**The 4 Essential Marketing Tips for Small Business Owners**

Owning a small business is one of the most rewarding things you can ever do. Building your own company from the ground up, being your own boss, creating something new and exciting...there's nothing quite like it.

Owning your own small business can also be one of the most difficult things that you will ever do.

Small businesses come with a myriad of challenges, all unique and puzzling. After awhile you get used to certain challenges but there are always new ones that creep up and solving them can be both difficult and rewarding.

One of the biggest challenges for budding small businesses is marketing.

Marketing can make or break your company at the beginning and a lot of continuous marketing can lead to your business falling by the wayside and becoming consumed by your competitors.

You must stay ahead of the game to succeed and you must always be doing different things to attract new customers.

You should be putting aside a percentage of your earnings to reinvest in your marketing and you should never let these efforts slip. Remember...your business falls apart if people forget about you.

Some marketing can be done on a small budget, while other forms of marketing may take some financial planning. Either way, if the marketing is done correctly, the rewards are *well* worth the costs.

In this report, I am going to go over four marketing tips that will put you ahead of the game and will keep people walking in the doors or clicking online to get to your website. You'll learn some amazing things that you didn't know and you'll reinforce some things that you may already be utilizing.

Get ready, because this may just be a game changer!

Before you we get into it, I just wanted to give you a quick reminder to read the newsletter. You'll get even MORE fantastic tips to make your small business thrive!

**1. Social Media Is King**

In today's day and age, a company without a social media presence may just be dead in the water.

Our modern culture is all about connection and being available. If you are unable to be reached, your company may fall by the wayside. I can guarantee you that your competitors have gone out of *their* way to make themselves available!

One of the best parts of social media marketing is that it can be one of the cheapest ways to advertise and interact with your customers. Most platforms have a built in advertising tool which can be very affordable to use to drive traffic and, of course, there's always the old-fashioned way...being social.

I'm going to walk you through some of the top forms of social media being used today and I'm going to give you a solid idea of how to use them for *your* business. If you don't have any of these social media accounts set up, now is the time to do so!

***Twitter***

Twitter is an amazing tool for getting information out there fast!

Tweets are built to be concise and to relay quick information, quips, humor and announcements. Because of the short-form format, Twitter can be ideal for announcing sales, events and anything else that crops up throughout the day.

You can also use it to show your love for customers, other businesses and anyone else that you want to give a shout-out to.

One of the best things about Twitter is that everyone, businesses and people alike, are on the same footing. There are no specific pages for businesses—they are regular users like everyone else.

This means that your business can become part of the conversation by hashtagging, becoming involved in conversation and direct messaging people.

It also allows you to add people, although you may be capped at a certain limit if you don't have a certain amount of followers.

You can drive traffic to your Twitter both in store and online. You can also utilize other forms of media, like your website or Facebook, to drive traffic to your Twitter.

Once again, one of the best ways to drive traffic is to simply get involved.

Search for hashtags in your specfic niche and jump in on the conversation. Even if you have a brick and mortar business, you may be able to attract customers that want to check out your shop when they visit your town or you may find people who live in your town who are already involved in the conversation.

Word can also spread through retweets, meaning that even if the particular user or users that you connect with aren't in your area, some of their followers may be and the act of retweeting may help you to reach those potential customers.

Keep in mind, though, that Twitter isn't all about spamming people. If you are sending too many spammy direct messages, you may be blocked from sending messages for a little while.

Also, no one wants to follow an account that does nothing but advertise. You may gain followers, but it's likely that they will also be accounts that only want to constantly advertise.

I want you to keep in mind (and this isn't only for Twitter) that social media is *social*. You must be active and you must create engaging content to hold your followers' attention.

Does this mean that you can't advertise? No. You can. But you don't want your sole focus to be advertising.

As you build a following, people will organically want to know more about your business, your product and/or your services. They will start paying attention to your business oriented posts and this will transition to sales.

Remember, if they are following you, they enjoy something in the realm of what it is that you are trying to sell. If you are a comic book store and your followers are comic book nerds, they'll jump at a sale you are having in store for their favorite comics.

So, what did we gather from Twitter advertising?

* Interact
* Mix up the content
* Reach out
* Search for conversations to join in
* Hashtag
* Don't spam

Twitter also has a paid advertising tool. Feel free to use this and for more tips on how to utilize paid advertising, check out the newsletter!

***Facebook***

At this point, if you don't have a Facebook, you are in the stone ages.

While the younger generation has begun to stray away from Facebook, even they have an account. More importantly, though, is most of the current paying customers out there are in the age range that they use Facebook.

Unless you are selling to young teenagers, Facebook is a safe platform to get the message out there and to reach potential influencers through shares.

Now, Facebook differs from Twitter in a few important wants.

First, Facebook is a long-form platform. This means that your posts can be a whole lot longer. This doesn't mean that they *should* be too much longer, but Facebook allows you to elaborate on an idea with more than 140 characters.

Facebook also has a stronger focus on video and photo shares. Once again, you can do this on Twitter, but a lot of what is being shared on Twitter is retweeted and isn't original content (as far as visual media goes).

Facebook allows for more of a focus on sharing content related directly to your business, like your location, staff and events that you are holding or have held.

Facebook also differs in that your contact is more limited to those who already "like" your page. Some people have tried to work around this by creating personal pages for their company, but if you are caught, you can get banned. That's no good.

Because your customers have to go out of their way to "like" your page, keeping these "likes" can become paramount. Each "like" counts, because they can be pretty difficult to gain.

So, why use Facebook at all, then?

Well, because users are more selective, you have a MUCH better chance of your followers seeing your content than on Twitter.

On Twitter there is so much noise that it's hard for people to focus on anything. They may be following hundreds or thousands of pages, meaning that your tweet can get easily buried in the chatter.

Facebook, on the other hand, gives you a better chance of getting the exposure that you want from the people you want to reach.

Facebook also has a **great** ad tool that I find more effective than Twitter's. For a few dollars, you can get a LOT of exposure.

So, what do we know about Facebook?

* Better for long-form posts
* More likely for your posts to be seen
* Need people to "Like" your page to reach them
* Good ad program
* Still one of the most popular social media platforms
* Better chance of reaching *paying* consumers

If you don't have a Facebook, you are probably a dinosaur. Get one TODAY.

***Instagram***

Instagram is an interesting social media platform, because unlike Twitter or Facebook, the focus is moved away from the written word and is instead placed on the visual.

People like to scroll through Instagram in a different way, where they are casually glancing until they find something they like and look at it for a moment, then possible click the like icon. If they like your overall account, they'll follow you on Instagram!

Because of this, your Instagram content has to be on point and you have to consider if you have the type of business that would benefit from Instagram.

Let's look at two separate examples.

Let's say you have a comic book store. You are always getting new comics in, you have costume contests and you host small conventions. You are a **perfect** candidate for Instagram!

You can upload photos of the new comics you got in, photos of people dressed up like superheroes and pictures of people getting their autograph signed by someone in the business. Really, the possibilities are endless, but these are a few ideas.

On the other hand, let's say that you own a paper company. While you may have an interesting staff and you may find what you do fascinating, your customer base probably won't be interested to see photo updates about what's going on around the office.

Instagram can be tricky to use for business, but if you have a business that translate well to photography, Instagram may be for you!

So, what do we know about Instagram?

* Photo based
* Users can follow you
* content must be visually interesting

***Youtube***

Youtube is an awesome way to get the word out there about your business. Whether you want to simply run Google Ads or you want to create a web-series to promote your business, Youtube can draw attention to your company in a fun and interesting way.

First, I want to look at Youtube strictly from an ad based perspective.

Youtube allows you to upload your videos for free and makes it so you can easily embed them just about anywhere. Whether you have one video (like a commercial) or quite a few, you can consistently upload videos with ease.

Because of Google Adwords, you can also run your Youtube video as an ad. This means that you can reach an audience of hundreds of thousands easily and efficiently.

Moving beyond the strictly business aspect, Youtube is a ton of fun and can really give people a sense of what your company is all about.

You can shoot video of events you host, introductions to your staff, interviews and even web shorts that help to establish the tone of your business and drive viewership.

Youtube can easily help you to establish yourself as an expert in your field by allowing users to listen to and view your business in action and allow the users to hear the heads of your business discussing topics that are pertinent to your specific trade.

Let's say you own a pizza place.

You can shoot videos of the lively atmosphere in your restaurant on a busy night, your staff horsing around and even a web series on cooking Italian food! This will not only drive traffic to your restaurant, but it will establish you as an expert. When they come to your restaurant, they know there will be a chef working there that knows what he is doing.

So, what do we know about Youtube?

* You can easily run ads
* You can establish yourself as an expert
* You can grow your exposure
* You can have fun
* You can give a visual representation of your brand

***Social Media is a necessity***

In this day and age, you are a fossil if you aren't running a social media campaign. Make sure that you aren't being left in the dust by your competitors. Start a social media campaign today and do your research on what specific mediums will work best for your company.

**2. Sponsoring Events**

Once you start to become more successful and you have some money to throw around, you may want to consider sponsoring local events.

Sponsoring events allows you to not only get yourself out there, but also show your support for your community. People will come to see you as a staple in the community and will know that when something cool is happening, you'll be there!

There are quite a few types of events that you can sponsor, but for this report I would like to touch base on two...sporting events and local festivals.

***Sporting Events***

The awesome thing about sporting events is that they allow for a huge reach, they show that you support your local teams and they come in all shapes and sizes.

If you have a lower budget, you can sponsor your local Pee-Wee baseball team or your town's high school football team. if you have a reasonable size budget, you can sponsor the local college. If you have a large budget, you can sponsor your local national team!

People love sports and they love people who love sports. By sponsoring these events, you establish that your local business supports the local team and is a fan of whatever sport you are sponsoring.

It may seem like a small connection to make, but trust me, people will remember your business the next time they choose to go out to eat, buy a printer or have their computer fixed.

***Local Festivals***

Local festivals give you an opportunity to not only put up your banner, but also interact with your customers.

Most local festivals allow businesses to pay for a spot to set up a booth or a food stand. This gives you exposure to *thousands* of people who are walking by in a face-to-face fashion that they may not have otherwise had with you.

Let's say you own a local hand-crafted jewelry store. Your local folk music festival may bring in a demographic of people who like hand-crafted goods and even if you don't sell to some people immediately, they may keep your brand in mind when they are in the market for hand-crafted jewelry.

If you are a restaurant, local festivals should be a must!

Many people get their first exposure to some of their favorite restaurants at festivals. There may be a ton of different options, but if you make an impact, they will seek you out next time they want to grab some good food.

Even if you don't have a food truck, you can brings some grills, set up a stand and start slinging some of your stables for the public to get a taste.

***Sponsoring local events will allow you to establish yourself as part of the community***

Especially in today's day and age, people want to shop local. They are looking for local shops that are run by *real* people, like their neighbors or their buddies. They want to feel close to the source of where they get their food, products and services.

If you see an opportunity to sponsor a local event, don't miss out on it! It could be a total game-changer.

**3. Word of Mouth**

One of the oldest and most tried and true methods of marketing is word of mouth.

Getting people excited about your brand and services/products will help you to attract customers in a more reliable way than anything else.

Sure, you'll probably have a wider reach with paid advertising, but word of mouth allows for a more personal advertising experience. People are more willing to trust the opinion of their friend, family member or colleague than a commercial they see on TV.

Even meeting with someone who own, runs or works at a local establishment may encourage or dissuade them from patronizing that business. Think about it...how many times have you met someone who runs a local business and liked them so much that you wanted to support them? How about disliked them so much that you told everyone how rude they are?

Word of mouth can make or break your business, especially in this day and age with online review sites like Yelp.

That's why I want to go over a couple of ways that you can get word of mouth working in your favor...

***Encouraging a conversation***

One of the easiest ways to get the word at is to ask people to spread it.

I know it sounds too simple to work, but you'd be surprised by the effectiveness of the power of suggestion.

I've seen businesses succeed in large part by the owner asking their patrons to tell their friends about their experience. This may be with something as simple as a stand with a reminder to spread the word or just a vocal reminder accompanied with a "thank you."

Let's say you own a restaurant. Do you know how powerful it is to come out as the owner, ask how the service and food was and then ask your patrons to spread the word around?

They may have been thinking about how much they loved the food and want to come back, but now they are also thinking about their friends who would love the food and how much they want to tell them about the awesome experience they had.

Don't leave it up to chance. Take the proactive step and ask people to spread the word!

***Partnering with other businesses***

I'm sure you've heard the expression "if you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours." This is true for business as well.

Working in tandem with other local business works in a variety of ways.

First, you establish yourself as part of a community. When they see local businesses working together, they want to support the cause as well and help out local businesses.

Second, you get a nice flow of traffic from a business that may be outside of your field or even a potential competitor. Instead of being at each other's throat you have bartered a truce and are now working together.

Finally, you build loyalty from that business' owners, employees and customers. Because of the partnership, they will be more likely to spread the word about your business to their friends and family.

***The best part is...***

Word of mouth is free.

This is something you can start doing *today* to grow your business. Don't stay silent. Spread the word!

**4. Reward Programs**

Do you have a local coffee shop or restaurant that you go to that has a reward program? Really think, does this encourage you to return?

You may not think about it consciously, but as those punch cards grow in punches and you get closer to the reward, you tend to go more. You really want that free burger or cup of coffee!

Reward programs are easy to start and cheap. All you may need is a punch card and you're in business!

Reward programs are a good way to thank repeat customers and encourage new customers to return. The best part is the reward can be anything you want! It can be a small discount or a free meal. Whatever you are comfortable giving out.

We went over some amazing marketing tips today. I know these four tips work because I have used them before and I've amassed great success using them!

Remember, without some form of advertising, your business is dead in the water. We all have started going to our favorite places because we heard about them from somewhere.

Sure, you may walk by a place and decide to check it out, but this may be less likely than you going to the place that your friends rave about. Even if you *do* decide to pop in, you may be greeted with a friendly owner who gives you a punch stamp, asks you to spread the word and recommends another local business for you to check out.

Advertising is how small businesses grow. Make sure your marketing campaign is on point and forefront in your mind to see your business succeed!

Thanks for reading this report. For more tips on running a small business, make sure to check out the newsletter!