

Clicks

The Online Marketing Guide for Small Business

WHAT ARE THE MOST IMPORTANT
SEO METRICS
TO TRACK?

WHY YOUR
SOCIAL MEDIA
GAME IS FALLING SHORT



INCREASE YOUR WEBSITE
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Understanding the importance of SEO is one thing and knowing what to do with your SEO metrics is another. With so many metrics to choose from, how do you know where to put your focus?

Which metrics can help you the most? It's a lot to learn everything there is to know about SEO. But here are the metrics that you really should be tracking, even if you don't have time for anything else.

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Local businesses have special marketing challenges. Namely, it's your job as a business owner to make sure that the people who are most likely to patronize your business – the people

who live in your service area – know what you have to offer and where to find you. One way to accomplish that goal is to use geolocation marketing. Here's what you need to know.

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Small business owners understand that without website traffic, you can't grow or even sustain your business. But traffic is one part of the equation. You also need to focus on conversion.

You might be able to attract thousands of visitors a month – but if none of those people are buying from you, what's the point? With that in mind, here are some of the most useful tools I know to help you boost your conversion rate and turn your traffic into revenue.

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Is your marketing budget tiny – or non-existent? It's a common problem with local businesses who put everything they make into inventory and payroll. If you don't have much to spend on

marketing, you might wonder how you can ever grow your business. The good news is that there are plenty of things you can do to attract new customers without spending a dime. We've compiled 10 of our favorite free marketing ideas for you to try.

Welcome To Clicks Magazine

Thanks for checking out our 12th issue of Clicks, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

Charles & Linda
Musselwhite Marketing

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Musselwhite Marketing is the leading small business marketing service in the North San Diego area for over 10 years. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So, we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

[For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of Clicks and feel free to reach out to us anytime.](#)



What Are the Most Important SEO METRICS to Track?

SEO matters. You don't need me to tell you that – although I certainly have told you all about it!

Understanding the importance of SEO is one thing and knowing what to do with your SEO metrics is another. With so many metrics to choose from, how do you know where to put your focus?

Which metrics can help you the most?

That's where I come in. It's a lot to ask any small business owner to learn everything there is to know about SEO. It's a complex topic. But here are the SEO metrics that you really should be tracking, even if you don't have time for anything else.



ORGANIC TRAFFIC

The traffic your website generates is the life's blood of your business online. If your site doesn't attract new visitors, it's a sure sign that your SEO isn't doing what it should.

Organic traffic is all the traffic you don't pay for – in other words, it's traffic you get because someone searched for a keyword on Google and then clicked on your link. Traffic from paid ads is not organic.

You need to track organic traffic using [Google Analytics](#) because it's a good barometer of your SEO in general. If you get little or no organic traffic, it means your site needs work. If your organic traffic is high, your SEO is doing something for you.



YOUR TARGET KEYWORDS

What are the keywords you want people to use to find you? Tracking their search volume and variations on them can help you target them on your website.

A tool such as [Keywords Everywhere](#) is a good place to start. You should look at the monthly search volume and dig into the search results looking for opportunities to rank for them.

You may be able to identify opportunities that other websites have missed.

THE KEYWORDS YOU ALREADY RANK FOR

How are people finding your website now? Whether you meant to target them or not, there are keywords that earn your website a first-page spot on Google. Knowing what they

are is essential if you want to fine-tune your SEO.

The best tool for the job is [Google Search Console](#). I recommend using your existing

rankings to capitalize on opportunities at the same time you think about how you can use the traffic you have to get the traffic you want.



BACKLINKS

Backlinks are still a huge factor in SEO. A site that has an array of high-quality backlinks is always going to rank higher on Google than a site with few or low-quality backlinks.

There are two aspects to tracking your backlinks. The first is tracking your own, which you can do using [Google Search Console](#). Seeing what you have can help you identify the areas where you're falling short.

The second aspect is tracking your competitors'

backlinks. There are a lot of potential backlinks out there and I'm willing to get you haven't capitalized on all of them. Using a backlink evaluation tool, such as the [SEMRush Backlink Checker](#) or [Moz](#) can help you spy on your competitors' backlinks.

If you see an authority backlink that you'd like for your own site, you can work on getting it. Some of the best methods include writing a guest blog post or simply contacting the site directly to ask if they'd be willing to link to your site.





SOCIAL MEDIA TRAFFIC

Google says social media posts (and other metrics, including Likes, Follows and Shares) don't impact your [Google rank](#) directly.

"Directly" is the key word because there is evidence that social media activity does impact a website's rank in some way. There's a reason that when you search for a big company, their social pages show up at the top of Google's SERP.

The good news is that you can track your social traffic using [Google Analytics](#), which is free. Pay special attention to the posts and activity that's leading people back to your website. You can use that information to do a better job of targeting your social media posts – and to create the kind of content that people will respond to on social media.



VOICE SEARCH RANKINGS

Alexa, are people finding your website through voice search?

If you're not asking that question, you should be. Voice search is taking over the world of search. As of 2020, 49% of all searches are voice searches. Mobile phones are still the source of most voice searches, but virtual assistants Alexa, Cortana and Siri aren't far behind.

You can get your Alexa search rank on [Alexa.com](https://www.alexa.com). Apple doesn't release search rankings for Siri, but you should make sure that your business is listed on Apple Maps if you want to rank on Siri, and Google Maps is a must for Google voice search.

One final note about voice search. Unlike regular Google rankings, voice search provides a single answer to a single question. That means your best bet is to identify questions that the people in your target audience are likely to ask and then optimize your content for them.



PAGE SPEED

Nobody likes a slow website and research shows that if your site takes more than a few seconds to load, people will navigate away. That makes tracking your page speed a no-brainer.

This is an easy metric to track using Page Speed Insights by Google. If your page is slow, you'll need to address it immediately.

ORGANIC CONVERSIONS

I saved the best for last. Your organic conversion rate is a measurement of how well your organic search rank is converting casual searchers to subscribers or (best of all) paying customers.

Here again, you can use Google Analytics – which is free – to track your conversions. You might get a ton of organic traffic, but if it's not helping you build your list, attract leads, and

make sales, then it's not doing you any good.

Most of these metrics are free to track. You don't need fancy tools, nor do you need to be an SEO expert. With a bit of research and perseverance, you can use your metrics to help you do a better job of optimizing your site – and growing your business.



WHY YOUR **SOCIAL MEDIA** GAME IS FALLING SHORT

By now, most small business owners know they need to be active on social media regardless of your niche or industry. Your customers expect to find you there. So... finding customers on social media is easy-peasy right?

I wish it was that simple, but a lot of small business social media pages are missing the mark. They're not getting the engagement – or the leads – they need and they're not sure why.

Fortunately, the answer is pretty simple, you're making mistakes and they're probably the same ones that other small businesses are making.

What should you do? Well... Identify the mistakes and stop making them! Here are the most common social media mistakes and what you can do to fix them.




BEING INCONSISTENT WITH YOUR ACCOUNT

When people follow brands on social media, they want to know what kind of content they'll be getting. If you look at big brands, you'll notice that they have a clear rubric they use to determine what they post. For example, beauty company Dove focuses on empowering content that celebrates women of every age and body type.

You'll also need to think about your content format. With Instagram, it's easy – all content there is visual. However, you could still think about creating consistency by participating in community hashtags like #ThrowbackThursday, or by posting a new video every Monday.

On Facebook, you have a lot of leeway when it comes to content format. You can share graphics, photographs, videos, and written content. A good way to create consistency is by posting similar content on the same day every week: videos on Monday, infographics on Tuesday, blog posts on Wednesday, and so on.

Consistency also applies to your posting frequency. I recommend creating a social media schedule and setting up your content ahead of time. That way, you can be sure your content will go out even if you're having a busy day or stuck in a meeting.



“Keep in mind that when you respond to a customer complaint, you greatly increase the likelihood that they’ll share their positive experience with their followers.



IGNORING YOUR AUDIENCE

When was the last time you responded to a comment from a social media follower? If it's been a while or you only respond when there's a problem, it's time to rethink your strategy.

People like to be noticed – and when they follow a brand on social media, they like knowing that the company reads what they write and cares about it.

Get in the habit of engaging with your audience by replying to their comments and direct messages and by sharing their content when it's appropriate to do so. It's a good way to build brand loyalty.

NOT USING SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLS

Every social media site has tools you can use to engage with your audience. Facebook Insights is a perfect example. It's where you can find detailed metrics to help you determine:

- > The best time of day to post
- > What times of content get the most engagement
- > Who your followers are

> Where your followers are located

Another prime example is post scheduling, which you can do with Facebook's Creator Studio for both Facebook and Instagram. If it's been a while since you looked at your social media tools, this is a good time to take an inventory and use what you've got.

USING THE WRONG SOCIAL MEDIA SITES FOR YOUR AUDIENCE

Very few small businesses have the time or budget to maintain an active presence on every social media site. And guess what? In most cases, you don't need to. What you should be doing is doing research to determine which sites your audience uses.

Someone who's targeting an older audience might focus on Facebook. A company targeting

Generation Z should think seriously about TikTok. Sites such as [Statista](#) can help you to dig into the numbers.

Once you know where to find your audience, you should drop any social media profiles that don't make sense and focus on the ones that do.



NOT FOLLOWING THE SITE RULES

This first mistake is one that happens all the time. Each social media site has rules for content. The easiest example is Twitter's limit of 280 characters. That's a simple one to follow because you can't Tweet more than that number of characters. But that said, people still make mistakes.

The rules for social media can be carved in stone or they may fall into the category of standard practices. An example of the former would be using a personal Facebook page to do business. Facebook can shut down any personal account it feels is violating its terms. You need to use a business account if you're going to be active on Facebook.

For an example of standard practices, let's look at Instagram. The only place on Instagram that you can put a live link to your site is in your profile. You can't put those links in an image caption. It would be great if you could, but your posts should be optimized for Instagram as it is, not as you wish it would be.

A link typed into your caption isn't a link your followers can click. Unless it's a short, easy-to-type link, it shouldn't be there. There are other standard practices related to how many hashtags you use. Following the rules will ensure that your content is appealing to your followers.





LEAVING SOCIAL MEDIA OUT OF YOUR MARKETING BUDGET

Finally, if you've been thinking of social media as a free marketing tool while resenting the huge following of other companies, then it's time to get real about what it takes to market on social media.

It's been years since Facebook changed its algorithm to prioritize content from individuals over businesses. Those changes apply to the organic feed, which is where posts from your followers' friends and family appear.

By investing a little money in promoting your posts and running ads, you can be sure that your most important content will reach your

followers and people like them. You don't need to spend a fortune – and you can start small.

I suggest investing \$50 or \$100 in promoting one or two posts or running a page promotion. It may take some trial and error to fine-tune your targeting. You should keep an eye on your spending per Like or per click.

Social media marketing takes work. It's not a "set it and forget it" proposition. By avoiding the errors here and taking corrective action, you'll be able to take your social media pages from zeros to heroes in no time.



CONTENT RESEARCH TOOLS

A high conversion rate starts with great content. If you're not sure what content gets the most traction, then these tools can help you find out.

Buzzsumo

BuzzSumo is one of the best tools I know for figuring out what kind of content to post. You can enter a keyword and get a display with links to the most linked and shared content related to your search term. You can then dig in to explore what makes the content shareable.

You can get a free trial. After that, the plans start at \$99 per month. That might seem like a lot, but there's no minimum subscription period.

SimilarWeb

Which sites are most like yours – and where is their traffic coming from? If you want to know the answers to both questions, you should try [**Similar Web**](#).

Similar Web will tell you which of your keywords is generating the most traffic and give you ideas about where to post and share your content online to increase conversions. They offer a free plan and a paid plan, which is based on volume. You can contact them for pricing.



INCREASE YOUR WEBSITE CONVERSIONS WITH THESE **ONLINE TOOLS**

In the world of digital marketing, traffic gets a lot of attention. Small business owners understand that without visitors to your site, it's unlikely you're going to be able to grow or sustain their businesses.

I'd argue that the focus on traffic isn't helpful unless it's paired with a focus on conversion. After all, you might be able to attract thousands of vis-

itors a month – but if none of those people are buying from you, what's the point? You're paying for traffic without getting any real return on your investment.

With that in mind, here are some of the most useful tools I know to help you boost your conversion rate and turn your traffic into revenue.



One of the keys to a high conversion rate is a great landing page – but how do you know if your landing page is getting the job done? I recommend [**Land-Book**](#).

Land-Book is a free collection of some of the web's most successful and effective landing pages. It's a great resource if you're not sure where to start with your landing page.



Do you want to improve the conversion rate of your emails? [**Really Good Emails**](#) does for marketing emails what Land-Book does for landing pages.

Browse their huge, free collection of effective marketing emails and use them for inspiration. This is an especially helpful resource if you're new to writing emails and want to up your game.

TOOLS TO CAPTURE LEADS

The next category is a series of tools that will help you capture leads once you've enticed a visitor to your website.



[**HubSpot**](#) is a free lead-capturing tool. Its primary feature is an exit intent popup, which is proven to be one of the best-known ways to capture leads.

What I really like about HubSpot is that it combines lead capturing with detailed metrics to help you understand the user experience on your website – which can, in turn, help you to increase conversions.



Sumo is a suite of tools that you can use to create action-triggered popups that include a Welcome Mat popup, a scroll-triggered popup, and a Smart Bar to help you attract more email subscribers.

Their free version is probably enough for most small businesses, but if you want even more analytical tools, you should consider their premium option, which comes in at \$49 per month.



HelloBar is another tool you can use to capture leads. They have a free plan with limited options that you can use to display a popup opt-in form to every 10th visitor on your site.

Their paid plans range from \$29 to \$49 per month and offer an array of additional features that can help you transform your website into a lead-generating machine.



HEAT MAPPING & MOUSE TRACKING TOOLS

A visitor's behavior on your site can provide a lot of information about why your conversion rate isn't as high as you want it to be. Here are some tools that can give you the data you need.



CLICKY

Clicky offers free and paid plans that will give you detailed information about how long visitors stay on your site and what they do while they're there.

I like that this tool offers real-time data that includes heat mapping. It's a good starter tool if you're new to this kind of conversion optimization.



Crazy Egg is a highly respected tool that offers a full suite of tools that include heat mapping and click isolation.

There's no free plan with Crazy Egg, but their premium plans start at only \$24 per month, making it a worthwhile investment if you want to learn about your site visitors.



ANALYTICS TOOLS

Reviewing your analytics is a must if you want to optimize your conversion rate. These tools will help you get down and dirty with the numbers.



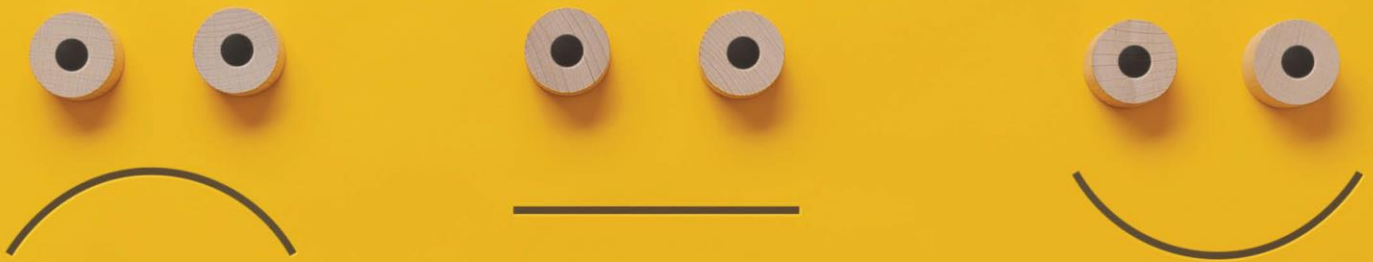
Google Analytics is a tool I use every day – and one I've mentioned a lot. It's free to anyone with a Google account and offers a ton of detailed metrics you can use to up your conversion rate.

If you want even more information, you can contact Google for pricing on their premium accounts.



Kissmetrics is the gold standard of premium analytics tools. It's best suited for optimizing email conversion and includes built-in A/B testing and data sets.

They don't publish prices for their plans, so you'll need to contact them if you're interested.



VISITOR FEEDBACK TOOLS

There are few things more valuable than direct feedback from your site visitors and customers. Here are some of my favorites.



Five second tests

User testing can be expensive, but **Five Second Test** offers an affordable option that allows testers to download an app-based version of your website and rate their experience.

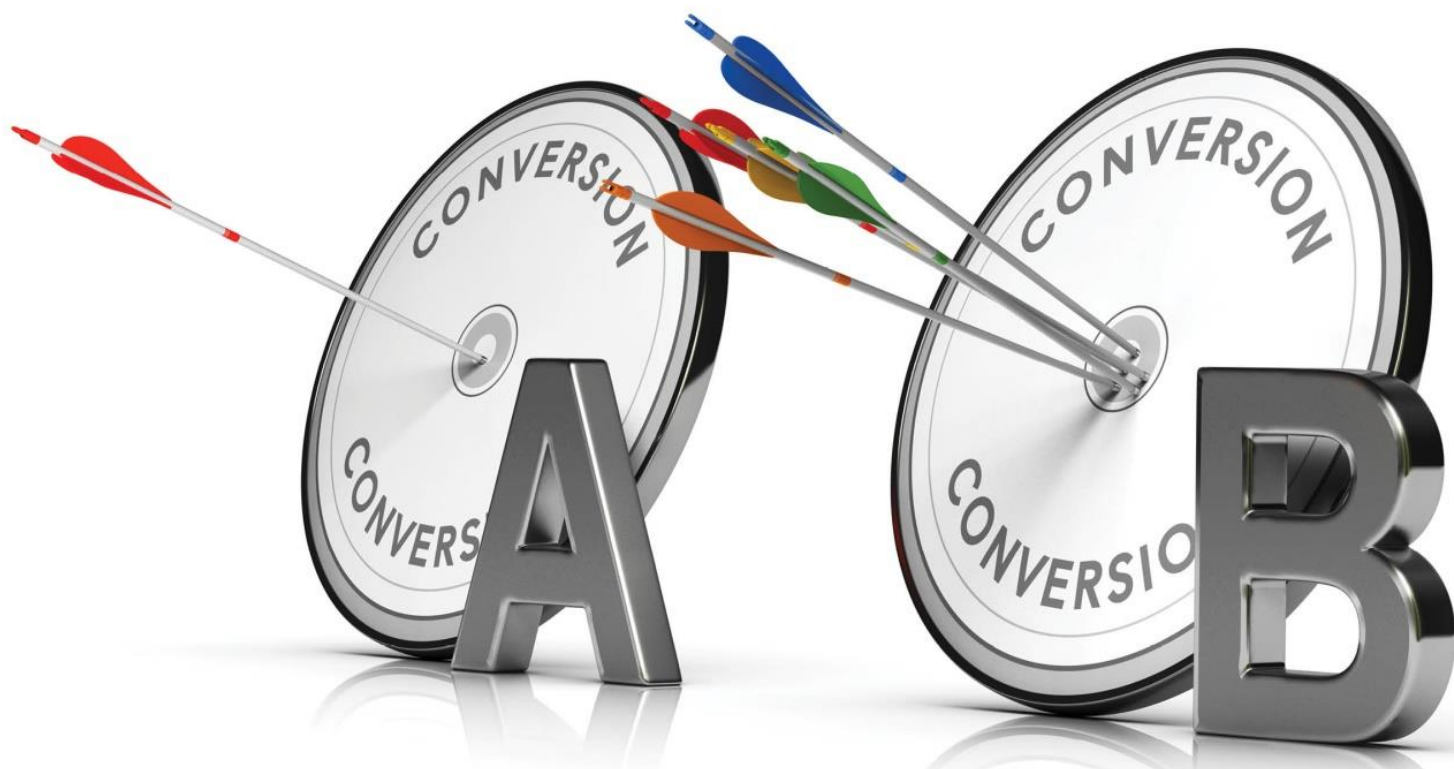
Prices start at \$50 per month. You can choose from a variety of testing methods, including basic UX, heat maps, and surveys.



INTERCOM

Intercom offers you the opportunity to chat in real time with your site visitors. You can also use it to track leads and share chats with the other members of your team.

Intercom's prices start at \$87 per month.



TESTING TOOLS

Finally, you'll need to test every aspect of your marketing to improve your conversion rate. Here are some tools that I recommend.



Optimizely

Optimizely is the best-known testing site. In addition to traditional A/B testing, they also offer multivariate testing options and detailed analytics.

Pricing is based on your needs, so you'll need to contact them for more information.



Effective Experiments

Effective Experiments is a tool that makes it easy to track your testing and content experiments. It's useful to have a place to keep everything organized instead of trying to juggle multiple spreadsheets.

Pricing is based on your company's needs and you can contact them for a quote.

Conversion optimization should be an ongoing effort because there's always room for improvement. The tools I've listed here will help you fine-tune your content and marketing, so that you can grow your business.

11 MARKETING IDEAS

to Get You Through the
PANDEMIC



Have you cut back on marketing due to the COVID-19 pandemic? You're not alone. A lot of business owners are trying to save money by reducing their spending.

Cutting back is understandable and may be necessary, but marketing isn't a luxury for your business. It's a necessity. And it's possible to keep things going even if you need to reduce your spending. Here are X ideas to help you stay in the marketing flow.





#1: Focus on Social Media

According to Statista, Americans are spending more time on social media now than they did before the pandemic. That translates to an opportunity for businesses who need low-cost ways to engage their target customers.

It's a good time to share the ways your business is coping with the COVID-19 pandemic and highlight the ways your business can help people cope with social distancing and stay-at-home orders. You may also want to consider boosting your

ads or running a page promotion to get your business in front of potential new customers.



#2: Take Advantage of Cheap Advertising

Speaking of running ads, one of the biggest potential upsides to the pandemic is that advertising costs are lower than usual.

If you're wondering how low prices are, the answer might surprise you. There's no hard data,

but anecdotally, marketing agencies are reporting costs that are between 50% and 75% lower than they were before the pandemic. That includes pay per click advertising and social media advertising, where you'll mostly pay based on impressions.

You may want to investigate the costs for your target market and rethink your budget to take advantage of the savings while they last.



#3: Don't Lose Sight of SEO

Search engine optimization is easy to neglect when money is tight. There's a tendency among small business owners to invest in SEO only when it becomes a problem.

The issue with that mindset is that SEO is the longest game in digital marketing. If you don't

stay on top of it now, you could find yourself facing an uphill battle to regain your coveted page one rank on Google. You don't need to spend a lot of money, but you should stay on top of keyword research and maintain your local SEO to ensure you don't slip.



#4: Create and Promote Special Offers

It comes as no surprise that consumer spending has taken a hit since the beginning of the pandemic. A lot of Americans have lost their jobs and as a result, they're being more careful with their money than they were before.

However, consumers are still spending money. People are looking for convenience and entertainment – anything that can make staying at home more palatable. That means this is a great time to create special offers that are tailored to your audience. Think about what your audience wants and needs and give it to them – and then promote it.



#5: Take Care of Internal Housekeeping

One thing that every business has in common is a lack of time to handle the kind of tasks that can easily be put off. I'm talking about things like solidifying and documenting internal processes, working through your email backlog, or taking inventory.

If things are slow, this is a good time to tackle your backlog. Set aside some time each day to handle the things that have been put on the back burner. That way, you'll be in good shape to capitalize on the return to normalcy – whenever it happens.



#6: Take a Proactive Approach to Marketing

In times of crisis, some of us panic. It's understandable – but it's not a great idea, either. Just when we think we've discovered a new normal, things shift under our feet. It can be stressful at best.

The important thing during this time is not to panic. Don't make any sudden changes to your marketing strategy. Instead, take a deep breath and look at your analytics and metrics. See what's working and what isn't – and adjust based on what you find. A fact-based approach will always serve you better than reacting in fear.



#7: Tackle Your Digital To-Do List

There are a lot of little online tasks that can get delayed when you're in the daily grind with your business. In addition to the internal housekeeping we already mentioned, this is an excellent time to check some things off your digital to-do list.

For example, you might use this time to claim your review pages and update your information there. You might respond to existing reviews. You could revamp your social media pages with updated photos and descriptions, standardize your NAP listings, or create a regular blogging schedule.

#8: Solidify Your Message

Another type of housekeeping you can do now is brand building. You already know that people are spending more time on social media than usual. That means they're also paying more attention to their favorite companies and brands.

Due to the pandemic-related uncertainty and stress, it's a good idea to focus on showing the compassionate, human side of your company. People want to support brands that care about them. By showing that you want to help people, you'll increase their desire to buy from you.

That's a win-win.



#9: Seek Connection

We're all craving connection. Being mostly stuck at home for months on end has highlighted our need for social interaction. And while in-person

gatherings are still not safe, that doesn't mean you can't find alternatives. You may want to organize a Zoom event or sale for your loyal customers. You could host an online fundraiser for a local charity.

Your regular customers want to hear from you, and you may even attract some new followers and customers by making your company part of the solution to pandemic-related loneliness and isolation.



#10: Make Customer Retention a Priority

This is a tough time to attract new customers. And, as you know, it always costs more to acquire a new customer than it takes to retain an existing cus-

tomers. If your marketing budget is reduced, then it simply makes sense to focus on customer retention.

Make sure to email the customers on your list regularly with updates about your business and special offers. You may also want to offer exclusive coupons or discount codes to entice people to buy from you again. Think about what your loyal customers want and give it to them – and they'll thank you with their business.



#11: Spread Some Joy and Kindness Heart

Finally, think about what you can do to lift people's spirits. All of us are in the same boat as we cope with a seemingly-endless string of bad news. People are sick and the economy is suffering – but that doesn't mean your marketing game needs to be all gloom and doom.

Get creative! Share some humorous videos and memes and don't be afraid to get personal by

telling your customers or clients what you're doing to stay entertained and healthy. You could even host a social media contest where you ask your followers to share clever ways to beat boredom or connect with distant loved ones.

The bottom line is that this is undeniably a stressful time, but marketing should still be a priority for all small businesses. A thoughtful, data-based approach can help you get the maximum bang for your buck – and be in good shape to rebound when the pandemic is over.



WE'RE HERE TO HELP.



Small businesses around the world are facing crazy times that call for a smarter approach to marketing your business online.

If you're ready to make meaningful change in your business – connect with us today for a complimentary strategy session today. One of our marketing experts will show you how to market your local business effectively online during this pandemic and increase your sales 30% or more in the next 30 days – No strings attached, no further obligations.

This is how we are helping our community.

Connect with us online at www.MusselwhiteMarketing.com