

Small Business Guide

Marketing Fundamentals

8 ways to reach new customers,
starting today



inspiring success



Not a marketer? Not a problem.

If you're like most small business owners, your days are consumed with many tasks that have nothing to do with why you started your company in the first place. If marketing is in this category, you're not alone. Many small business owners have little experience as marketers.

The good news? You know more than you may think you do. Your passion for your business means you've already got the vision you need to market your company. What you might lack is some practical know-how.

No worries! This guide has your back. Written by experts who know the ins and outs of online and offline marketing, it breaks down the whole marketing landscape into eight manageable steps. Feel free to proceed in order, or skip around to where you need guidance or practical tips.

Talk to a Small Business Adviser today.
Call **866.240.8691**



For the love of small business.[®]

Throughout this guide, we are proud to showcase images of the inspiring small business owners who participated in the **Small Business Revolution — Main Street** experience. Championed by Deluxe Corporation, this annual effort rewards one small town with a \$500,000 revitalization that includes business advice and marketing services.

To learn more, visit
smallbusinessrevolution.org

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Introduction:

Marketing is vital to your success

What if you had the finest product line or the tastiest menu items, and no one bought them? What if your customer service was so excellent it could put a five-star hotel to shame, but no one had the chance to experience it? What if you launched a great business and no one knew about it?

Establishing an amazing business is merely the first step. To interest customers enough to attract them to your products or services requires marketing. Marketing takes many forms, from business cards to websites to television advertising, and everything in between. Even word-of-mouth, which many small businesses rely on, is itself a form of marketing.



"Starting a small business takes hard work and drive, but most of all it takes passion. Marketing is how you share that passion with others."

— **Malcolm McRoberts**

Senior Vice President, Small Business Services, Deluxe Corp.



Why is marketing so important?

At its most basic level, marketing spreads the word about your business. That's only the start, however. Marketing fulfills five key functions:

Marketing informs. Marketing educates current and potential customers about your business and how it serves a need they have.

Marketing engages. It's one thing to offer a superior in-person experience or a frictionless online shopping journey. But marketing makes sure your business remains in people's minds after a transaction is over — and before they need you again.

Marketing builds reputations. Because marketing spreads the word about your business, it's a major factor in the reputation your business takes on. Strong, professional marketing indicates to people, even if subconsciously, that you're a reputable business. The connection is undeniable.

Marketing sells. Even the most passionate business owner needs to make money. Marketing draws attention to what you're selling so that people can buy it.

Marketing grows businesses. This final function is partly the culmination of the first four. If you successfully educate customers, keep them engaged, create a strong reputation in their minds, and regularly sell to them, your business will most likely do well. On top of that, most (if not all) businesses thrive on the acquisition of new customers. Marketing is how you attract those customers in the first place.

Eight parts. Make a plan. Get it done.

For something so vital to a business's health, marketing can feel daunting. Where do you start? What comes first?

Fortunately, it's possible to build your marketing step by step, one manageable piece at a time. When taken together, these pieces add up to a well-rounded marketing program that's many times greater than the sum of its parts.



This book is designed to be a resource to small businesses just starting out, those looking to grow, those already well-established — and those that are still merely an idea in a would-be entrepreneur's head. We'll go through these marketing fundamentals one at a time, showing why each is important and how it fits into the larger whole. Feel free to proceed in order, or skip around to where you need guidance or practical tips.

We understand every business is unique. If you need help along the way, our Small Business Advisers are ready to help revolutionize your business with the same expertise and transformational tools that took the **Small Business Revolution — Main Street** businesses to new heights.



Part 1: Develop a smart marketing strategy

The perfect marketing campaign for one business may not work for another. To be successful, your marketing must be true to you and to your customers. Create a plan to get your marketing right.

You don't need a college degree or an expensive consultant to master your marketing. Simply knowing the steps to take, and taking them methodically, one at a time, helps you reach your goals. Lay the groundwork and follow your plan, little by little.

Build an impactful marketing strategy

Marketing spans the entire process that businesses follow to provide a product to consumers: from designing and pricing the product, to deciding where it will be sold and how to persuade people to buy it.

The tools you use to reach new customers and to keep existing customers will depend on a variety of factors. How do you know the right approach? By building an impactful marketing strategy.

To build your strategy, start by answering these questions:

What's your mission as a business? What gets you excited to wake up and come to work every day?

What are your business goals? Think about where you want your business to be in three to five years. Is there anything you could start doing now to get there?

Who is your target customer? In other words, describe the person who is most likely to love your products or services. What do they care about? What motivates them? What common personality traits do the majority of your customers share?

Who are your competitors? What advantages do they have that your business does not have? What are they doing that's the same or different from what your business does?

What problem do you solve for your customers? This goes beyond what products or services you sell, although that's an important part. But what is it that your business does that leaves your customers smiling? What saves them time or money, or fixes an issue for them?

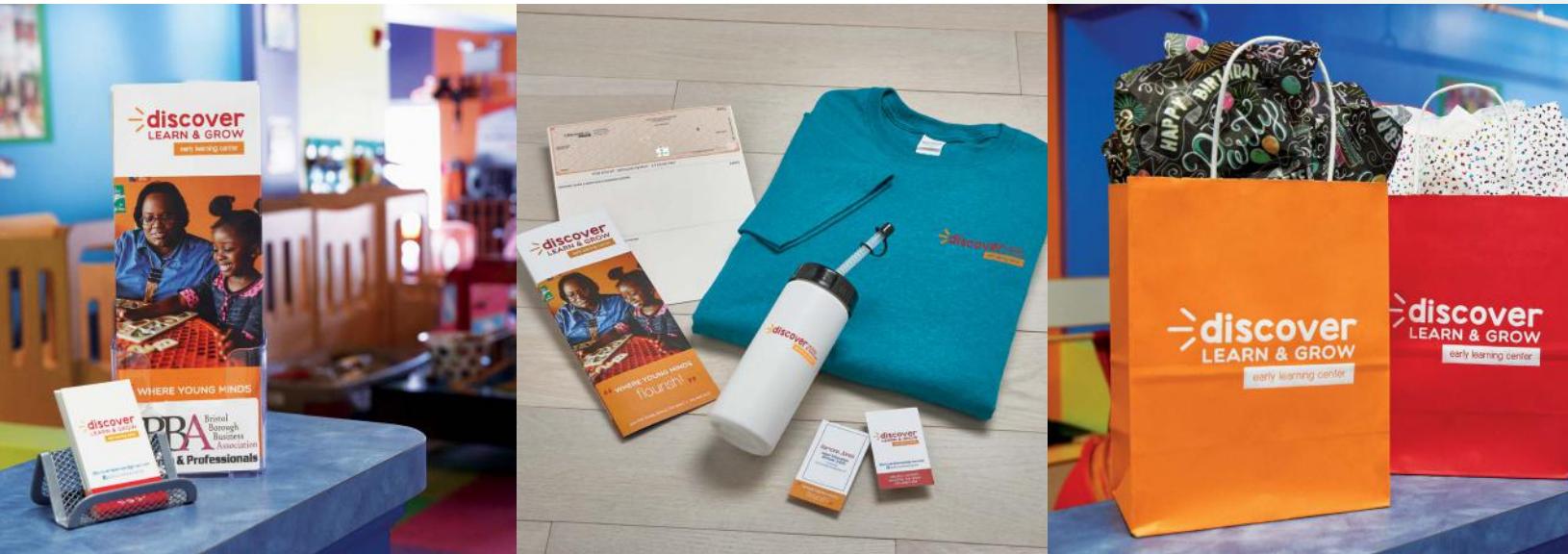
Why should a customer choose you over a competitor? This is your unique selling proposition. It's what makes your business stand out. What can you offer that no other business can?

Marketing 101

Marketing is the end-to-end plan that spans the entire process your business should follow to provide products or services to your consumers. This includes designing and pricing the product, deciding where it will be sold and how to persuade people to buy it. A solid marketing plan should include a budget and a calendar filled with marketing efforts. Such a plan helps you stay in control and a step ahead of any challenges or opportunities.

Advertising and **promotion** are the methods you use to execute your marketing plan or strategy. There are countless ways to promote your business. The trick is knowing which efforts will provide the best return on investment — especially when your budget is tight.

Target audience is another term for your ideal customers — the people most likely to purchase your products or services.



Perfect your elevator pitch

A great way to distill all your answers to the questions above into a simple story is to develop an **elevator pitch**: a brief narrative highlighting your value in a way that draws people in. It should be easy enough for a stranger to grasp in the short time you share a theoretical elevator ride. Make it one or two sentences at most, in plain language that explains how your business solves a problem.

For example, veteran educator Ramona Jones established Discover Learn & Grow to be a community center recognized for its excellent child care and family events. She targeted parents and guardians of children aged 2 to 10 with consistent child care needs. She wanted to emphasize DL&G's safety, its affordability and, unlike other preschools, its focus on early childhood learning.

Her elevator pitch?

"I'm dedicating my 30 years in education to Discover Learn & Grow, a safe and affordable child care option, with an emphasis on early childhood learning."



Your elevator pitch helps guide your marketing efforts, and it helps you spread the word about your business. Deliver your elevator pitch to family and friends, fellow business owners, potential investors and anyone else who crosses your path. The more you can tell your story, the more awareness you build for your business. You will also get better at honing the pitch down to its essentials, until you're a master at it.



"If your marketing doesn't strike a chord with your target audience, they will ignore it. It's crucial to tell your target customer how you meet their specific needs. Speak to your target audience, then let the others listen."

— Bridget Aymar, Senior Content Strategist, Deluxe Corp.

Focus on your target audience

Your business likely caters to customers of all kinds. Consider a neighborhood coffee shop. A stay-at-home mom, a rushed commuter, a high school student and a host of other characters may drop in for a latte on any given morning. Think about how you would reach all of them with an advertisement or promotion. All of these people may visit different websites, live in different neighborhoods and even speak different languages. So how can a small business with a small marketing budget capture them all?

The short answer: You can't. Any smart marketer knows the key to reaching customers is choosing a segment of consumers, learning everything you can about how your business meets their needs, and then connecting the dots for those consumers. In the coffee shop example, the business owner may realize that the stay-at-home mom buys an Americano every single morning, whereas the commuter and student are only occasional customers. This could indicate that people like the mom are high value, and would make excellent target customers for the coffee shop.

Marketing newbies are sometimes hesitant to focus on one or a few target customer segments, arguing that they want to reach as many people as

possible. It may seem like the more people you can reach with your marketing efforts, the more sales you stand to make. But in reality, the opposite is true: If you spend \$100 to reach 1,000 people with a message designed to appeal to all of them, you risk appealing to none, and wasting your \$100 investment.

Consumers increasingly expect to find the best possible provider, all the time. They want to feel known and catered to. But since every customer has different expectations, you can't successfully market to all of them. Instead of broadcasting a watered-down message to appeal to everyone, you're better off zeroing in on the consumers who are a perfect fit for your business. Become the best at providing the solutions *they* need.

Word-of-mouth is priceless

It's much more expensive to attract a new customer than it is to keep an existing customer. That's why marketing doesn't stop when a new customer makes a purchase. Imagine all the interactions that influence whether that customer will remember you, recommend you — and return to you.

The most genuine marketing comes from customer endorsements. That's why your marketing plan needs to define a comprehensive customer experience. **Customer experience** is how customers engage with your business, not just once, but throughout the entire duration of your relationship. That includes on-site visits, your branding, your website, your social media, your emails, telephone interactions and more. Plan positive interactions at every customer encounter (also known as a **touchpoint**), and you'll create loyal followers who will become regulars and refer others to you.

Remember, the best way to create a raving fan — the finest kind of marketing — is to provide an outstanding customer experience, every step of the way.

On the right track

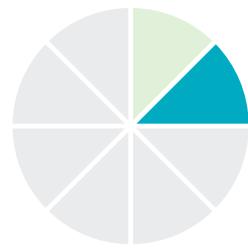
By focusing your marketing efforts to reach your target audience, you're on your way to creating a powerful marketing plan. Now it's time to write out the actual plan. Instead of reacting to dips in sales, changes in the market or other factors, establish a thorough marketing plan. Set your budget and plot your marketing efforts on a calendar.

Keep reading to learn more about the best tools — social media, email marketing, digital advertising and more — that can bring your marketing plan to life.



Need help with your marketing strategy?

Get expert insights and professional guidance. Talk to a Small Business Adviser today.
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Part 2: Create a strong brand



Is your business a brand? You may not think so, but the answer to that question is “Yes.” Even if your business is a small, one- or two-person operation, you should consider your business a brand.

The word *brand* itself can be confusing, because people tend to associate it with very large businesses. When someone asks you your favorite brand of soda, you’re most likely to think of huge companies like Pepsi or Coke. When you hear the phrase “brand-name clothing,” names like Levi’s, Nike or Calvin Klein may come to mind.

At base, a brand is a mark, logo or symbol that distinguishes your business from others, but it really goes beyond that. Your brand is what people think about when they hear your business’s name. It’s the centerpiece of all your marketing efforts.

In that sense, your brand goes well beyond a logo or tagline. Everything about your business — your color scheme, your website, your business philosophy, your office, your culture, your communication style — contributes to defining your brand.

When you think of your business as a brand, you can begin to shape how people perceive it.

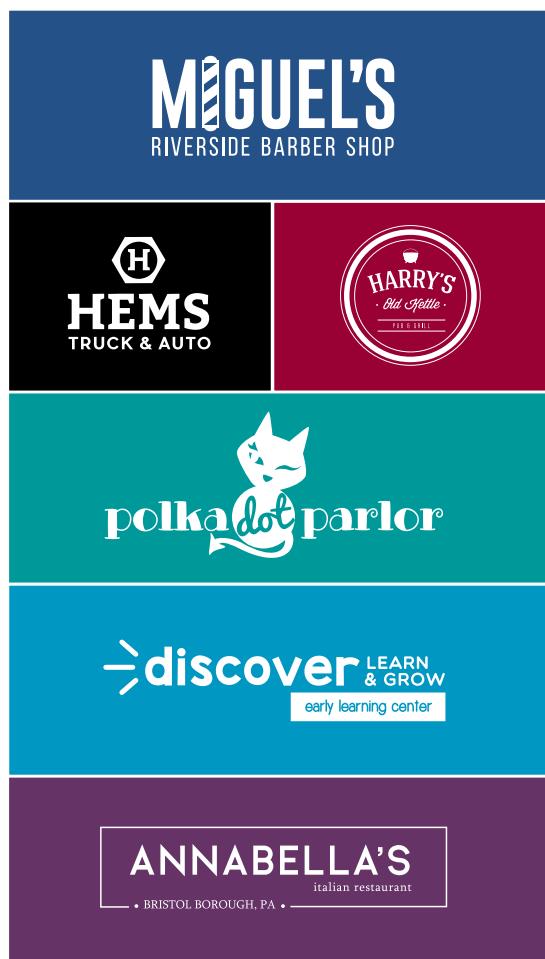
How strong is your brand?

Small business owners are often so busy taking care of customers that they forget to assess their brand identity. It's important to do so, however, to get an idea of how both current and potential customers perceive your business.

A good way to assess your brand is to ask yourself a series of questions and answer them as honestly as possible:

- Do people know my business's name and what we do?
- What do people think about my business's name?
- What would I like them to think?
- Do my business's name and my logo project a strong representation of what I offer?
- Whom do I want to communicate with, and where can I reach them?
- What could I do to improve the perception of my brand?

If some aspects could use improvement, take some time to tweak and cultivate your brand identity.



Your logo is your brand's cornerstone

When you assess your brand, your logo is one of the first things to consider. For new businesses, this may mean creating a logo from scratch. For businesses looking to rebrand or freshen up their image, a new logo may be in order.

Logos are a vital element of brand identity for businesses of all types and sizes. Whether it's for a very small business with just a handful of employees, or one that's growing to 100 employees or more, a professionally designed logo evokes a sense of reliability and competence that potential customers appreciate.



"Some may think they're 'too small' to warrant a professional logo. Others may think it's an expense they can spare — that it isn't important. But in thinking this way, you are doing your business a disservice from the outset. A logo is one of the most important elements you can have in marketing your business."

— Ashley Kimlinger
Director of Enterprise Brand Management, Deluxe Corp.

4 reasons why logos are so important:

1. A strong logo helps you make a good first impression (more on this below).
2. Your logo helps convey your business's values and personality.
3. A logo provides credibility and helps build trust with customers.
4. When used consistently, a logo reinforces your brand in customers' minds and creates familiarity over time — so they'll remember you when they need you.

No matter the industry, the most successful brands tend to share at least one common trait: a very recognizable logo. If it's computers and software, Apple and Microsoft both jump out. For cars, the likes of Chevrolet, Ford, Mercedes and BMW all have very familiar logos. You can probably picture every one of these logos in your mind without much effort, and that familiarity helps you relate to the business beyond any one specific product.

Logos make the right first impression

For small businesses, a logo is a key component of the first impression they make on potential customers. When prospects are researching providers they may want to do business with, a professional logo creates trust and inspires intrigue.

A strong logo alone doesn't secure new customers. In the end, your products or services will play the biggest role in a customer's decision to choose you. That said, an eye-catching, professional logo sparks the necessary interest for a customer to check out what you're offering in the first place.

Think of two automotive businesses competing for customers in a specific area of town. When potential customers go online to compare prices and services, they notice that one of the businesses has a clean and streamlined logo, while the other has a poorly designed one, or nothing at all. As long as the services and pricing look comparable, the body shop or auto mechanic with a professional logo will likely be the customer's first choice — because the logo signals professionalism and credibility.

Is your logo true to your brand?

Your brand is what customers think about any time they see or hear the name of your business. Ideally, your logo will help convey the values and emotions you'd like associated with your brand identity.

Here are some ways to ensure your logo is true to your brand:

Be authentic. Your logo should reflect your business's values and personality.

Stand out. Make sure your logo differentiates you from others in your industry and market.

Keep it simple and scalable. Create a logo that is legible in even the smallest sizes, and in black and white or full color. Focus on a simple design, using no more than two colors and typography styles.

Once your business has a logo that's true to your brand, include it in all your marketing materials.



How big or small should your logo be?

In a perfect world, your logo will be recognizable no matter what size it is, from a tiny social media icon to a huge billboard.

Scalability can be about more than just size, however. Ideally, the logo you choose will be equally effective when seen in black and white as it is in full color. This is particularly helpful if your logo appears in the local newspaper, on invoices and letterhead, or on other materials printed in black and white.

Here are a handful of tips to keep in mind when considering logo designs for your business:

Keep it simple. A logo that contains many fine details may look good at full size, but a simpler design will ensure that it doesn't look too cluttered when that size is scaled down.

With fonts, less is more. A unique font can be a great feature of memorable logos, but be careful not to go overboard. Utilizing more than two or three fonts in a single logo can make it seem like you're trying too hard.

Limit your colors: Logos that include more than one or two colors are expensive to print on marketing materials, promotional products, signs and banners and other media. Keep this in mind as you consider how many colors to include in your design.

Make it something you love. In the end, your logo is the first thing many potential customers will see when it comes to your business. No matter what kind of design you choose, be sure that it's something you are truly fond of that is also true to your brand values.

What do your logo's colors say about your brand?

Colors speak louder than words, especially in logos.

Red Action, emotion, passion, love and aggressiveness

Pink Femininity, love, sweetness, sexuality and nurturing

Orange Happiness, sunshine, the tropics, enthusiasm and creativity

Yellow Energy, warmth, joy, sunshine and positivity

Green Nature, rejuvenation, youthfulness, peace and hope

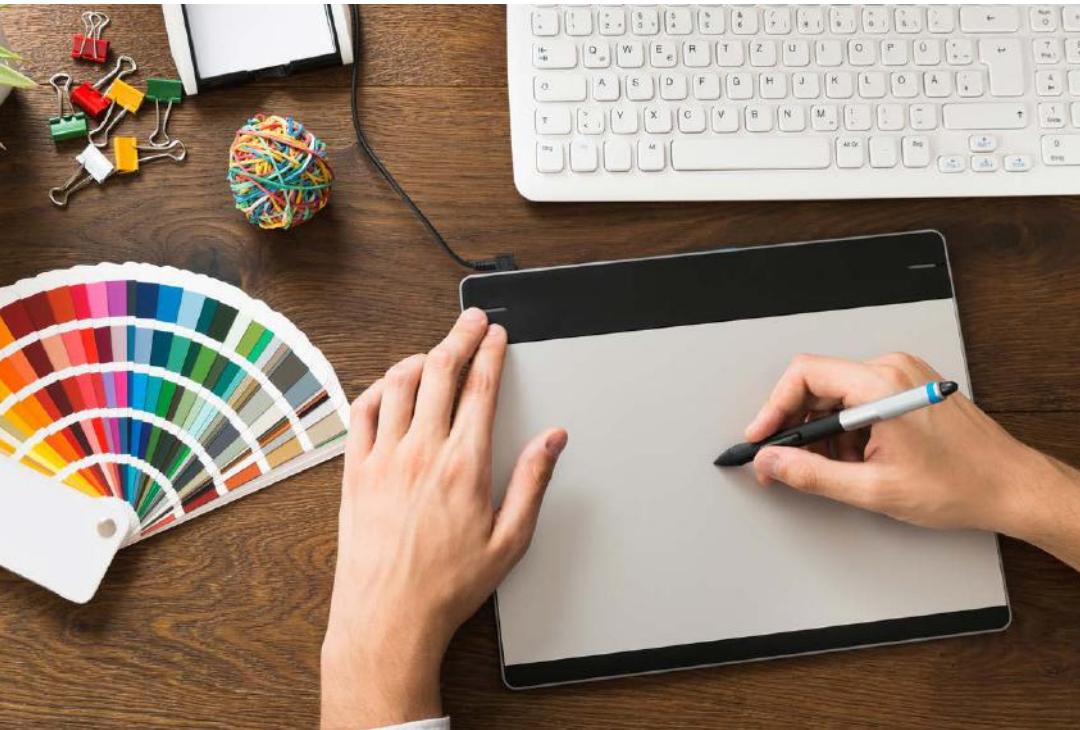
Blue Depth, intelligence, clarity, confidence, calm and trust

Purple Luxury, royalty, glamour, power, nostalgia and introspection

Brown Reliability, strength, support and dependability

White Cleanliness, purity and innocence

Black Mystery, formality, boldness and luxury



Need more logo guidance?

Download our free **Guide to Logo Design** for expert tips, real-world examples, and logo do's and don'ts.

 DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Put your logo where people will see it

Once your business has a logo that's true to your brand and makes a strong first impression, it's time to get it seen! Here's how to get potential customers to think about the positive aspects of your business each and every time they see your logo:

Digital media: Your logo should appear on your business website, as well as in any digital advertising your business uses. This includes display, pay-per-click and social media advertising.

Social media: Your logo should also be very visible on your social media accounts, in most cases serving as your main profile image or icon.

Mail: If your business sends products or correspondence to customers by mail, consider custom envelopes, letterhead, postcards and boxes that include your logo.

Product packaging: If the core of your business is selling products to consumers, including your logo on product packaging and shipping materials is a no-brainer.

Promotional products: Many businesses use promotional products to spread awareness of their brand even further. You can place your logo on just about any promotional item, from T-shirts and hats to pens and umbrellas.

Vehicles: Consider branding the vehicles you use to transport products, make service calls or visit events. Every fellow commuter is another opportunity for a brand impression.

Custom apparel: Does your business have raving fans who would purchase a shirt, hat or other wearable emblazoned with your logo? Consider investing in high-quality custom apparel that you can sell for another source of revenue.

Business listing websites: Don't forget to upload your logo to business listing websites like Yelp, TripAdvisor and Google My Business.

TV: If your business has the budget for TV advertising, including your logo is a must. After all, TV is first and foremost a visual medium, so consider a large logo for a few seconds at the end of your ad, or a constant watermark version in the corner of the screen throughout the commercial.

How much should professional logo design cost?

Try to stay within your price range and pay a price that makes you comfortable, while still ensuring the final design is one you'll be proud to display.

Reasonable designs start at \$100 to \$200. Expect a simple, professionally designed logo in this price range. "Simple" typically means a logo with a well-defined company name and symbol. Intricate patterns and complex lettering may increase the price tag. The finished design should be clear, unique and professional.

A more complex design warrants \$400 or higher. A logo design with intricate patterns and fonts typically costs twice as much as a simple design. Expect to pay a minimum of \$400. The price increase usually includes extra services, such as up to 10 original logo designs to choose from, and unlimited revisions.

In the end, the price should be fair and equal to the time spent on the task. When selecting a designer or logo design company, look for guarantees, samples of previous work and positive reviews. Find a designer who is willing to hear about your unique business, whether it's via an initial phone conversation or by requesting you fill out a short creative brief. Be sure the designer cares about what sets your business apart. That knowledge will reflect in the finished design.

Looking for a partner?

Let Deluxe design a unique, custom logo to represent your business.

 **LEARN MORE**

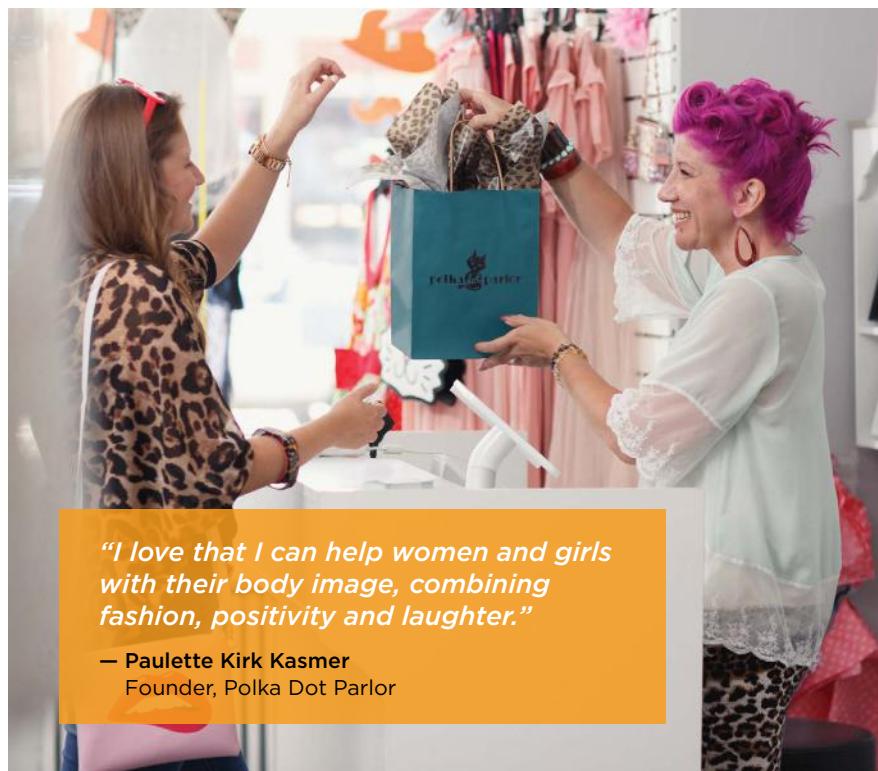


Logo Case Study: Polka Dot Parlor

Paulette Kirk Kasmer is passionate about helping people look and feel good. She opened Polka Dot Parlor in 2016 to encourage women of all ages to explore their sense of fashion in a fun, friendly environment. Her mantra: Rock whatever you want to rock, at any age.

Kasmer needed a powerful brand to build her reputation and stick in the minds of her customers. The marketing team from Deluxe outlined a plan to boost Polka Dot Parlor's visual brand to get people talking about the boutique and encourage customers to visit, again and again. The first step was a logo makeover.

The original Polka Dot Parlor logo reflected Kasmer's whimsical personality and love for cats. While cute, it was problematic. Too many colors made it difficult to translate to black and white for invoices and other forms. Busy design elements, like stars and polka dots, prevented Kasmer from shrinking down the logo for a business card, sticker or mobile screen.



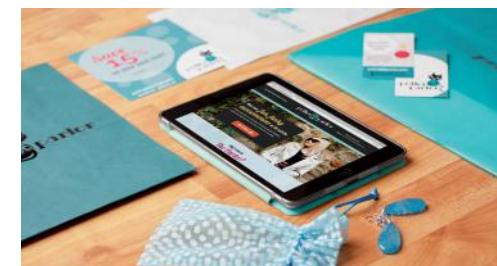
"I love that I can help women and girls with their body image, combining fashion, positivity and laughter."

— Paulette Kirk Kasmer
Founder, Polka Dot Parlor

Before



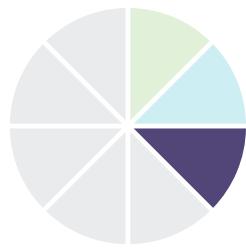
After



The Deluxe team explored new logo concepts. The first round kept the design as simple as possible, with new colors and fonts but without the cat. Kasmer felt these concepts were too conservative for her boutique. After additional revisions, Deluxe conceived a logo that included the cat and aligned with Polka Dot Parlor's identity. The logo's clean design, with two fonts and two colors, ensured it would look great on a large sign, on letterhead and on a business card.

In addition to putting the new logo on business cards and postcards, Deluxe developed custom packaging to turn every Polka Dot Parlor purchase into a walking billboard.

Kasmer was thrilled to see how the new branding attracted new customers and encouraged repeat visits. Since the redesign, the shop has experienced record sales, the business is poised for growth, and Kasmer can continue to bring fun, funky, standout style to her town.



Part 3: Build an effective website

When potential customers are looking for a specific product or service, they search the internet to find a business that can meet their needs. This is why building and maintaining an effective business website is crucial.

Think of your website as a window to the world that gives potential customers a sneak peek at what your business has to offer. While the quality of your products and customer service will keep customers coming back, it's a well-designed website that gets customers in the door in the first place.

It's not enough to simply have a website. The impression it makes can either boost or hinder customers' likelihood to interact with you. If your website is outdated, hard to navigate or visually unappealing, or if it doesn't offer the information your visitors want, they will spend their money elsewhere. But, if you can tap into your customers' needs, and meet those needs, your website will be a business-generating machine.

Design a website your customers love

The key to persuading potential customers to visit your site — and, more importantly, to take action — is creating an excellent experience for your online visitors.

Make a strong first impression. Attracting visitors to your site is great, but *keeping* them there is the larger challenge. One way to do this is to entice them early and often, whether that means using visuals, written content or a combination of the two. It can be helpful to think about your own experience browsing the web. When you visit another business's website, what types of things make it more likely for you to stay? You can then incorporate (but not copy) similar elements into your own site.

Be yourself. Your website should feel true to your business. Revisit the brand you sketched out for your business, and imagine how those attributes can translate to your website:

- Is your brand trusted? Your homepage might feature an image of your employee helping a customer find the right product, paired with this headline: "Financial planning can be scary. We make it easy."
- Is your brand welcoming? Your services page will be more appealing if it highlights services for beginners at the top of the page and reinforces that first-timers are welcome.
- Is your brand delicious? Your online menu should include words that make your visitors' mouths water: "Explore the spring menu and discover dishes starring sun-drenched tomatoes, luscious berries and vibrant herbs."

As you plan the content for your website and get into the specifics of your products or services, consider how those brand attributes guide your messaging. Write for your website with your customers' problems in mind. How do your business attributes solve those problems?

Focus on your strengths. In business, defining your unique selling proposition is an important factor, and your website is an excellent chance to put it to use. Many potential customers research multiple providers online. Make it easy for them to compare your offerings to those of the competitors, and reinforce why they should choose you. Are your products made with the best-quality materials? Do you offer a satisfaction guarantee or price matching? Perhaps you are the most experienced business in your neighborhood. Your website should convey what sets you apart.



Who's your target audience?

It's tempting to think you want a website for everybody, because in the end you want it to bring in as many customers as possible. But in truth you need to tailor your website for your target audience — those most likely to do business with you after visiting your website.

If you run a bar and grill near a college campus, your target audience should be students, faculty and alums. If you operate a canoe rental business in a small town, your target audience should be folks visiting town for the weekend. And if you run an auto garage that specializes in repairing foreign cars, your target audience should be foreign car owners.

Knowing your target audience is valuable because **these are the people you need to convince to choose your business over your competition.** Use your website to communicate to them what makes your business better than others with similar offerings.

On the other hand, if you don't tailor your website to your target audience, you risk being too vague or bland and getting lost in the shuffle. So take some time to figure out who your target audience is, and keep them in mind when building your website.



Show visitors the proof. It's not enough for your website to simply say your business is the best at something. Visitors want to see some sort of proof or validation. This could come in the form of customer testimonials, whether written paragraphs or short videos. You can also showcase any awards or recognition your business has received, or positive coverage by local media outlets.

Keep it current. Your website is your digital storefront. You want it to appear kept-up and cared for. Depending on the type of information on your website, you should be making updates at least monthly. Continually refresh event information, product availability and pricing, seasonal promotions, hours of operation, and images.



"The way you show up online is just as important as the look of your shop. You can communicate trust in a split second through the fonts, colors and images you use online."

— Amanda Brinkman, Chief Brand and Communications Officer, Deluxe Corp.

Nearly 30% of small businesses do not have a website.

— Clutch Small Business Survey on Website Design, 2017

Make visitors feel the need to take action

In addition to giving the world an overview of your business, the main goal of your website is to drive an action. If you're a restaurant, this may mean getting visitors to make an online reservation. For a repair company, it could mean getting visitors to book a service time. And if you're a retailer, it may simply mean getting people into your store or making an online sale.

These five steps will help you build a website that encourages visitors to take the action you want them to take:

- 1. Define your website goals.** Ask yourself exactly what you'd like your site to accomplish. This may include things such as driving foot traffic, gaining new customers, answering questions about your business, or setting expectations for your products or services.
- 2. Choose your target audience.** This will depend on who you're trying to sell to. If you already have a strong customer base and would like to maintain that base, your existing customers are the main target audience. Conversely, if you're trying to build your base with new potential customers, your site should target this group with helpful information that encourages a visit. For example, for a restaurant that would like to attract more visitors from out of town, your site should contain info that makes your business approachable to newcomers.
- 3. Make your principles clear.** Stay true to your brand and inform potential customers what separates you from your competitors. If you're a plumbing company that guarantees service within 24 hours, make that clear. If you're a neighborhood brewpub that specializes in craft beers, tailor your site to entice beer lovers.
- 4. Map the customer's journey.** Put yourself into the shoes of your potential customers. What is the path they will take to eventually engage with your business? It most likely starts with an online search before a visit to your website. If that web visit leads to an in-person visit or sale, the customer's experience will play a large role in whether to return.
- 5. Communicate your opportunity.** Let web visitors know the opportunity your business offers them. Think of it as a potential tagline or a short statement that defines your business. It could be something like, "The only repair shop in town that guarantees 24-hour service." Or, "The neighborhood sports bar with the most TVs and the best beer selection." After you come up with your opportunity, design your website to help support it.

Make your site mobile-friendly

It's common practice to target potential customers wherever they are, and it's a safe bet that your customers are increasingly browsing the web on mobile devices.

More than 84 percent of the U.S. population went online in 2017, [according to eMarketer](#). Of those, an enormous 93 percent used a mobile device to go online. Further, nearly 15 percent browse the internet exclusively via mobile phone or tablet.

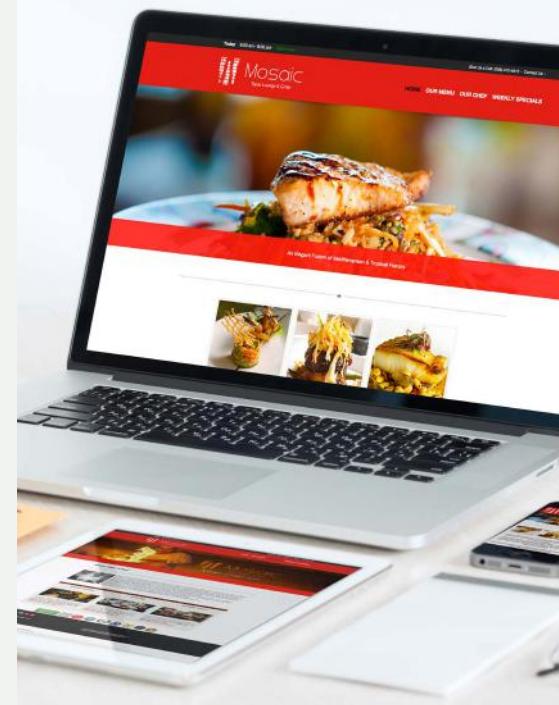
Those numbers illustrate just how crucial it is to make sure your website looks great and works perfectly on mobile devices. Think about your own web-browsing tendencies. While it may be common to visit websites on a desktop or laptop computer while at work, there are likely many instances when you are not in front of your computer — at the supermarket, in a waiting room or even on the couch — in which you browse the web from a mobile device. And if visitors can't easily navigate your website on their phone, they are highly likely to move onto another business.

There are a few things you can do to check if your site is mobile-friendly. The easiest is to take a look at the site on your own phone or tablet. Browse all of your pages to be sure the text is easily readable and images are viewable. If you need to squint your eyes, scroll left or right, or zoom in, you probably need to take some steps to make your site more suitable for mobile.

Google also hosts a [handy test](#) that allows you to check whether your site is mobile-friendly.

93.4% of U.S. internet users go online via mobile device.

— eMarketer, 2017



Use original photos and images

The written content on your website is important, of course, but the imagery you use is equally crucial. When you think about the many websites you visit each day, you begin to realize that the ones with the most eye-catching images are those most likely to pique your interest and keep you browsing longer.

With that in mind, it's vitally important that you use your own original photos and images — as opposed to stock images. Here's why:

- Original photos are more effective.** The evidence that original images work better isn't just anecdotal. Actual studies [support this fact](#). The general consensus is that "real" or original images drive more conversions on websites, while people tend to ignore stock photography.
- Stock photos can be risky.** On the surface, there doesn't seem to be anything inherently wrong with stock photos. They exist for a reason, after all, and sometimes they can be quite attractive. That said, a website can lose credibility very quickly if it happens to use the same stock images as a competitor. Put simply, it's not a good look.
- Your own photos are authentic.** When people visit your website, they want to know more about what you offer. That's not possible with stock photography. Using real photos of your location, products and staff is a great way to give visitors an authentic look at your business.

Strong writing drives home your point

Photos and images go a long way toward showing potential customers what your business has to offer, but the written word is the ingredient that helps seal the deal. Every website features some sort of written content, so here are three tips that can help ensure the writing on your site stands out:

- 1. KISS (Keep it short and sweet).** Nobody wants to spend hours reading online, but people do crave information that can help them. Whenever possible, keep the writing on your site simple and to the point while still delivering vital information to potential customers.
- 2. Write like a boss.** When it comes to the written content on your site, it's perfectly OK to tell people what to do. Simple phrases such as "Book an appointment," "Call now," "Try it today" or "Get started" are often the nudge that web visitors need to take action.
- 3. Google is your friend.** When coming up with written content for your site, be sure to include words and phrases that you think people will use to search for the products or services you offer. Put yourself in the shoes of a potential customer and think about the phrases they would use on Google when looking for businesses of your type. For example, if you are a pizza shop, sprinkle phrases such as "best pizza in town" or "best local pizza" across your pages so your site shows up in related search results.



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Update your site early and often

One of the biggest online turnoffs is a website that is out of date and irrelevant. When potential customers come across sites with dated content, the perception is the business doesn't make the effort to keep things current.

It may sound tedious and time-consuming to update your website constantly, one more to-do on your list of endless tasks. However, it only takes a few minutes per day to make sure your web content is fresh and up to date.

By keeping your website's content current, you can let customers know about limited-time deals or promotions, or inform them about new products or services your business offers. You can also add a touch of sentimentality to your site with seasonal updates. Think patriotic content or images around the Fourth of July, or holiday-themed content in November and December.

Here are four things you can quickly check each day to make sure your site is up to date:

1. Are your seasonal sales or promotions still running?
2. Are the products or services on your website still available?
3. Are your contact information and hours of operation up to date?
4. Do all of the links on your site still work?



Measure your website's performance

You know how to measure the number of people who visit your business. Did you know you can also determine how many people find you online, and whether they take action? Analytics are invaluable measurement tools that can help you determine what's working, what's not and how people are using your website. The most common way to measure your website performance is to use [Google Analytics](#).

Google Analytics helps you measure:

- How many people visit your website
- Where these visitors came from (Google search, email click, social media, etc.)
- Where your visitors are located
- How many visitors are using mobile devices
- Which pages on your website are most popular
- How many visitors are taking a particular action like filling out a form or placing an order
- How long visitors stay on your website
- Additional metrics not listed here

It's free to get Google Analytics. To start measuring your website, you will need to sign up for an account, install the tool on your website and set up goals.

Looking for a partner?

Deluxe can help you design and launch a professional website that gets results.

 [LEARN MORE](#)



Website Case Study: Annabella's Italian Restaurant

Chef Robert Angelaccio and his wife, Alison, opened Annabella's Italian Restaurant in Bristol Borough, Pennsylvania, in 2003. They wanted to bring their passion for authentic, Old World cuisine back to the community where Robert had been raised. After several years, Annabella's was a mainstay in the town, but Robert and Alison struggled with maintaining consistent dining traffic.

Annabella's partnered with Deluxe to build a new, mobile-friendly website to connect with more potential customers online and entice them to visit the restaurant. Considering 84 percent of diners research more than one restaurant online before deciding where to eat, Annabella's website had to stand out.

The Deluxe team designed a website that showcased just what made the restaurant so special. The new homepage features delicious-looking photos, and the new layout makes it easy for guests to find the restaurant, book a reservation and place an order for takeout. Most importantly, the new menu page is crisp and clear on every screen, from a desktop computer to a smartphone.



"Our new website is just fabulous and has already made a big difference. Sales have been consistently running at two times the pace, year over year."

— Alison Angelaccio
Co-Owner, Annabella's

Since the revamped website launched, customer traffic has seen a boost. More than 80 percent of diners who discovered Annabella's website arrived by searching for local restaurants, indicating the establishment is getting noticed by a new audience.

Robert and Alison say that business has certainly increased: The sales numbers have exceeded the traffic the restaurant enjoyed when it first opened. And with more than 5,000 views of the mobile-friendly menu in the refreshed website's first few months, it's safe to say that business won't be slowing down anytime soon.



62% of diners are less likely to choose a restaurant if they can't see the menu on their phone.

— eMarketer, 2017



Part 4: Get found online

When you're looking for a particular product or services, one of the first things you do is search Google (or another search engine) to see which businesses in your area have what you need. After you type in a word or phrase describing what you're looking for, you get a list of results. You then browse those results to see which business can best meet your needs.

Searching the internet has become second nature to most consumers, and that creates an opportunity for your business. Just how widespread is search engine use? A recent eMarketer survey found that [80 percent of people online](#) used a search engine to find a local product or service in the past week, while 87 percent used one in the past month.

Google controls a good portion of the search world. In the past year, nearly three-quarters of all internet searches were performed on Google, [according to NetMarketshare](#). But there are other search engines that are valuable to pay attention to as well, including Bing and Yahoo.

Remember, your business doesn't have a website simply for the sake of having one. When used smartly, websites are powerful tools that drive new business. The trick is getting your website noticed in the first place, and search engines are one key way to do that. Here's how to give yourself the best chance of showing up when people search for the products or services you offer.

What is SEO?

A term you may already be familiar with is SEO, which stands for **search engine optimization**. Essentially, this is the process of setting up your site so search engines notice it. There are a number of factors that go into SEO, including the use of keywords and phrases on your site, as well as high-quality original content that's updated frequently.

Every page and business is ranked for keywords, and the higher your business ranks, the better. If you run a store that sells vintage vinyl records, you would want to rank highly for keywords such as "vintage vinyl" or "classic records."

When it comes to posting content to the web, you should always keep SEO in mind. Yes, you want the content on your site to be as clear and straightforward as possible, but for SEO purposes it's also very important to sprinkle in words and phrases that potential customers are likely to use when searching for businesses like yours online.



Searching the internet has become second nature to most consumers, and that creates an opportunity for your business.

How search engines work

Search engines' inner workings can seem technical and confusing. After all, for each search word or phrase you use, there might be millions of webpages that could be considered relevant. So how do search engines decide which results you see? For those looking for a detailed and technical explanation, [Google has you covered](#). But here's a basic primer:

Crawling: Even before you perform a search, search engines "crawl" the web, gathering data from billions of webpages. Key information that crawlers look for includes new sites, updates to existing sites, and "dead links," or links that don't work any longer.

Indexing: After the search engine crawlers scour the billions of pages, information from each webpage is indexed. If you think that sounds like a lot of information, you are correct — Google says its search index is larger than 100 million gigabytes in size. When indexing the pages, search engines track various factors such as specific keywords on the page and how new the content is.

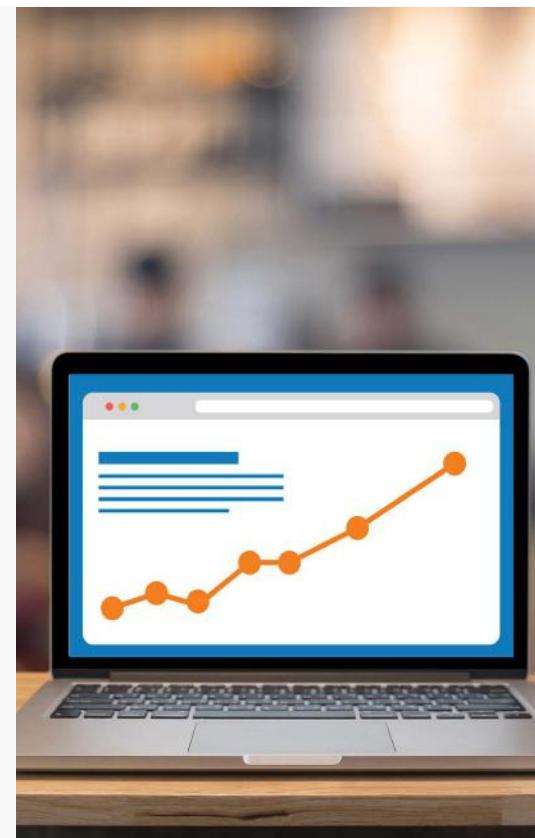
Algorithms: With information from billions of webpages collected and organized, search engines decide which results web searchers see using algorithms based on what they are looking for. These algorithms use many factors to determine the best potential results for each search. They analyze the words that are used, rank pages based on potential usefulness, and pair search words or phrases with webpages that match. Search engines also consider the context of each search, such as the user's past search history and location, and then deliver the best results based on those factors.

Why SEO matters

Your website is one crucial method to drive business, and SEO is an essential tool for getting that done. If you don't build and maintain your website using SEO techniques, you risk losing out on potential business.

Additionally, as you have probably noticed during your own web searches, the higher up on a search results page a website appears, the more likely potential customers are to click on that link. The search results appearing on pages 2, 3 and later are even less likely to be clicked on. These high-ranking websites on page 1 of search results use SEO in a way that gives them the best chance to be noticed by potential customers.

One of your SEO goals should be to show up in the results when people search the web for information related to your business's products or services, and then continue implementing SEO best practices so your website moves forward on those search results. Your competitors are likely making the most of SEO, so it's important for your business to do so as well.



Quick SEO fixes

To optimize your website for search, you must prove to search engines that your website is relevant to particular keywords. For example, a bakery can determine that its customers are looking for donuts, and may focus on "chocolate donuts" as a keyword. To show up in searches for "chocolate donuts," the keyword should appear across the website. Here are some quick fixes to boost your website's SEO:

- 1 Page title:** The title of each webpage is the most important SEO element on your site. Include keywords as close to the beginning of the title as possible. Limit the title to 60 characters. The title appears in the browser tab and is the blue clickable text in a search result.
- 2 Page URL:** Including keywords in the URL will help search engines better understand what the page's content is about.
- 3 Meta-description:** The meta-description does not show on your website, but rather appears as the text underneath the blue clickable text in a search result. Each page's meta-description should be relevant to that page's content.
- 4 Primary headline:** The primary headline is the second most important SEO element. Include keywords within the H1 tag, which is the HTML language that indicates a headline.
- 5 Body content:** Make sure to include keywords where appropriate, but don't overdo it. Ensure the content reads well. Update it frequently to keep it fresh and relevant.
- 6 Image names:** When placing important images on your webpages, include keywords in the file names as appropriate.
- 7 Image alt tags:** Most website platforms allow you to append alternate (alt) text to images. This is the information that describes the image. Include keywords as appropriate, as these alt tags are picked up by search engines as well.

The screenshot shows the homepage of the Keystone Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts website. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a search bar containing 'Keystone Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts | Bristol Borough, PA' and a link to 'http://keystoneboxingmma.com/'. Below the search bar are links for address, phone number, and email, along with social media icons and a login/register button. The main header features the 'KEYSTONE BOXING & MMA GYM' logo and navigation links for YOUTH PROGRAMS, ADULT PROGRAMS, OUR INSTRUCTORS, CLASS SCHEDULE & SIGN UP, and BLOG. The main banner has a dark background with a photo of a young boy in a blue shirt and red pants practicing a punch, with a coach in the background. The text 'BUILDING CHAMPIONS IN LIFE & IN THE RING' is prominently displayed, with 'SIGN UP TODAY' in a red button below it. To the left of the banner, a section titled 'OUR MISSION' is visible. On the right side of the banner, there are numbered circles (4, 6, 7) pointing to specific parts of the page. Below the banner, there are two large diagonal images: one showing a close-up of a young boy's face and another showing an adult female boxer.

① Keystone Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts | Bristol Borough, PA

② http://keystoneboxingmma.com/

③ 247 Mill St #5, Bristol, PA 19007

④ (267) 393-0756

⑤ Featuring: Boxing, Jiu Jitsu, Mixed Martial Arts, and Little Ninjas

⑥ Login / Register

⑦ YOUTH PROGRAMS ADULT PROGRAMS OUR INSTRUCTORS CLASS SCHEDULE & SIGN UP BLOG

⑧ KEYSTONE BOXING & MMA GYM

⑨ BUILDING CHAMPIONS IN LIFE & IN THE RING

⑩ SIGN UP TODAY

⑪ OUR MISSION

⑫ Keystone Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts is dedicated to providing the youth and adults of the Bristol Borough area with a safe, positive and welcoming training environment. Our programs are designed to teach discipline, self-control and coordination while instilling confidence and commitment in members of all ages.

⑬ ADULT



Keystone Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts



- ① Keystone Boxing & Mixed Martial Arts Gym | Bristol Borough, PA
- ② keystoneboxingmma.com/▼
- ③ At Keystone Boxing & MMA Gym, we offer training and courses for kids, teens, and adults in boxing, muay thai, jiu jitsu and the mixed martial arts.

The importance of local search

For small businesses, **local search** is vital. Because smaller businesses look for customers in a specific market or region, it's important their webpages show up in searches specific to those areas. When it comes to search, proximity really matters: 72 percent of consumers who searched on a smartphone visited a store within 5 miles of their location.

For example, a boutique pet store in Des Moines, Iowa, doesn't need to show up in searches for pet stores in Toledo, Omaha or Dallas. It does, however, need to be visible in searches performed around Des Moines to help boost local foot traffic.

One of the most important factors in local search results is [your business's physical location](#), because search results tend to highlight businesses near the searcher's actual location. If the search was performed on a smartphone, the search engine likely knows the searcher's exact location thanks to GPS. If the search was performed on a desktop or laptop computer, the search engine tries to pinpoint the searcher's location based on their IP address and Wi-Fi data.

This is something you can test for yourself. Search on your smartphone for "hardware stores." The top results that show up are most likely the hardware stores closest to your actual physical location.

So what does this knowledge mean for your business? No matter the SEO tactics you use to boost your search results, one of the most important things you can do is make sure your business address is prevalent across the web. This includes your business's website, its social media pages, and online listings and directories (more on those in the next section).

"When you're on your mobile device, you might look up 'oil change near me.' When people are looking for a service, you need to have a webpage to match that search."

— Noah Turner
SEO Manager, Deluxe Corp.

What if your business doesn't have a physical location?

Not every small business has a storefront or commercial office space. Some businesses are based out of a garage or home office. Even in those cases, however, it's important for you to list the physical or mailing address of your business online to help attract customers through searches performed near your location.



When a search engine knows your address and the type of business you are, you improve your odds of showing up in results when a search is performed within close proximity of your physical location.

72% of consumers who did a local search visited a store within 5 miles of their location.

— Wordstream, 2016

Consider paid search

Building your website using best SEO practices should always be a priority, but **paid search** is another option to help boost business via search engines.

Paid search is a pay-per-click (PPC) business model, in which businesses bid on specific keywords and have ads appear next to search results when those keywords are used. One of the most popular paid search platforms is Google's AdWords.

To see how this works, try searching Google for a word or phrase such as "plumber" or "carpet cleaner." On the search results page, the first handful of entries are accompanied by a tiny square that says "Ad," which indicates those entries have been paid for (even if they mostly look like "normal" search results).

Businesses pay Google each time one of these paid search results is clicked, and the price per click can vary based on how popular and in-demand the search keyword is.

The image displays two screenshots from Google. The top screenshot shows a search for 'PPC' where the top result is labeled 'AD'. To its right is an orange callout box containing three bullet points: 'Pay-per-click ads', 'Variable pricing', and 'Immediate results'. The bottom screenshot shows a map of a local area with several martial arts studios marked. Overlaid on this map is the text 'Maps & Local SEO'. To the right of this text is a teal callout box containing three bullet points: 'Earned search results', 'Not paid for', and 'Long-term strategy'.

- Pay-per-click ads
- Variable pricing
- Immediate results

- Earned search results
- Not paid for
- Long-term strategy

What are the benefits and drawbacks of PPC?

Paid search has three main benefits:

- Guaranteed visibility:** If you're willing to pay the price, you can guarantee that your business shows up any time a specific word or phrase is searched for. If you want your page to show up every time someone searches for "accounting services in Pensacola," you can make that happen. Paid search does not, however, guarantee someone will click on your ad to visit your website.
- Flexible options:** You can fine-tune your paid search ads to give them the best chance to reach your desired customers. For example, if you run a pizza joint near a college campus and want to attract students, you can make sure your site shows up anytime someone searches for "pizza" while on campus.
- Web presence beyond search engines:** With paid search, you can have ads for your business show up on other relevant websites beyond search engine results pages. For example, the Google Display Network is a group of thousands of websites you can utilize. You can choose specific sites you'd like to be on, or indicate the types of customers you'd like to attract and let Google choose the best sites for you. You can get very specific or narrow with your targeting. For example, if you're looking to attract youth hockey players and their parents to sell them equipment, you can purchase ad space on websites within the network that this crowd tends to visit often.

Paid search does have some potential drawbacks to be aware of:

- Paid search doesn't help SEO.** Think of paid search as "pay for play." You pay the search engine, and they make sure your page shows up among the ads at the top of the results. That doesn't mean your page will begin to show up in searches organically in the results below the ads. For that you will need to make sure you've made use of sound SEO strategies.
- It costs money.** It may seem obvious, but paid search is not free. That means you'll need to make sure a paid search strategy fits within your budget.
- It may turn off some potential customers.** Some web users may totally ignore paid search ads because they know the business paid money to be seen. It may be unfair, and it's certainly not the case for everyone who uses the web, but there are some users that are skeptical about clicking on paid search results.

Should you give PPC a try?

One of the good things about paid search is, while it does cost money, it doesn't take a huge investment to get started. You can dabble in paid search for \$50 or \$100 and see if the results are worth that investment.

If you give it a try and begin to see a positive increase in business, you may want to include paid search in your long-term strategy. On the other hand, if you don't see a return on investment that makes sense for your business, then sticking with traditional SEO tactics may be sufficient.

Looking for a partner?

Deluxe can help you get found by search engines and create pay-per-click ads. Sharpen your online strategy today.

 [LEARN MORE](#)



Part 5: Boost your online visibility

One of the simplest, yet most important, things you can do to enhance your online visibility is make sure your business name, address and other contact information is placed on the web in as many places as possible.

The most effective way to do this is to make sure your business is listed consistently across a variety of online directories. The word “directories” can be a bit deceiving, however. Yes, this can include online versions of old-school directories such as White Pages, Yellow Pages and the Better Business Bureau, but it also includes sites such as Facebook, Yelp, Angie’s List, LinkedIn, CitySearch and Foursquare.

In fact, there are at least [50 online local business directories](#) that you should consider, depending on your business goals and target audience.

What listings can do for your business

When looking for a particular product, service or business, searchers are more likely to use their phone than a computer. There is no doubt that many of these searches lead to online sales, but most people still prefer to do business face-to-face.

Take some [numbers from the U.S. Department of Commerce](#) as proof. In the third quarter of 2017, U.S. online retail sales reached \$115.3 billion, up 3.6 percent from the same period a year earlier. That's a huge number, of course, but it still represents less than 10 percent of total retail sales during the quarter, which came in at a whopping \$1.27 billion. So, while online sales are significant and on the rise, the majority of sales still occur offline.

This is precisely where online directory listings can help — they can drive people to your business's actual location. Even if you don't have a storefront or physical office space where you can work with customers, keeping your address and contact info up to date will help your business show up in local searches performed in your area.

Where to focus your online listings

It's time to consider which listings and directories you should use.

One of the most important is undoubtedly [Google My Business](#). Google remains the dominant search engine on the web and likely will be for the foreseeable future. A listing on Google My Business means you will also appear on Google Maps, a tool that many use when looking for directions. It also means that customers can post reviews of your business on Google (more on the importance of online reviews later).

In addition to Google, there are [many online directories you should consider](#), including:

[Angie's List](#)

[Best of the Web](#)

[Bing Places for Business](#)

[The Business Journals](#)

[Citysearch](#)

[DexKnows](#)

[Directory Critic](#)

[Foursquare](#)

[Google My Business](#)

[Hotfrog](#)

[Kudzu](#)

[Local.com](#)

[Manta](#)

[MapQuest](#)

[MerchantCircle](#)

[SuperPages](#)

[TripAdvisor](#)

[White Pages](#)

[Yahoo Local Listings](#)

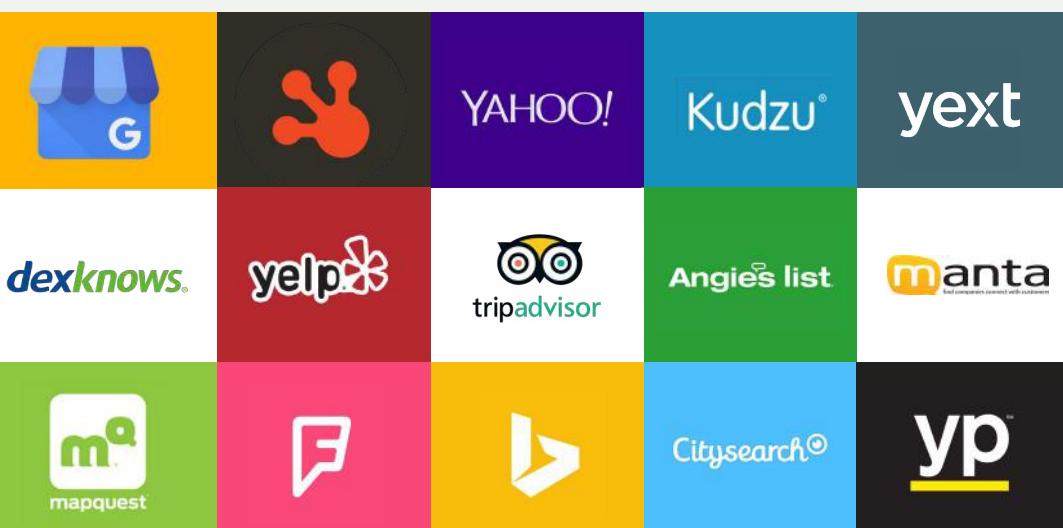
[Yellow Pages](#)

[Yellowbook](#)

[YellowBot](#)

[Yelp](#)

[Yext](#)



The more directories you use, the better. It gives your business a larger presence on the web, which gives you the best chance of getting in front of customers looking for the product or service you offer.

The most important thing to know about online directories

When placing your business information on listings and directories, there is one essential thing you must do to ensure the best results: **Make sure your information is identical across each directory.**

Websites and search engines can act intelligently, but only to a point. Like humans, they get confused if they're given conflicting information. This is why you need to make sure your business name, address and phone number are listed in exactly the same way across the web.

If your business is known by a few different names, pick one and go with it. Customers may call your business *Pam's Bar*, *Pam's Restaurant*, or *Pam's Bar and Grill*, but that will only confuse search engines and directories. Choose the name you'd like to use to identify your business online and keep it consistent across listings.

The same can be said for your address. You don't want to list your address as *123 S. Main St.* in one listing and *123 South Main Street* in another. Even though the addresses are technically the same, keep the format consistent to avoid confusion.

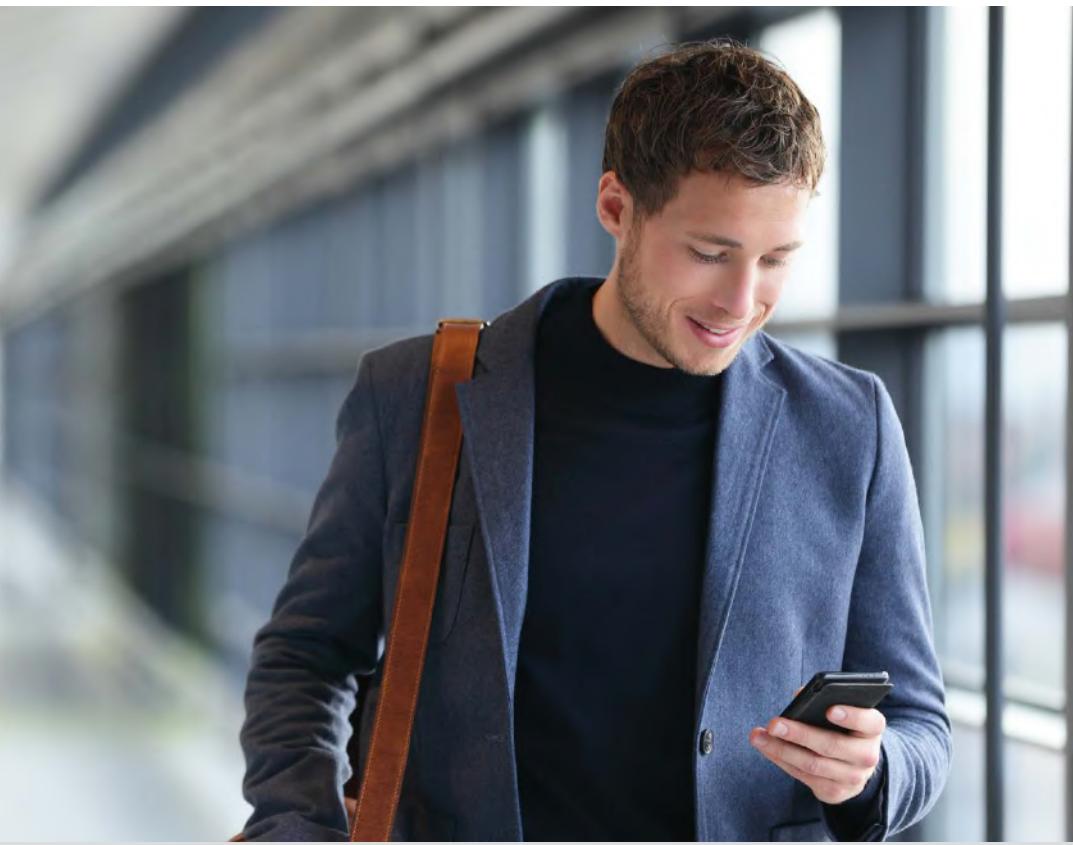
When your business information is listed repeatedly across the web, it builds credibility with search engines because they begin to realize the legitimacy of your business. Keeping your listings consistent is a simple task, but it is crucial.

It's also important to keep this in mind if your business moves locations or changes its name. It may take a bit of work, but if anything changes — business name, address or phone number — be sure to update your listings accordingly.

Customer reviews boost SEO

Another aspect of online directories is reviews. You've likely searched a local restaurant and seen reviews from sites like Google, Facebook and Yelp pop up in the results. If your business has an online presence, there's a good chance customers will review your business as well.

Positive reviews are ideal, of course. The more positive customer reviews a business receives online, the more likely it is to rank highly on Google and other search engines. Reviews are a good way to boost your search engine optimization.



See how you show up online

Deluxe offers businesses a **free scan** of more than 50 online directories, social networks and search sites to ensure your business and contact info are listed correctly in each.

 GET YOUR FREE REPORT NOW



How to get — and manage — online reviews

Ask for reviews. Once a sale or transaction is complete, it doesn't hurt to ask customers to go online and post a review. This lets customers know that you take your reviews and customer service seriously, and that you're committed to constantly improving. If you have your customers' email addresses, consider emailing them a link to your business on Google, Yelp or another listing provider and asking them to submit a quick review. Remember, however, that it's against review sites' policies, and in some cases even illegal, to offer rewards or incentives for customers to post online reviews. That applies even if there is no requirement that those paid-for reviews are positive.

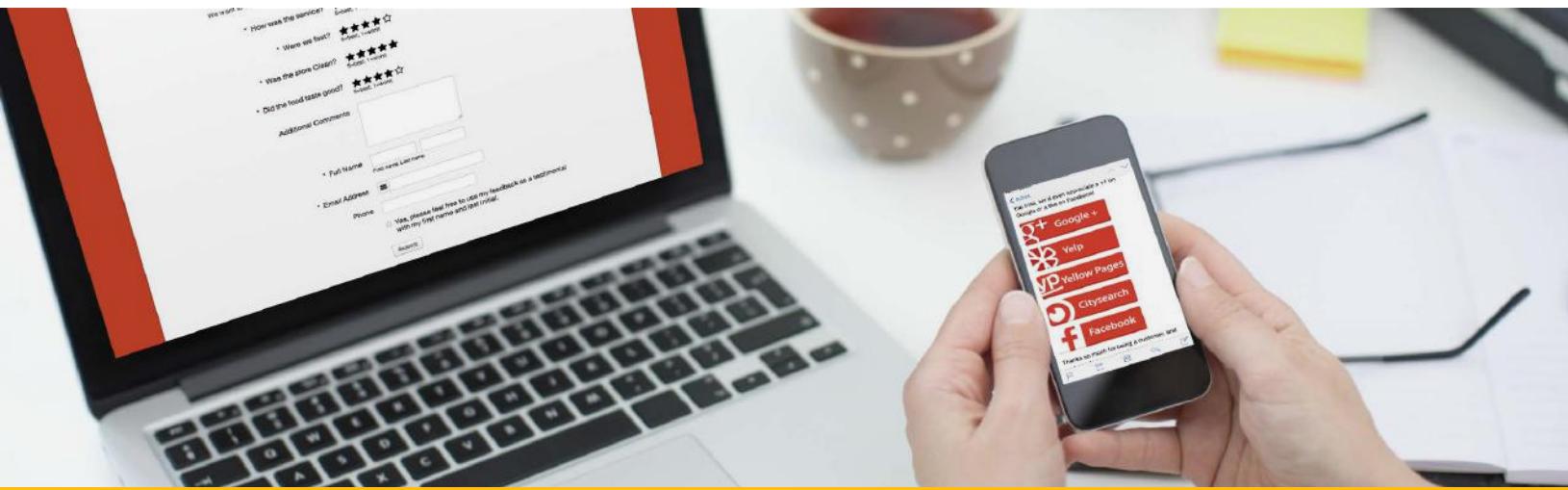
Quickly respond to negative reviews. Receiving a bad review online can feel like a punch to the stomach, but it's bound to happen. After all, it's almost impossible to completely please every customer every time. If you do receive a negative review, immediately respond to it in a positive way, such as offering to do whatever you can to resolve the customer's issue. This can help you retain that customer, and it also shows others you're more than willing to address any concerns that may arise.

Knowing your business will be reviewed online can be a bit scary, but don't let fear get the best of you. Always remember that if you consistently deliver the high quality you know your business can offer, the majority of your reviews will be positive. That will then help your business rank higher on search engines, leading to even more business.

Avoid fake reviews. It may be tempting to pad your stats by asking friends or family members to post positive reviews, but don't succumb to this temptation. The whole point of reviews is to build your business's credibility, and if word gets out that you've planted fake reviews, your credibility will take a major hit.

Deliver quality service. At the end of the day, you and your business are in complete control of how you interact with customers. If you make a point to deliver quality products and excellent customer service, the positive reviews will flow naturally. Sure, you may come across a grouchy customer or two. But generally speaking, if you make it a point to deliver quality, that effort will be reflected in the reviews you receive.

Encourage check-ins. While offering incentives for reviews is a no-no, you often can offer rewards or discounts to customers to check in on sites such as Yelp, Foursquare or Facebook when they visit your business in person. When these customers check in to your business on these types of social media sites, your business will gain exposure among their friends and followers.



Looking for a partner?

Deluxe can help you improve your business listings and drive positive reviews.

LEARN MORE



Part 6: Stay connected with email marketing

Email marketing is inexpensive and delivers an amazing return on investment (ROI). A 2016 survey by the Direct Marketing Association and Demand Metric found that email marketing had a [median ROI of 122 percent](#) — more than four times higher than other marketing formats, including social media, direct mail and paid search.

Email marketing can be one of the most effective ways to drive business. Just think about how often you check your email each day. Remember that tinge of excitement you experience when you receive an attractive offer from a brand or business that you like. The same holds true for your customers.

Email is a strong way to drive revenue because people actually want to hear from businesses via email. A 2017 [study from Adobe](#) showed that 61 percent of consumers said they prefer receiving offers via email, up 24 percent from the previous year.

Email is a marketing tool that almost every business should have in its arsenal. We'll provide some easy steps you can take to get your email marketing efforts up and running.



"Email marketing is one of the most economical ways to generate repeat sales. A lot of business owners don't want to spam their customer base, but it's not spamming when those customers want to hear from you."

— Julie Gordon, Director of Marketing Partnerships, Deluxe Corp.

How to build an effective email following

When you begin your email marketing efforts, determine who you want to send emails to. While many consumers like receiving offers via email, they can also be turned off by unsolicited messages. The trick is to get customers to sign up for your email list, a signal that you have their permission to show up in their inbox.

Here are some easy ways to build your subscriber list:

- 1. A sign-up page on your website:** Including a field on your website where visitors can sign up to get emails is one of the easiest ways to collect email addresses. Just be sure to let visitors know what they're signing up for — a regular newsletter, weekly specials or deals, announcements, and so on.
- 2. Collect email addresses in person:** If you deal with customers face-to-face at an office or storefront, you can provide a sign-up sheet for those interested in hearing from your business. All you need is their name and email address. You can also make it easy for them to sign up by asking for their business card.
- 3. Social media:** If you're using social media sites such as Facebook, LinkedIn or Twitter, you can post a link to your email sign-up page and encourage your followers to join.
- 4. Make signing up a contest:** Give customers a chance to win something for providing their email address.
- 5. Don't give up on bouncebacks:** If you receive bounceback notices from incorrect or invalid email addresses, ask customers if you can update their email address on your list.



More than 6 out of 10 consumers want to receive email offers from brands and businesses they like, a 24% increase over the previous year.

— Adobe Systems Inc., 2017



Need more email guidance?

Download our free **Guide to Email List Management** for expert tips on growing your contact lists and improving your open and clickthrough rates.

 DOWNLOAD EBOOK

What emails should you send?

You don't want to annoy your subscribers by inundating them with multiple emails each day, so in most cases a "less is more" approach works best. When you do send emails, make sure they're relevant and provide some sort of value to the reader.

6 types of emails to consider sending:

Welcome email: Just as it sounds, a welcome email is a message you should send to those who are new to your subscriber list. It can tell subscribers what to expect from future emails, and perhaps provide an introductory offer in appreciation of their signing up.

Newsletter: A newsletter email is best sent regularly, such as once a month or every two weeks. It can include topics such as recent company news, upcoming sales or specials, and other content related to your industry. A newsletter email should be broken up into small chunks of information, with a few short paragraphs for each of the various subjects you'd like to cover. For longer content you'd like to share, include links to associated webpages.

Promotional email: These messages interest your subscribers most. The message can be short and simple, for example, "This week only, large pizzas for only \$10!" Successful promotional emails typically include eye-catching graphics and minimal text, just as any other sort of advertisement would. If the promotion is enticing to the subscriber, they'll act on it. If not, they'll delete it — but your business will stay fresh in their minds.

These are just a few examples. Consider sending emails that educate subscribers about specific products, messages that take a deeper look at industry news or issues, emailed invitations to events your business is hosting, and emails that include testimonials about how effective your products or services can be.

New inventory email: Let subscribers know you have new products in stock. Include some details about the new arrivals, along with photos that make them enticing. If your business is more service-oriented, use this type of message to promote new services you may offer.

Survey email: Surveys can be used to collect many different types of information, such as customer demographics, likes and dislikes, or buying habits. They can also elicit feedback on customers' most recent experience with your business. Consider offering an incentive such as a small discount or free shipping for taking part in the survey. The data you collect can be used to target your email messaging even further.

Reorder email: Remind subscribers that it's time to reorder a certain product, such as vitamins, pet medications or printer cartridges. A well-timed reorder email will be especially appreciated by those who don't always remember when it's time to re-up on the products you offer.

Create an editorial calendar

To save time and streamline your emails, map out your messages in advance. An editorial calendar is a tool that helps you plan the types of emails you plan to send subscribers over the coming weeks and months.



To begin your editorial calendar, plot out emails around **four key areas**:

1. Holidays (Valentine's Day, 4th of July, Halloween, Small Business Saturday, Christmas, etc.)
2. Events (Super Bowl, back to school, etc.)
3. Upcoming promotions or events (seasonal sales, deals of the week, customer appreciation parties, etc.)
4. Product or service updates (new releases, seasonal recipes, etc.)

Think of your editorial calendar as a guide, not a rigid set of rules that you have to follow strictly. If something pops up that makes sense for your business to email about — timely and relevant news, a new product launch, updated service offerings — it's perfectly fine to override your editorial calendar.

Avoid these seven email sins

Email marketing has benefits for every business, but it doesn't come without potential pitfalls. To get the most out of your emails, avoid these seven mistakes.

1. **Sloppy copy:** This should go without saying, but avoid sending emails containing misspelled words or poor grammar. These messages project an unprofessional vibe and tarnish your credibility.
2. **Buying email lists:** As tempting as it might be to take shortcuts to build out your email subscriber lists, buying a set of addresses from a third party is almost always a bad idea. It's crucial to build your list with subscribers who are actually interested in receiving your emails, and buying lists is the opposite of that. In addition, purchased lists are often filled with invalid addresses that will flood you with bouncebacks. You might also run afoul of some anti-spam laws, which leads to the third sin.
3. **Spamming readers:** Spam is not only an annoying tactic that can paint your business in a bad light with potential customers, but it can also be illegal. In the U.S., for example, there are a number of email regulations businesses need to follow under the CAN-SPAM Act of 2003. It's also important to note that email marketers are bound to anti-spam laws where the email recipients *reside*, not where the business is located. In many countries, an opt-in from recipients is required for email marketing.
4. **Sending from “noreply@yourbusiness.com”:** When setting up your email campaign, include a personal address — or at least one that looks personal — in the “from” field. It could be the name of the business owner, or a manager. Emails sent from generic usernames such as “noreply” or “admin” feel impersonal to readers. And, if a recipient replies to the email with a question, it's unlikely anyone will read or respond to it.
5. **Novel-length emails:** It's perfectly fine to have some substance to your emails, but don't make them so long that readers tune out or feel annoyed. Short and sweet is often the safest play.
6. **Not enough (or too many) links:** Sprinkling useful links throughout your emails is a bit of an art form. On one hand, you don't want to include too many because you may overwhelm or confuse your readers. At the same time, you don't want to send emails without any links at all, particularly if your goal is to entice the reader to take an action. Go with a happy medium. Take a look at some promotional emails you've received recently, and try to emulate what seemed to work best on you. Sometimes one can't-miss call to action (CTA) is all you need.
7. **Not including an unsubscribe function:** The U.S. CAN-SPAM Act requires businesses to let recipients know how to opt out of receiving messages, and opt-out requests must be honored promptly. You also don't want to make email subscribers feel like they're locked in. Most appreciate an easy-to-find “unsubscribe” button or link, even if they don't plan to use it.

Design for high open rates

Most email marketing providers offer predesigned templates that you can customize to fit your business's brand, with no graphic design experience necessary. Keep these pointers in mind when designing your emails:

- **Avoid text-only emails.** Text-only emails often feel unprofessional and dated. Email between friends or colleagues is largely a written medium, but email from businesses should be visual. That's not to say words aren't important. Just remember to include some quality graphics or imagery to accompany your words.
- **Use strong photography.** Leading with an eye-catching photo is often the most effective way to immediately captivate your readers. If you're using a photo to showcase a product, you don't want it to look like the image was shot by an intern in the break room. You don't have to break the bank on a fancy camera, but try to use techniques such as smart background choices to help make the image of the product pop.
- **Choose clean fonts.** Try to use fonts that are easy to read, and use one or two at most. Take inspiration from eye-catching ads or magazine layouts to come up with some ideas. Avoid fonts that are too playful or hard to read on smaller screens.
- **Don't forget about mobile.** Most emails are opened on mobile devices, so be sure to format your emails so that they're easily readable at a small size. Nothing is more annoying than opening an email on your smartphone only to see that the images don't load, the links are too tiny to tap or the text is unreadable.
- **Extend your brand to email.** At a minimum, be sure to include your logo in all your email marketing. If possible, make the colors and typefaces align with what you use in your marketing materials and on your website. Add links to your website, social media profiles and any relevant landing pages. Don't forget to make sure your address and/or phone number appear too, so customers can easily contact you.

Get customers to take action!

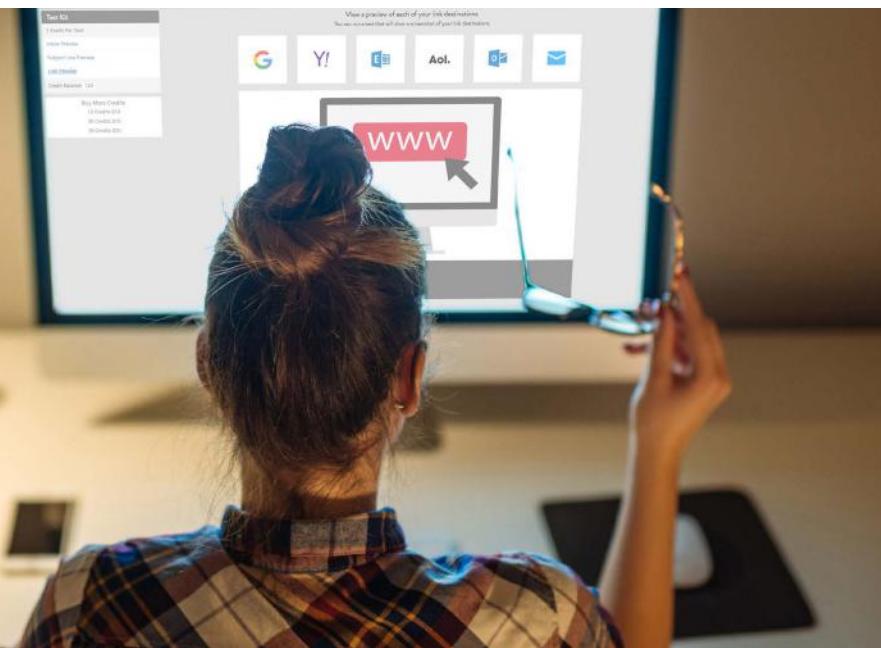
In most of the emails you send, your goal will be to get the recipient to take some sort of action, whether it's making an appointment, buying a product or inquiring about your services. Here are a few quick tips on putting effective **calls to action** (CTAs) in your emails:

Add buttons: Buttons help your calls to action stand out from the rest of the text in your message. When email readers see a button within a message, they assume it will take them where they need to go to complete an action.

Use simple text: Each of your call to action buttons should use short and simple text, preferably two or three words. Common examples include "Buy Now," "Read More," "Learn More," "Book Now" or "Make an Appointment."

Don't overdo it: More is not always merrier. Don't dilute your calls to action by including too many. Try to limit yourself to just one or two buttons per message. Often, one near the top and another at the end of the message are sufficient.

Use white space: Be sure to leave plenty of white space between your buttons and email text to help your calls to action stand out even more.



Track your emails' effectiveness

One of the best things about email marketing, besides its high ROI, is how easy it is to measure its effectiveness. Check these metrics regularly:

- **Delivery rate:** This is the percentage of emails that were actually delivered to your readers' inboxes, as opposed to those that bounced back. The higher your delivery rate, the more you're reaching your desired audience. A lower rate means you have too many addresses on your list that are inactive or invalid. Strive for delivery to be as close to 100 percent as possible.
- **Open rate:** This is the percentage of email recipients who clicked to open (and presumably read) your email. A low open rate may mean you need to improve your subject lines to make sure subscribers are interested enough to open your messages. You could also consider changing the "from" email address to something your readers will recognize. Aim for open rates that are about 20 percent.
- **Clickthrough rate:** This is the percentage of recipients who clicked on a link within your email to take the action you intended. Consistently low clickthrough rates mean you likely need to reconsider the type of content or deals you include in your emails. A good clickthrough rate is about 2.5 percent.

As you become savvier with email marketing, you may look into more advanced tools and metrics that can help fine-tune your strategy even further.

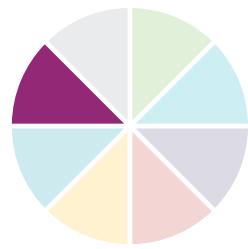
It's essential for small businesses to have a strong logo and an effective website, but it's just as vital to take part in email marketing. Everyone with access to the internet checks email at least semi-regularly, so avoiding email marketing means you may be missing out on significant business.



Looking for a partner?

Deluxe Email Marketing makes it easy to send professional, mobile-responsive emails — whether you create them yourself or let us handle it for you.

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Part 7: Find more fans with social media

Although a more recent development than email, social media is a remarkably widespread form of communication, not only for friends, family and peers, but for businesses as well. Millions of people use platforms such as Facebook and Twitter every day, and it's increasingly common for users to interact with their favorite brands on those platforms.

That's why small businesses that aren't on social media are missing out on a key driver of growth.

To win customers on social media, businesses must go beyond signing up for a Facebook profile and slapping their logo on it. They must consider which channels to use, the types of content to post and whether paid social advertising campaigns make sense.

Start with Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn

When developing your social media strategy, the first thing to decide is which social channels to use. For most small businesses, there are three musts: Facebook, Twitter and (in many but not all cases) LinkedIn.

You may have some familiarity with one or all of these platforms, but here is a quick overview of the strengths each can offer small businesses:



Facebook: Facebook's sheer size — the site claims more than [2 billion monthly active users](#) worldwide — makes it a necessary social stop for any business. No doubt nearly everyone you know has a Facebook account. Because so many people use it, there is widespread familiarity and comfort with it. Users are willing interact with businesses they find on Facebook.



Twitter: Twitter allows users to post short and quick content, limited to 280 characters. Users can also include links, photos or videos. The nature of Twitter allows your business to quickly and easily capitalize on trending topics. For example, if seemingly everybody on Twitter is commenting on the Academy Awards, a well-timed movie-themed tweet from your business would be appropriate. Not only does Twitter allow you to keep up with trends, but it can help you communicate directly with individual customers, and enable you to post promotional ads and videos.



LinkedIn: As a social platform designed for professionals, LinkedIn is all about networking. Posting relevant content on the site can help generate sales leads, and it can also help your business find qualified candidates if you're looking to hire. Also, since many businesses have a presence on LinkedIn, it gives you an opportunity to scout your competition and help differentiate your business. Because of its emphasis on professional networking, LinkedIn may not always be a natural fit for restaurants, retailers and some service businesses. That said, if your competitors are on LinkedIn, your business should be, too.



Other social channels to consider



Pinterest is a visual-driven social media site where customers look for inspiration in fashion, crafts, recipes and do-it-yourself projects.



Instagram is another visual social media channel owned by Facebook. It's ideal for businesses that have strong photography to share.



YouTube allows you to post video content — everything from traditional TV ads to how-to's.



Snapchat is like Instagram, where users send and post messages, photos and videos that disappear after 24 hours. Despite its reputation as a social service for teens, companies also tend to use this platform for promoting events.



"A business not on social media is missing out on an enormous marketing opportunity. Look up brands and companies you like — and even your competitors. It's a safe bet they're all connecting with customers on Facebook, Twitter and other social platforms."

— Katie Cerney

Director of Social Media Strategy, Deluxe Corp.

5 things you need to set up your social media accounts

Getting started on various social media platforms is relatively simple and takes little time. Each platform has a similar process for signing up. Here's what you need:

- Email address:** All social media platforms require a valid email address to get started, and in many cases that address will be used to log in.
- Username/handle:** In addition to an email address, most social platforms ask you to create a username or handle, which will be used to identify your business. On Facebook, this may be as simple as typing in your business's name. Handles can be tougher to come by on Twitter because duplicates aren't allowed. For a business named Sally's Cupcakes, an example would be @SallysCupcakes, but since that is a fairly common name, you may need to get creative when coming up with an alternative. Many businesses use the city they're located in to differentiate themselves. For example, if Sally's Cupcakes is in the Dallas/Fort Worth area, one option might be @SallysCupcakesDFW. Try to keep your usernames and handles as simple as possible, while also making it clear who your business is.
- Profile icon/photo:** In most cases your logo is a great option for your business profile image. Some platforms such as Facebook and Twitter also include a larger background image on profile pages, and here you might consider using a photo of your building, products or staff.
- Company information:** Many services include an "About" section where you can write a short description of your business and what you offer. This can be a useful tool in building interest in your business for those who may not be familiar. It's also important to add your physical location and contact information, so customers who find you first on social media can find you in real life, too.
- Website URL:** Be sure to include your website address somewhere on your profile so visitors to your page can also visit your actual business website.

What should you post on social media?

Now that you have your social media accounts set up, it's time to post messages that grab your followers' attention. So, what exactly should you post?

The answer varies for every type of business, as well as for each different social platform. But one thing is consistently true: **The most successful posts for businesses are entertaining and engaging, and also tell the story of that specific business.**

Yes, it is also good to include promotional posts that let followers know about a particular sale or event, but your social channels should include much more than calls to buy. For example, if most of your posts on Facebook say something like, "Be sure to visit us this weekend at our location on the corner of 1st St. and Washington Ave.," followers will begin to lose interest quickly.

Remember that your website is designed to give potential customers all the key information they need about your business. Your social channels, then, help you engage with those same people on a deeper and more personal level.



How to come up with social post ideas

The possibilities for social posts are nearly endless, which can make it somewhat intimidating if you're just getting started. Over time, you'll begin to see and feel which types of posts do well for your business, and which types fall flat.

You definitely want your posts to be original, but it also doesn't hurt to surf Facebook or Twitter yourself and check out the types of things your competitors post. Use their best posts as inspiration for your own social content, and tailor it for your specific business and customers.

Similar to email marketing, putting together a content calendar for social media is a great way to guide yourself throughout the year. For example, in February you may consider posts relating to big events such as the Super Bowl or Academy Awards, and in late summer you may want posts related to Labor Day and back-to-school season.

Here are some social post ideas:

- Video from an event
- A customer poll
- Photo caption contest
- Link to relevant news story
- Promotional posts featuring seasonal events or sales
- Product photos and reviews
- Video tutorials
- Event announcements
- Link to a blog post
- Memes

Plan to use a mix of these types of posts to keep things fresh and followers coming back for more.

Social media don'ts

A wrong move on social can make customer engagement turn sour quickly. Stay away from these:

Personal opinions: Your own personal opinions should be shared on your personal social accounts, not on those of your business. You don't want to risk alienating potential customers that may not share your views on a particular subject.

Offensive content: It should go without saying, but don't share or engage with content that may be considered offensive, whether it's sexist, racist, explicit or vulgar. Your social channels are a reflection of your business's brand, so keep things professional. If you're not sure about the tone of something, err on the side of caution.

Political posts: It's usually best to stay away from political talk on your business's social accounts. You could risk offending half of your potential audience if you choose to be overly political, be it on the right or left.

How often should you post on social media?

You want to post content often enough to keep your business at the top of followers' minds, but not so frequently you turn them off. Here are some general guidelines:

Facebook: 1 to 2 times per day

LinkedIn: 1 time per day

Twitter: 3 to 5 times per day

YouTube: 1 to 4 times per month

Pinterest: 5 times per day

Instagram: 1 to 2 times per day

Snapchat: 1 to 2 times per day

These figures aren't completely rigid and vary business to business. It's perfectly fine to occasionally skip a day of posting on LinkedIn, or to post two pieces of content on one day. But if you generally follow the above guidelines, it should give your social platforms a nice flow and keep the followers coming.



Need more social media guidance?

Download Deluxe's free **Guide to Advertising on Facebook** eBook for expert tips on reaching new customers with targeted Facebook ads.

 DOWNLOAD EBOOK

Measure your social media success

Similar to email marketing, one of the best things about social media is the ability to quickly and accurately measure results. All of the major social platforms have tools for businesses to use that can measure social media activity in a number of ways, including overall social activity over time, or activity relating to one specific post or campaign.

Here are **four key areas** you can use to track your social performance:

1. **Engagement:** See how many people are taking an action with your social posts, indicating that they are engaged. Here you can look at metrics such as likes, shares, retweets, replies and comments to see how engaged your social followers are. This is helpful because it means your content is not only being seen, but users are sharing or responding to it.
2. **Impressions and reach:** These intertwined metrics can sometimes be confusing. Impressions are the total number of times your post was displayed to users in their news feeds. If users share your post with their networks, your impressions increase. Reach measures how many users had the potential to see your posts. To put it more simply, impressions are the total number of times your post was displayed to users, while your reach is the total number of people who may have seen it.
3. **Web traffic:** If the goal is to drive traffic to your business website, you can monitor how many visitors your site received from links you placed in your social posts and profiles. This is a good way to see which platforms and which types of posts are most effective at getting users to click through to your website.
4. **Market share:** To see where you stand among competitors, compare metrics including shares, likes and retweets to those of your competition. This will give you an idea of where you stand, in terms of awareness, among those you are competing with.

Paid social campaigns improve visibility

If you're putting a lot of thought and energy into your social posts without seeing great results, you may want to consider a paid social campaign, such as Promoted Posts on Facebook, LinkedIn Sponsored Posts or Promoted Tweets on Twitter.

Paid social advertising has a few advantages, including:

- **Added reach:** One of the main goals of your posts is to get them seen by as many people as possible, and a paid campaign means your post could be instantly added to the social feeds of thousands of additional users — including people who haven't previously followed or liked your account.
- **Low costs:** Paid social campaigns are typically very cost-effective, sometimes as low as \$5 for an additional 1,000 views on platforms such as Facebook.
- **Targeting abilities:** Many social platforms allow you to highly target your paid campaigns by demographics, geography, users' interests and other criteria — so you can attract the attention of users most likely to want, need or enjoy your services.

The importance of social media in our society continues to grow, and social platforms are here to stay. No small business should ignore this vital marketing tool. Use social platforms to grow and engage with your customer base, in a way that makes sense for your products and services.

Looking for a partner?

Deluxe can help you grow your audience and get followers talking about you online.





Social Media Case Study: Filament Tattoo Company

Filament Tattoo Company is a world-class tattoo studio in Wabash, Indiana. After the shop became a fixture in the community within its first two years, owner Matt Haynes hoped to transform Filament into a regional tattoo destination.

Haynes knew that connecting with tattoo lovers on Facebook would help Filament grow its reach to the greater Midwest. Like many businesses, however, Filament seemed to be experiencing diminished returns from its social media marketing efforts.

Deluxe reviewed Filament's Facebook presence and discovered the shop had acquired a significant number of business page likes — yet its reach was minimal. Filament's posts simply weren't showing up in followers' feeds.

To overcome this hurdle, the Deluxe team developed a strategy using Facebook ads to promote and grow the Filament Tattoo page. They also got to work building a thriving community of fans who wanted to interact with the shop on Facebook on a regular basis.

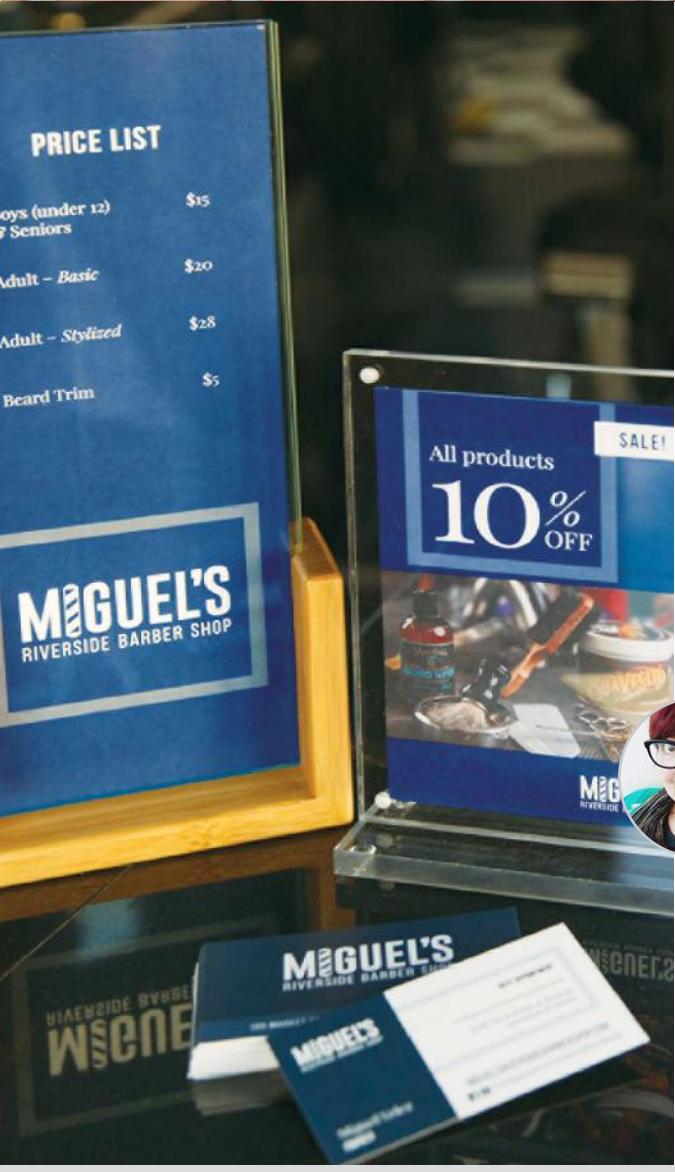
Deluxe devised a three-part strategy:

1. Create highly targeted Facebook ads within the region that Haynes wanted to reach. The ads invited customers to like Filament's Facebook page.
2. Invite followers to join a new Filament Facebook Group that provides unlimited reach. This tight-knit group is also more likely to interact with posts from the shop.
3. Build a regional community through the new Facebook Group.



Within a few months, Filament recorded a 34 percent increase in sales, and the shop's appointments were booked solid.

Deluxe helped Filament Tattoo expand by clearly understanding Haynes' goals, and creating a plan to help him meet those goals using tools that drove results.



Part 8: Tie it all together with print marketing

Print marketing is essential to nearly every business, and it is one of the easiest ways to get your name out there. One mistake that many small businesses make is thinking about print marketing as something that detracts from their online efforts. In reality, print is something that enhances your digital promotions across the board.

Print marketing has a durable, impactful nature that complements your online presence. From stickers, business cards and postcards, to promotional items such as T-shirts and pens, print gives your business visibility wherever your customers are. Add your website, email address and social media accounts to these materials, so customers can easily find you online.



"Print marketing is a fantastic way to make an impression in a crowded online world, especially when you use print in tandem with the rest of your marketing."

— Sonia Mansfield, Content Marketing Manager,
Deluxe Corp.

For the most impact, imprint your brand on these staples

For best results, mix and match a few of these items to get the most bang for your buck:

- **Business cards:** A business card is a must for every business. Be sure to include all of the ways potential customers can contact you, including a phone number, email address, website and a physical address if you have one. Don't forget your social media info, such as your Facebook profile or Twitter handle.
- **Brochures:** If you want to give potential customers detailed information about your products or services, brochures are an excellent option. You can include photos of your products or business location, along with all of your contact information. People often share brochures, meaning each one you produce may be seen by multiple sets of eyes.
- **Postcards:** Think of postcards as a slimmed-down version of brochures. There's enough space for some impactful photos, contact info, and perhaps a coupon, special or promotion. Postcards work well as direct-mail marketing pieces, but you can also distribute them in other ways, such as passing them out to people at events, making them available near your register and slipping them into packaging materials.
- **Letterhead and stationery:** If your business does any correspondence through traditional mail, letterhead and stationery featuring your business name and logo will give your mail a more professional and polished look and reinforce your brand far and wide.
- **Stickers:** Stickers have many uses. You can put them on product packaging. You can create bumper stickers to distribute with each sale. You can make buy-one-get-one stickers and place them on products that are part of a "BOGO" free deal. You can produce stickers featuring your logo and website and hand them out at events.
- **Retail packaging:** Turn purchases into walking ads with personalized shopping bags, gift boxes and takeout containers.
- **Promotional items and apparel:** Consider printing branded items that customers will find useful. T-shirts, pens, notepads, popsockets and tote bags all help your logo and brand stay in people's minds day in and day out.

4 reasons print is vital to every marketing plan

1. **You can hold it in your hand.** Unlike an online ad or a social media post, print pieces are tangible things that potential customers can actually touch and feel, which makes your message harder to ignore.
2. **It's easy to target an audience.** Many small businesses like to target a particular geographic area, and print marketing lends itself perfectly to this approach. For example, you can use print pieces such as postcards or doorknob hangers in the specific neighborhoods that make sense for your business.
3. **Print is mobile.** One of the best things about printed items like business cards, brochures and stickers is that potential customers can take promotions with them. This means folks can literally carry around your message — and contact info — wherever they go.
4. **It's all about your business.** When a potential customer watches TV, listens to the radio or goes online, it's possible your message can get lost in the clutter of similar messages from other businesses. A printed piece eliminates distractions and focuses the potential customer on your message.



Best practices for print marketing success

Both digital and print marketing can be very cost-effective, so you don't need a huge budget to target potential customers using this two-pronged approach. Still, plan to maximize your results by using print in an intelligent way that makes the most sense for your business. Keep these best practices in mind:

- **Stay true to your brand.** Any type of marketing you do is a reflection of your business and brand, and print marketing is no different. Produce print pieces that represent your brand well. For example, a quirky neighborhood boutique may want to use more playful fonts and images. Or a cleaning company that takes pride in timely service will want to convey that in print.
- **Utilize your logo.** The more people see your logo, the more they'll associate it with the products or services your business offers. Include it on all the print marketing you do.
- **Don't overdo it.** With print marketing, a "less is more" approach is often the way to go. Try not to overwhelm potential customers. Too much copy or a cluttered design may land your print items in the recycle bin.
- **Include a call to action.** Use print marketing to generate sales. That may mean including a coupon or promotion to help drive foot traffic, or maybe a promotional code that customers can use on your website for a small discount. Other calls to action can prompt customers to book an appointment or call for a consultation.
- **Use eye-catching imagery.** You have probably seen thousands of print marketing pieces in your life, but how many are truly memorable? If you're using mainly graphics and text, make sure the design is easy on the eye. If you use photos, try to incorporate artistic or powerful images that will stand out from run-of-the-mill stock photography.

Print boosts your online marketing

One of the main challenges of online marketing is building a list of email recipients and social media followers. Print marketing should be one of your go-to methods to do that.

No matter which items you print, they should nearly always include your business's email address and social media handles, so customers can easily go online, subscribe to your email list, and find you on social.

Additionally, when your print marketing looks like your website, which looks like your place of business, which looks like what people see on your social pages, which looks like your packaging, which looks like your email messages – and all of it features your strong logo – you'll stay in customers' minds long after they've transacted with you. Print is one more way to reinforce the brand you've worked so hard to build online and at your workplace.

Even for businesses that are digital-first, it will always pay off to have a presence in the physical world. Print helps support your other marketing while expanding your reach and making a positive impression in its own right.



Looking for a partner?

A Deluxe printing specialist can help your business make an impact in full color.

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Conclusion: Reach more customers today

You started this book as a business owner, and you finished it as a marketer. Now that you're familiar with the tools of the trade, you can choose the marketing methods that will get noticed by your customers. You have the knowledge to start spreading the word about your amazing business.

Put your knowledge into action

Dedicate some time today to marketing your business, using the tips in this guide. Here are some items you can start with right away:

- Begin working on your elevator pitch.
- Get feedback on your logo from a customer you trust.
- Add SEO keywords to your website's content.
- Claim your online listings and make sure they're consistent.
- Plan your first email newsletter.
- Create social media pages for your business.
- Begin a calendar of your email campaigns and social posts for the next several weeks or months.
- Start creating your first postcard to add to packaging or mail to customers.

Every effort counts! Return to this guide, as often as necessary, to navigate your marketing challenges.

If you're short on time, remember you have a partner in Deluxe. More than 4.5 million small businesses fulfill their operational and marketing needs with Deluxe products and services. It's been an honor to help them thrive. Today, we're here for you.

Whether your business is a startup or well-established, we offer the expertise you need to define your goals, make a plan, and implement the full suite of tools and services that help you succeed.

Call **866.240.8691** to talk with one of our Small Business Advisers today.





Market your business **successfully**

Rely on Deluxe to help you design the right logo, build an effective website or create eye-catching collateral.

- Logo and website design
- Print marketing materials
- Retail packaging products
- Promotional and apparel products
- Online and email marketing services



Run your business **efficiently**

Every new business needs the basics — banking products, business checks and forms. We can help you find the perfect products to assist with all your everyday needs.

- Business checks and forms
- Cash management and banking products
- Sales and service management
- Payroll services and more

Ready to revolutionize your marketing? Still have questions?

Our Small Business Advisers can help. Get expert advice and insider tips with absolutely no obligation to buy.

Tell us about your business today.

Call 866.240.8691



DELUXE
For the love of small business.[®]

