

Ultimate Quick Guide to Local **Small Business Marketing**





A Quick Guide to Local Small Business Marketing

This guide is designed to provide the small local business owner with a basic understanding of what the current local business marketing environment looks like. Packed with essential knowledge and insider tips, this guide cuts through the clutter of the internet to deliver practical advice on digital trends, traditional tactics, and local strategies. Get ready to boost your online presence, engage customers, and drive your business forward. Your journey to Local Small Business marketing mastery starts here!

If you still have questions after reading through this guide or want to market at the next level, feel free to reach out to ClickShine.com for a complimentary discussion on any local marketing topic you care to discuss.

1. Know Yourself: What is Your Business Type?

One of the first steps in crafting an effective marketing strategy for your small business is to understand your business type. In essence, this means recognizing whether your business falls into the category of a Demand Business, an Outreach Business, or a Combination of both.

Demand Business (e.g., Emergency Plumbing): Demand businesses are those where customers seek your services urgently, often in times of crisis. For instance, an emergency plumbing service is a classic example. In such cases, customers are actively looking for you when they need your services. Your marketing efforts should focus on being easily discoverable and trustworthy when these urgent needs arise.

Outreach Business (e.g., Retail): Outreach businesses, like retail stores, proactively reach out to potential customers. Your task is to grab their attention and engage them. Outreach campaigns need to be compelling, straightforward, and appealing, as you're essentially convincing customers to choose you over competitors.

Combination Business (e.g., Food, Gym, etc.): Some businesses, like restaurants or gyms, fall into a combination category, where customers may either search for you or you reach out to them through marketing efforts. It's vital to balance your approach by catering to both scenarios effectively.

2. Websites and Apps: Making Every Second Count

In today's digital landscape, simplicity reigns supreme. Gone are the days of sprawling websites; instead, think short, impactful, and visually engaging. Your online presence should be a narrative told in just a few words and eye-catching graphics.

With mobile devices driving 55% of web traffic, optimizing for mobile is non-negotiable. Your site or app should be effortlessly navigable, delivering a seamless user experience.

Most importantly, every page should have a clear and compelling call to action. Whether it's 'Shop Now,' 'Get Started,' or 'Contact Us,' make it impossible for your visitors to miss. In the age of fleeting attention spans, each second on your site should be purposeful, guiding visitors towards their next action.

If you decide you need an App, make sure it is adding value to a customer's experience. Apps are no longer needed to seem relative; they are now a tool that must do a job.

3. Local Listings: Navigating the Digital Map

In the digital age, local listings are your business's main address source. Google My Business and Bing Local are essential tools to put your venture on the map. Ensuring that your business information is complete and accurate in search engines is paramount.

While there are hundreds of online directories, focusing on those that matter most is key. Google, Bing, Yahoo and Duck Duck Go account for nearly the entire search market. Google by far is still the king. Accuracy is the name of the game, as inconsistent information can deter potential customers and effect your search score and results. By using Google My Business you are insured of showing up on local searches and maps without having to pay a thing. In order to verify your business, you may need to get a digital code through email, or a postcard sent to your address.

For eligible businesses, **Google Guaranteed** is a preferred lead generator provided by Google. It not only boosts visibility but also instills trust. To see if your business qualifies and can pass a background check, consult Google's list of eligible business types by Googling Google Guaranteed Business Types. This service is great for a small business because you only pay for solid leads and can reject poor leads (you don't pay) if the lead was not correct on your lead was out of your service territory. Having a stamp of approval can drive customers right to your doorstep.

Reviews are also a key indicator for potential clients. Today everyone has positive reviews so make sure that you have as many positive reviews as you can collect and keep negative reviews to a minimum. On google you can contact people who left you a negative review and see if they will take it down. Specific review sites like Yelp can be positive but generally are ineffective for advertising as people go to review sites for an unbiased opinion.

4. What is SEO? Is it Dead?

SEO or Search Engine Optimization is the how the internet knows and decides where and when to list your website/business on the internet (We are really talking about Google). Your page is optimized if it well constructed, relevant, clear, fast, has strong keywords associated in the content, is linked to other sites, and has other sites linked to you and many other criteria, some of which only Google knows (they like to keep their algorithm a secret). Companies like SEO because it is free. Google charges nothing to be listed in its “Organic Search”. SEO used to be important for all companies but over time the big companies bullied their way into dominating all of the free listings. So the question of whether SEO (Search Engine Optimization) is dead often arises, particularly for businesses in fierce competition with lead generators like Angie's List or large chains franchises such as UPS Stores, Home Depot and Verizon. These giants often dominate their organic search space, making it appear futile for smaller businesses to invest heavily in content creation unless they occupy a niche market. Having said that though, if you do have a unique business or product offering then the key to winning organic search is to create lots of content for your website and splash it with your own unique keywords.

5. Search Engine Marketing and Ads: Navigating the Digital Marketplace

Search Engine Marketing (SEM), Pay-Per-Click (PPC) and Pay-Per-Impression (PPI) advertising can be lucrative avenues for small businesses, but they demand expertise and careful consideration of costs. Some industries witness expensive clicks, necessitating a cautious approach to ensure a positive Return on Investment (ROI). Many businesses have been sorely surprised by large bills from Google without sales to justify that cost.

SEM and PPC revolve around keywords, geography, and budget allocation. By strategically selecting keywords relevant to your business, targeting specific geographic regions, and setting a realistic bid budget, you can maximize the impact of your ad

campaigns. Regular monitoring and adjustment of the daily spend of your campaigns are crucial to optimize spending and ensure that every dollar spent brings a return. With the right strategy, SEM and PPC can be powerful tools for driving targeted traffic and conversions. This is a key marketing strategy for Demand Business's where customers are searching for a specific service and an engaging headline can make a difference. Demand Business's often have high a cost per click rate so make sure you have analytics over time to justify the cost.

PPI or Pay-Per-Impression is having your Ad show on many different search engines and websites. You pay every time your ad is shown or impressed onto a page. Some companies use Cookies which enable ads to follow internet users and display ads based on a potential customers search habits. This marketing is great for businesses looking to convince or remind a customer to buy a service or product through repetition. Recent studies say that a user must see an ad 7 to 8 times before it sinks in.

6. Social Media Advertising: The Power of Precision

Harnessing the potential of platforms like YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and TikTok involves a two-pronged approach: general posting and targeted ads. While organic posts maintain connections with your audience and friends, paid ads offer precision targeting with another population of potential customers.

Social media ads can be incredibly granular, reaching your ideal demographics with precision. However, to impact brand awareness and conversions, consistency and frequency are essential. Regular, strategic ad campaigns keep your business out front and increase the likelihood of engagement and conversions.

By balancing organic content with well-crafted, targeted ads, you can harness the full potential of social media platforms to expand your reach, engage your audience, and drive your small business forward. This marketing is best for Outreach and Combination Marketing.

7. Mail and Publications: Still Alive and Kicking

Despite the rise of digital marketing, traditional methods like direct mail and local publications continue to have their place. High-volume local mailers and magazines can be exceptionally effective when targeting specific demographics. They offer a tangible presence that digital can't replicate.

Moreover, these physical mediums often have staying power. Your brochure or advertisement can linger on a kitchen table or in a waiting room for days or even weeks, serving as a constant reminder of your business. For some audiences, this tangible connection remains valuable and can be saved by the reader.

Integrating both digital and traditional methods into your marketing strategy can help you reach a broader spectrum of potential customers and capitalize on the strengths of each medium.

8. Signage: The Art of Visibility and Impact

Effective signage is a critical component of business visibility. The key lies in readability and strategic placement. A common mistake is overcrowding signs with text and using color combinations that hinder legibility. The goal is to create signs that 'pop' and are easily decipherable from a distance. With the evolution of signage technology, options now range from digital displays to traditional flags, vinyl banners, and foam core boards. Prioritizing durability, readability, and flexibility ensures that your sign not only captures attention but also withstands environmental factors. Remember, a sign is not just a marker; it's a silent yet powerful communicator of your brand.

9. Email, Telemarketing, and Appointment Setting: Diverse Channels for Effective Outreach

Email marketing stands as the most cost-effective way to reach a vast audience. However, its efficacy can be hampered by spam filters and stringent regulations on mailing lists. On the other hand, telemarketing remains a potent tool, particularly for re-engaging existing customers and introducing new products or services. It fosters a more personal connection with clients. Appointment setting, employed chiefly in high-volume sales environments, is crucial for businesses that can withstand significant rejection. It involves dedicated personnel reaching out proactively to set meetings, thereby paving the way for more in-depth sales interactions. Each of these channels plays a unique role in a comprehensive marketing strategy.

10. Budget Strategy, Automated Tools, and Measuring Success: Investing Wisely in Marketing

In marketing, budgeting is not merely an expense but an investment in your business's growth. Typically, allocating 5 to 10% of your revenue towards marketing is advisable. Remember, the ability to trace customer acquisition back to specific campaigns is vital. This tracking ensures that every dollar spent is accountable, allowing for the fine-tuning of strategies based on real data. Modern marketing tools, such as HubSpot and Marketo, offer built-in reporting features and automation capabilities. These tools can handle the 'heavy lifting', efficiently managing campaigns and providing insightful analytics. They are invaluable in measuring success and optimizing your marketing investment for maximum impact.

11. Guerilla Marketing

Sometimes the best way to get your business out there is by simply getting out there yourself and knocking on doors and papering the town. Face to face engagement is still the most effective way to make a connection. Also engage with Business trade groups, the local chamber of commerce and sponsor local organizations to embed yourself in the town. In order to gain local business you should market yourself as a peer who is also trying to thrive against big chains and franchises.

Wrap Up

Every business is unique so every marketing plan should be tailored to maximize the effectiveness of those marketing dollars. The key is generally to take a mid-term approach and try to utilize as many channels as possible. Once you form your strategy, then taking a consistent approach over a sustained period is key. Identifying which channels are performing and which are not will enable you to move spend in the right direction. As always if you have any questions on marketing, feel free to contact ClickShine.com who charges nothing for a conversation with one of our small business marketing experts. Best of Luck! Go Local!