don't be afraid to say what you feel. For example, a fashion blogger could write about why she dislikes a particular style. You'll win more followers if people feel you are prepared to express your views openly.

Content marketing can give smaller businesses the edge over large corporations. It can be used to build trust and establish yourself as an expert in your field.



Seven Ways to Gain Hundreds of Social Media Shares in Just a Few Days

A strong online presence is important for blogs and businesses alike. One of the best ways to establish yourself in the online world is through the magic of social media. Most of the time, posting on sites like Twitter or Facebook isn't enough to spread word about your blog, business, or website. The best way to generate

interest in what you're doing is through shares on social media.

When one of your followers shares your post, he or she shares your content to his or her own network. This allows you to reach a bigger audience. But how do you get these shares in the first place? You'll

be surprised by how easy it can be. Featured below are seven ways to get hundreds of social media shares in just a few days.

Use eye-catching graphics and illustrations

Facebook, Twitter and other social media platforms allow users to include images in

their links. Make sure that the featured images you use are easy on the eyes and attention-grabbing. You want to capture the interest of your followers, even for just a split second. Don't just let them scroll past your content.

Make more list-based content

If possible, consider making more list-based content. List-based articles are naturally interesting and easy to digest. If your viewers don't have the time, they can just skim through the headlines. This is enough to give them a general idea about what your content is about. Thoughts and points are also easier to organize in this format. Remember that any type of easy-to-digest content is very shareable.

Holding a raffle where the tickets are shares

Raffles, contests, and giveaways are tried-and-tested methods of self-promotion. Holding a raffle or contest where you randomly draw a winning number is easy. You can find plenty of tools and random number generators online. Why not make sharing one of your posts a requirement to join your contest? You can offer things like items, discounts, or cash as prizes. Big companies and websites do this all the time. Every person joining your contest is equal to one share, and each share exposes you to

a bigger audience.

Staggering your posts to reach the most number of people

Remember that it's easy for your posts to get buried in your followers' news feeds. Chances are that you're not the only blog or business that they're following. Repost and tweet your content more than once. Don't just settle with one tweet and hope that you'll get hundreds of views from that tweet alone. Posting your content more than once guarantees that you'll reach the most number of people, this is especially true if you're aiming for an international audience.

Use analytics to discover the peak hours when your audience is most active. Try to post your content at least thrice a day, making sure to put a few hours between each post.

Relate your content to current events and other trends

Make blog posts related to both local and global trends. Find a way to relate whatever is happening in the world with your niche and the content you produce. People are more inclined to share content that their friends and relatives can relate to. Writing about trends also helps a lot with SEO.

Simply asking your fans for a Retweet or share

If you have a loyal enough following, you shouldn't have any problem asking people to share your content. If you have a promo or contest coming up, ask your followers to tell their friends about it. You can offer them incentives like a discount on their next purchase. You can also offer them something simpler and more sincere, like a mention on Twitter or a personal thank you message.

Asking people who create similar content to yours for a Retweet or share

Practice a bit of generosity once in a while. Like and follow people who create similar content to yours. Occasionally share some of their posts and promotions. When it's your turn to promote something, don't be embarrassed to reach out to ask for a share or Retweet. Because you share the same niche, their followers are more likely to check out your content, and vice versa.

At the end of the day, it doesn't matter which method you use. Just remember that social media is composed of networks upon networks of people. Whenever you post something, make sure that it's easy to digest and more importantly, easy to share. At the same time, don't be afraid to personally ask people to share your content.



The Benefits of Frequent Press Releases for Online Marketing

Press releases are a great way to promote your business online. As a part of content marketing, they provide information about your company for prospects and customers. Your press releases remain live for several months or even for years, giving your business continued visibility. Regular press releases chronicle your business activities while providing benefits beyond longevity.

Stand Out From Your Competition

Few businesses use press releases regularly. Most only use them to report major events such as a merger, new product launch, or record growth period. However, you can create press releases about small events as well, such as a website redesign, a new employee hire, or a recent blog post. Sending out regular press releases shows your prospects that you're serious about sharing important and interesting information about your business and creates transparency.

Consistent Messages

Most companies have a core message or mission statement to describe what they stand for and what they want to accomplish in the marketplace. A good press release incorporates this core message. By consistently using the same message in all content, a company can establish itself as an industry leader, building credibility and trust, and helping to create and maintain long-term relationships with consumers.

Save Money

Press releases are a cost-effective marketing method with a high return on investment. Your only costs are for writing and distribution, which is typically a few hundred dollars. If the media picks up your story in newspapers, journals or blogs, it can reach even more targeted consumers, making that few hundred dollars a worthwhile expense.

Improved Traffic

Online press releases bring traffic to your company website. If you use basic search engine optimization techniques, such as keywords, meta titles and meta descriptions, you have a better chance of the press release ranking high on the search engines. A higher rank means more people will find your company when they search for your keywords. Another potential benefit is your website ranking higher because of the backlinks from news outlets that pick up your story.

The press release format includes a section for a short description of your company. It's a smart idea to put your website address in that description, creating a link to bring more traffic to your website.

Different Formats

Press releases are no longer just text messages with a photograph. Today, there are video press releases as well. You can use the same story for both the text and video release and reach a wider audience.

A press release is still one of best forms of content marketing. Any event in your company can be made newsworthy and topical. As long as the information is relevant to your target audience, frequent press releases provide an effective way to market your company.

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5 Reasons To Use Responsive Web Design

Once upon a recent time, people used desktop or laptop computers to browse the Internet and make purchases. It was groundbreaking technology that allowed shoppers to avoid the crowds and the cold when Christmas shopping. Online purchases increased rapidly and soon millions were shopping for goods and services online.

That was yesterday, and technology continues to develop rapidly. Your website must respond to all mobile devices today, or you risk losing

out on sales to the smartphone and tablet shoppers.

The “responsive method” of coding a website allows it to provide an optimal viewing experience for the consumer. Regardless of the device used (computer, laptop, smartphone or tablet), the viewer will enjoy easy reading and navigation without the inconvenience of hunting and scrolling just to finish a sentence. One website can serve all devices, which saves time and money for the business owner.

Flexibility

The fluid action of responsive web design sites allows all the content to move freely on all screens of all devices. Similar to the way a poured liquid fills its container, the images and grids on the responsive site fill the allotted screen space with content.

Smooth User Experience

The ability to work across devices with the same quality and usability allows consumers,

students, professionals and business executives to access the content they need from any device, in any location and at any time of day or night. Responsive web design caters to your audience and conveniently adapts to their device and schedule.

Economical

Responsive web design opens the door and allows every device into your business website. Consumers will not experience navigational difficulties and will have the identical customer experience whether they access your site from a smartphone or a computer.

Consistency is critical when pleasing customers and responsive web design provides the consumer with a consistent experience.

Google Prefers It

Google prefers to have crawling, indexing and organizing website content to be as simple as possible. Google states, "Responsive web design is the industry's best practice."

When you have one site accessible to all devices, Google only has to crawl one site for your business. The content is the same no matter what device accesses it, and that gives the best experience to the consumer.

Convenience

If you maintain one website for computer access and another for mobile devices, it involves two SEO campaigns. It also requires twice as much work and time to keep everything up to date on both sites. If one of your clients has been regularly accessing your mobile site and then tries to access it on his or her home computer, they will be disappointed at the navigational difficulties they will experience.

It would be to the business owner's advantage to utilize responsive web design and handle the needs of all consumers from one web location.

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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INSTAGRAM

STATS & TIPS

**75
Million**
Daily Users

90%
of Users are Under
the Age of 35

**300
Million**
Monthly Active Users

**70
Million**
Instagram Photos
Posted Daily

49%
of Users that Log In
at least Once a Day

50%
of Instagram
Comments Contain
an Emoji

**Only
9%**
of Small Businesses
Use Instagram

**77
Million**
Instagram Users
in U.S.

Hold A Fun Contest

Create a custom hashtag
and encourage others to
post entries.

Embed In Your Website

Add an Instagram Feed into
your website - show off your
customer engagement.

Business, Not Personal

Ensure you set up and are
using a business page,
not a personal one.

Incentivize Followers

Provide exclusive savings
and promotions to your
Instagram followers.

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Show off your team
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into your your culture.

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Provide photos showing
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