

DIGITAL MARKETING EBOOK

Actionable Marketing Ideas for Small Businesses



Introduction

With tight budgets, time restrictions and the very many variables you have to juggle in your small business, the unknown world of marketing may have been an afterthought for some time. After all, marketing can seem like a money pit to many small businesses because of the lack of visibility and accountability on what you get for your dollar – or least the perceived lack thereof.

The reality of the matter is that marketing can be a broad concept. Techniques, tactics and strategies can be limitless and opinions about best practices can differ but the main goal is always the same: **attract more paying customers.**

That's the beauty of marketing, with the right strategies in place, you can increase your online presence and brand exposure allowing potential customers to easily find your product or service and, ultimately, convert into actual customers.

So, where to start? Whether your small business is B2B, e-commerce or brick-and-mortar, you can use these actionable ideas to push your marketing efforts forward.



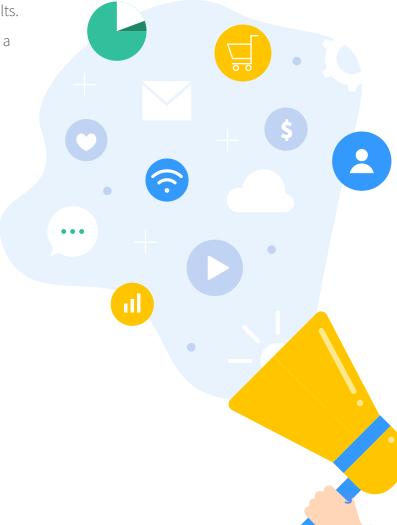
Digital Marketing vs Traditional Marketing

Before we take a deep dive into the actionable items, let's clarify what digital marketing actually is and the difference between digital and traditional or offline marketing.

Digital marketing speaks specifically about marketing efforts performed online and that result in online presence, spreading EWOM (Electronic Word Of Mouth) and capturing your audience's attention in the digital world while traditional marketing (also known as offline) pertains to more traditional forms of advertising such as print ads and trade shows.

Truth is, a mix of offline and online marketing initiatives is likely to bring the best results.

However, whether you decided to have a stronger presence online or off greatly depends on your type of business, whether you're selling a product or a service, your budget and other factors directly connected with your value proposition.



Why Digital Marketing is a Must

Regardless of how much or how little digital marketing you're willing to start off with, make sure not to disregard these types of initiatives; bottom line is that all businesses need online presence. Whether your product or service is purchased directly online or not shouldn't be the determinant of building online presence. Services and in-store purchases are influenced greatly by what your audience is finding online.

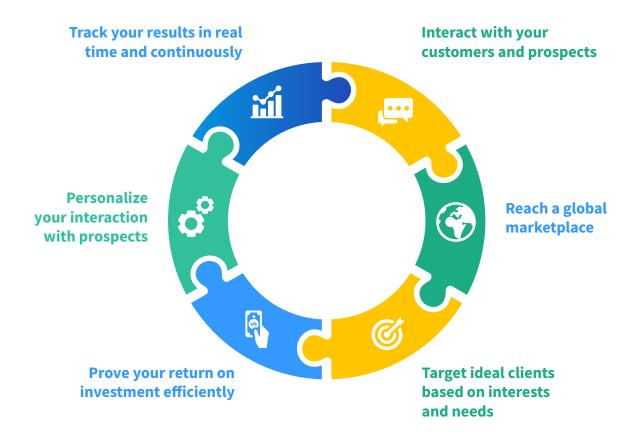


"According to a recent study **The ROBO Economy**, 82% of smartphone users consult their phones on purchases they are about to make in-store and 45% read reviews before making a purchase."

That's why small businesses should consider the huge marketplace of prospects online. While offline marketing techniques require a lot of time and money, digital marketing is a lot more affordable and fruitful.

The Benefits of Digital Marketing

Online marketing is a great opportunity to create more visibility for your company. It also tends to be a lot more affordable than its counterpart and allows you to track and evaluate progress constantly. This level of control allows you to optimize your budget and make sure your marketing money is being spent how you want it to be.



Getting Started With 4 Basic Methods of Digital Marketing

Any and all marketing activity should begin with some research. Before implementing marketing activities, a thorough research of your competitors and the market's demand should be conducted. This will help you avoid common mistakes and, therefore, maximize your chances for success.

Now that we know that digital marketing is the place where small businesses can get started with a tight budget and limited resources, let's take a look at how to actually get things rolling.



Start out with the 4 basics of digital marketing for small businesses:

Building A Website

Setting Up Your Social Media

will start spreading the word about allow businesses to sell almost directly strategy is cost-effective



Launching **Email Marketing** Campaigns



Email marketing has proven to be one of the most effective digital marketing techniques yielding a high return on investment. This tactic is one that only requires a small budget and lots of skill to be performed successfully. With email blasts, newsletters, series and cold sales emails, there's a vast pool of email types to choose from – all for different purposes. Being able to properly harness the power of email marketing can greatly boost your digital marketing efforts.

Running Ads



SEO, and email marketing are long-term efforts. These to show any real results as they rely on consistently growing a

Website

Your website, your presentation card to the world, your online shop. At the very heart of your business, a website needs to be in tip-top shape to welcome new prospects, display clear information about your products and services and gently guide users through a funnel. For that to be the case, there's quite a few things that need to be taken into account.

No matter when you created your website, if it's not generating quality leads, there might be room for improvement! Even if your website has "good" traffic in terms of quantity of visitors, if the leads generated from your site are low in quality (the leads aren't fully interested, won't need your product or service in the near future or they are not even part of your niche market), you might want to reevaluate your conversion points, time spent on the website and number of pages visited.



For those of you still dwelling on whether you should be spending money on building a website, please consider its benefits:



Gives you an online presence



Makes your business accessible at all times



Improves customer service



Could be an automatic revenue-generating channel (if built properly)



Targets larger markets



Should be a main stream of lead generation



"46% of all searches on Google have local intent."

Google, 2018

Getting Started With Building a Website

Websites are living, breathing creatures. Your business, your products and even your customers will change at some point. Make sure you're setting up your website for success from the get go by creating a roadmap for the project and taking into account that adjustments and improvements should be made after the initial launch. While building the new site, take under consideration our key suggestions:

Set up clear goals for the website

Whether it is to convert more leads, provide information or generate actual sales through the site, having the main goals clear from the beginning will ensure a much more satisfying result.



Know your audience

If you don't know your prospective client very well at this point, this is the right time to start coming up with conclusions about their demographics, likes, dislikes, goals, and interests. This will guide the entire conceptualization process to ensure an effective user journey.



Sketch a website map

Figure out what you need when it comes to the sections of your webpage. Is it a single page? Do you need a blog? Start with the menu to figure out your sections and break it down from there. When you're done with your sitemap, all your needs should be fully met.



Getting Started With Building a Website

Prototype your page

Getting the right look and feel for your website will determine how attractive it will really be. Come up with your concept and create a prototype of your website. If this is not your area of expertise, we suggest turning to a freelancer or agency to come up with the right look and feel for your website. This will increase the chances of creating a unique user experience.



Perform keyword research

SEO specialists can dig out the top performing keywords for your small business based on your products or services and your audience. Many people underestimate the importance of keyword research but the truth is that this is the foundation for a visible, well-ranked site.



Create amazing content

Based on your goals, your audience and (hopefully) a thorough keyword research, create the copies for the website as well the graphics that will engage your audience.



Set up the proper analytics tool

By setting up platforms like Google Analytics and the Google Search Console, you can gather all the necessary data from the get-go so that you can properly track and analyze your website's performance in the future.



Actionable Ideas for Your Website

01

Get Your Basic SEO in Check:

Does Google Search Console indexing sound familiar? If not, this is priority! Sometimes Google doesn't automatically index websites naturally so you have to submit your site through the Console for proper indexing. Also make sure you're all set up with Google Analytics (at least open the account to be able to track behavior) and ensure your website content is fully optimized using keyword research. Fully checking your technical and on-page SEO will also ensure the website is running smoothly and is user and google friendly.



"53% of mobile website visits are abandoned if a mobile site takes longer than three seconds to load. For every one second delay in site load time, conversions fall by 12%"

Google, 2018

Actionable Ideas for Your Website

02

Integrate With Other Platforms (Like eBay):

If you're planning on selling on your website, integrating it with an ecommerce platform like Ebay allows you to sync the inventory from your existing website directly or by using a .csv/spreadsheet straight into your Store. This means direct access to millions of Ebay users and leveraging their own SEO tactics.

03

Make Your Site Mobile-Ready:

After making all the effort to spread the word, ensuring your audience is aware and promoting to drive traffic, the last thing you want is for someone to simply exit out because your site wasn't smartphone friendly. Take this as a high priority and get it done. Check it on all possible mobile devices – sometimes it can be tricky.

04

Create a Conversion-Oriented Machine:

All that traffic and people browsing isn't enough, you want them to buy or at least talk to you. That's what conversion points are for. Simply put, they are places where visitors provide their contact information in exchange for something from you – the commitment can be as low as signing up for a newsletter or as high requesting a quote. Adding the right conversion points in the right places will be the turning point to for lead generation.

Balance is key here: while you want to make all of those points of contact clear and painless for your audience, you also want to increase conversion points in order to bring in more leads.

Top 3 Mistakes to Avoid When Building a Website

01

As mentioned earlier, don't let the pressure of the digital world make you build a website you may not have the budget or time for. If your online presence needs to start out with a landing page or just social media profiles, that's completely fine. Let your business dictate what you will do, not the rest of the world.

02

Let your website tell your story. Having a bland site will help no one. Make sure you're putting your two cents into every aspect of this site, tell your story and stay on brand.

03

Having an administrable website will save you lots of headaches. When building your site, ensure all your pages end up being fully editable and administrable – especially if you don't have a developer at your disposal at all times.

404

Suggested Tools for Your Website



yoast.com

Yoast Plugin:

If you're using WordPress as your Content Management System (CMS), we suggest adding the Yoast plugin to be able to administer your SEO efforts. With this tool, you can add SEO titles, meta descriptions and more directly from a blog or page without needing any technical knowledge.



analytics.google.com

Google Analytics:

This is such an important tool, we just had to mention it again. Once you've set up analytics on your website, go back to Google Analytics to understand where your visitors are coming from, which pages they're visiting the most and how they are converting among others.



Live Chat:

Live chats are an effective way to interact with visitors in a quick and personal way. Depending on your budget, we suggest using Intercom, Zoho SalesIQ or Drift. Whichever one you choose, make sure you don't ever leave the chat unattended.

Social Media

Almost 90% of marketers said that their social marketing efforts increased exposure for their business and 75% said that they increased traffic but only 61% of small businesses invest in social media marketing according to **Clutch**, **2018**.

Are you part of the 39% of companies missing out on spreading the word through social networks?

Social media plays such a key role in any company's promotional efforts that not being present on the main networking platforms can be the difference between new prospects trusting you or not.

According to Business 2 Community recent post in January 2019, while YouTube and Facebook are the clear leaders in the social media usage battle, Instagram has jumped ahead of the pack to be the third most popular platform with a continually expanding lead over Pinterest, Snapchat, LinkedIn, and Twitter.

facebook



of American Facebook users have discovered something to purchase via this platform.

Pinterest



of users say they use
Pinterest to plan for
purchases.

Linked in.

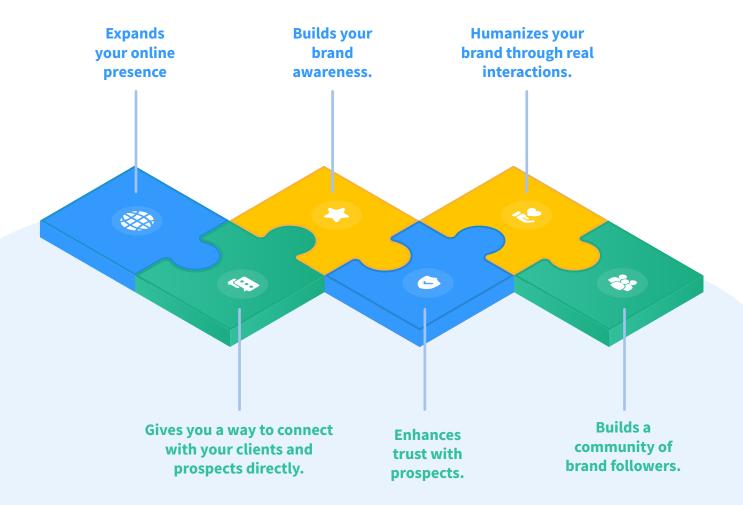


of B2B leads come through LinkedIn.

16

Need more reasons to start working on your social media strategy?

Keep in mind that joining the social media frenzy is much more than that. A well-thought out strategy is more likely to yield results than just opening up a Facebook page at a whim and posting every once in a while. Social media thrives on interaction, engagement and consistency. Jumping on the main social media platforms can bring immense benefits to your company:



Getting Started Setting Up Your Social Media

As a key player in the digital marketing strategy, social media platforms need to be created from the ground up with special care. It's not enough to put profiles together and go live with a logo as your main post only to not post for the rest of the year. The initial setup for your social media deserves to be a well-thought out, scalable process. Here's how you can do it:

01

Choosing the right social media platforms. There are literally thousands (Yes! Thousands) of social networks out there. Make sure you do your due diligence to revise platforms that may be specific to your niche and evaluate whether you want to join them or not. To get started with, it might be best to stick to a few networks and scale up from there.

02

Social media audit and research. Take some time to review the platforms and search for your competitors. What are your main competitors up to online? Where is your audience hanging out? This will help you zero in on the how to manage your accounts and what type of content to create.

03

Set up your profiles. Now is the time to actually create your profiles on the networks identified above. Make sure your page name, description and graphics match your company branding.

Getting Started Setting Up Your Social Media

04

Content creation. Go out and create some valuable content for your audience. Make it shareable, engaging and fun to read. Social media craves bit-size and dynamic content so make sure you take that into account when creating posts for your social media accounts.

05

Scheduling and posting. Once you've got your content ready, go ahead and create a calendar to evenly spread out your posting times and dates. It's best to sign up for a platform where you are able to schedule your posts so you don't have to spend extra time and effort remembering to post every day.

06

Analyze, revise, change and adapt. This is key. Social networks constantly change, morph and adapt to the market – and so should you. Your business and marketing strategy should be evaluated and revised constantly not to discover that you are left far behind what's going on in the real world and what your customers need.

Actionable Ideas for Social Media

Operating under the assumption that you've already set up all your social network profiles and have created a content calendar for your postings, now it's time to kick it up a notch. Use these ideas to engage further on current networks and branch out to find new leads.

Here's a few ideas you could use to build and further engage your community as well as attract new customers:

Join Facebook and LinkedIn Groups:

Find groups on Facebook or LinkedIn that may be related to your expertise or topic of choice and ask to join! Once you're in, offer valuable insights, comment on other's posts and share your own content. This is a very authentic way to humanize your brand get a lot of exposure in a free, niche-centric way.



Find Other Social Networks:

There are literally thousands (yes, thousands!) of social networks currently live in the world. So it's important that, once your main profiles are up and running, you take the time to check additional channels that could potentially bring you leads. Don't get stuck on the most popular networks, if you have a niche product there might be other social networks where your audience might be hanging out and you'll want to join them – wherever they are.

Actionable Ideas for Social Media

Inventory on Social and In-App Sales:

If you are operating in retail and e-commerce, you'll particularly love this! Get your inventory up on networks like Facebook where there are now "in-app" ads that allow you to purchase without ever leaving the social platform. You can then offer a Facebook user the ability to check out without the hassle of leaving the site. Instagram also offers the option to link on every post a direct shopping link. Make sure you're leveraging all of these options.



Attract with Challenges and Giveaways:

If your follower base decreased (or never took off), run challenges and giveaways to be able to reach your audience. When launching this initiative, you'll want to make sure to have a goal in mind and make the conditions of the game crystal clear.

Suggested Tools for Social Media

Manually posting on social networks is just not scalable or manageable. We suggest using scheduling tools and leveraging technology to save time and effort.



hootsuite.com

This affordable platform has all the basics you need to be able to program your social media posts, track performance and even manage ad campaigns.



later.com

If your forte is Instagram, Later is a great option as it allows you to have a Linkin.bio where you can add links to posts on that platform. It also allows you to schedule stories, posts, track performance and more. This tool does have limitations in regards to the social networks you can manage through it so be sure to check before making any purchase.

agora pulse

agorapulse.com

this tool allows you to manage your entire social media strategy from a single spot. Depending on the plan you choose, you'll have access to countless features where you can approve and schedule posts, interact through chats with the audience, track results and perform social listening.

Top 3 Mistakes to Avoid for Social Media

01

Whatever you do, don't ever open up profiles just to let them die slowly

If you're not going to be adding relevant, purposeful content on social networks, it's better to not open the profile altogether.

Having an empty page online tends to have a negative effect on your audience's perception towards your brand.

02

Stay in character, always

Ensure your social presence is showing your brand in a coherent fashion. Align your posts or videos graphically and in tone of voice with the rest of your activities to establish brand recognition.

03

The more constant you are in social media, the better

Don't post sporadically or only when you have a big event coming up. Rather, create a calendar with consistent postings and ensure you're staying top of mind with your audience.

Email Marketing

Email marketing can be used either to reach out to prospects that already know about your business or to foster better customer relationships. In any case, sending emails will allow you build a stronger brand to help you keep growing.

According to an eMarketer study, the median email marketing ROI is 122%. That's four times higher than any other digital marketing channel. Not only is email marketing cost-effective but you can also expect to benefit from:



scopicsoftware.com 24

needs.

like and dislike.

Getting Started With Email Marketing

Email marketing doesn't necessarily have a linear progression. The starting point here is identifying who you want to send emails to and for what reason. Once you've figured that part out, create email maps on spreadsheets to set timing, topics and content for each email. However, before you send your very first email, there's a few points you'll have to settle on:

First, Build Those Lists

If you don't have contact information or want to attract more leads start by working on your list building first. List building is what, us marketers, call gathering contact information from leads, prospects and customers to create segmented lists. To create lists, you can start by:

- Gathering information from former interactions with potential customers like emails, business cards, online requests or chats.
- Round up the contact information of all your customers.
- If you have a website, create a form where people can subscribe to an offer by leaving their contact details.

Email-Sending Platform

Once you have people to send the emails to, you can finally start setting up your emails – but how? Email marketing isn't about sending one-off emails and leaving it be. This tactic actually works best with some level of automation because you want to create triggers that set off a specific email blast or newsletter. When choosing an email-sending platform, you should consider:

- The amount of contacts you have versus the total amount of emails you are able to send per month.
- The platform should allow you to create visually appealing emails with templates or drag and drop capabilities so you can add engaging graphics.
- Triggers and automations are a plus! If you're able to get a platform that allows you to schedule emails, create rules to trigger certain certain emails being sent and send autoresponders, you'd definitely be one step ahead of the bunch.

Emails for Customers

Since your current clients already have such intimate knowledge of your product or service, you'll want to be very specific in your emails. Don't underestimate their knowledge but also don't assume they're experts. In your messaging, try to be as detailed as possible describing the subject but know that your audience has some basic understanding of what you're talking about.

If you are a small business owner, chances are you're an expert at something. Your trait and expertise took you time, maybe some research and a lot of effort. So, yes! You have plenty to share with your audience, whether it is tips and tricks, best practices or even your own opinion about a certain subject, create blog posts, videos or social media content to share!



Some good examples to keep your customers coming back and engaged are:

Newsletters

Send periodic newsletters with valuable content. In general, you'll want to make sure you share some of your knowledge, help them understand a topic further or offer specific insights into a valuable subject for your clients. You can even choose to send this every few weeks to start creating a habit – both for you and for the audience.



Promo Emails

Upsell or cross sell your products and services with a brief email describing the product or offering a specific deal. At the very least you'll create some curiosity about the featured product – if they didn't know about it before, they know now.



New Product or Service Launch

Give existing customers sneak peeks of your new product or service launch through an email blast. Make sure you add some type of graphic or video to really catch the user's attention and provide information that you have not yet made public through media.



Emails for Prospects

First of all, let us clarify that segmenting the lists properly here is particularly important. You want to make sure you're not sending the same type of emails to people that have never heard of you as you are to hot leads ready to close. With that said, here's a few examples starting from cold emails all the way to lead nurturing.

Outreach Emails

These are the cold-calling version of emails. If you have a list of possible prospects that have never heard of you or your company before but you'd like to see if there's any interest, create a personalized email. Make sure you're connecting with the person on the other side on some level and include their name, their company name or any other details available while pitching your product or service.



Series of Emails

For leads you have captured through a website form, at an event or through referrals, create a series of emails to be sent out to them periodically with information about your company. Create some interest in what you're doing, show them the benefits of your work and ask them to connect. Usually series are built from 3-4 emails sent over a period of time and help to keep your brand top of mind for this audience. This process can be automated with the platforms above mentioned while you can watch the campaign, make adjustments and talk to leads.



Promos & Special Deals

If you are running a holiday promotion or simply want to entice warmer leads to buy, send an email with a promotion or exclusive deal. Word of caution, if you have a sales team in place, make sure your sales team is fully aware of the email being sent and have all the tools necessary to follow through on your word.





Suggested Tools for Email Marketing





Massive Emailing

As a starting point, you can begin your email marketing efforts with platforms such as MailChimp and SendGrid. This type of tools will allow you to set up visually attractive emails, schedule them, send them a list of contacts and then track performance.

ActiveCampaign ≥





Automation Tools

We also recommend considering options such as Active Campaign, Act-On and Get Response. These platforms are cost-effective marketing tools that not only allow you to send email blasts but also include automation features where you can create series of emails, trigger newsletters based on actions and create campaigns to monitor your initiatives' performance.





Customer Relationship Management (CRM)

Having a polished CRM should be a top priority when it comes to marketing but it particularly influences your marketing efforts. To keep your contact information nice and neat, we recommend affordable options such as Hubspot CRM and Zoho CRM.

Top 3 Mistakes to Avoid in Email Marketing

01

Don't forget who's on the other side

The more personal you get, the better. You will have better chances of engagement if you use simple techniques like starting out with the contact's name and including their desired product or service within the body of the email. Some of the tools we have mentioned have variables that can pull each contacts' information to make your emails hyper personalized.

02

Define what you want to say from the beginning

Don't try to cover everything at once, if the topic is too broad, it's better to send out several emails rather than overwhelming your audience with an essay-style newsletter.

03

Remember your expertise

Why are you even reaching out? What do you have to offer?

Make sure you're adding personal information, your story or insightful information for your audience for better results.

Targeted Ad Campaigns

Advertisement can serve as a means to attract new prospective clients and persuade a targeted audience by promoting products, services and ideas in a short time frame. Small businesses use targeted ad campaigns to reach a niche audience centralizing efforts in a specific audience without spending time and money on broader a public.

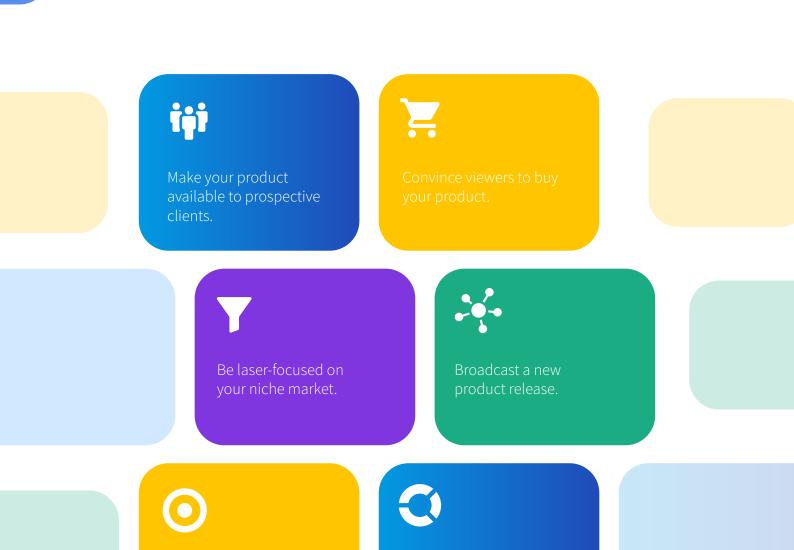


"Businesses generally make an average of \$2 in revenue for every \$1 they spend on Google Ads." **Google, 2018**

If you're worried about the budget it requires to be able to run ads, don't be! Some people believe ads are limited to big corporations with huge budgets but the reality is that many businesses work with budgets of about \$10 a day and still manage to bring in new customers and sales.

Email Marketing

Through digital ad campaigns, you can target your ideal customers, create awareness for your content, and amplify all your other initiatives. Google Ads and social media ad campaigns are an effective way to reach short-term goals such as:



Measure leads and

conversions.

Getting Started with Ad Campaigns

An ad campaign is a set of digital advertisements that revolve around a single message and are intended to achieve a particular goal. Whether you want to run your ad on Google Ads, build a campaign on Facebook or launch an in-mail effort through Linkedin, make sure you have the following steps all figured out prior to spending a single dollar:

Set your goals

Yes! Again! This will probably be the single most important step you'll take on the road to creating ads. Each platform will ask you to choose a goal for your ads and knowing exactly what you want to gain from them will be of utmost importance.

Choose the platforms

Deciding on a platform is based on your type of business or service.



Facebook is a good choice for B2C campaigns, especially direct-to-consumer sales. However, B2B campaigns targeting specific consumers can be effective as well.



Instagram is an ideal platform for ads that have a direct call to action and a strong brand image, as the demographics on this platform is strongly skewed towards millenials, you should make sure your ads are eye-catching and resonate emotionally.



Twitter ads work particularly well when used to increase a follower base a promoted tweets serve to publicize your ideas and brand to new people who might follow you for access to more regular posts.



LinkedIn is, allegedly, the best platform for B2B lead generation. Since career-specific information is handled through LinkedIn, you can target decision makers directly.



Google Ads is a rich platform with several different advertising options. It exposes your brand to an audience with a strong search intent which, in turn, leads to higher conversions.

Getting Started with Ad Campaigns

Define your promotional assets.

What will you run an ad of? What are you promoting? What are you selling? Define, plan and create all the assets you'll need to be able to run your ad. Assets such as lead-capturing landing pages, exceptional blogs and attractive pieces with special offers are are likely to perform well depending on your goals.

Build your ad basics.

To successfully run your ads, we recommend creating a calendar with the following information:

- Keywords for each ad or ad campaign.
- Target your niche audience.
- Copies and graphic pieces for each ad.
- Budget for each ad.
- Time frame you will be running the ad.

Monitor all the way through.

Running an ad is much more than setting it up and waiting for results. Make sure you closely monitor your ad on a weekly (or even daily) basis and make changes accordingly.

Actionable Ideas for Ad Campaigns

After you take the plunge to start running ads, the rest will follow. Experimenting with the audience, platform, copies and budget to understand where your product or service gets the best results, can really make a difference. Even within a single platform, there are countless possibilities for ad goals and types of ads. Stay updated with the newest trends and be open to trying new things.

Use Video Ads on Youtube

YouTube is the #2 largest search engine in the world after Google. If you have a video that you've spent time and effort creating, make it shine through video ads on YouTube. You can now target ads at people who recently searched for a certain product or service to target the video ads they'll be served on the platform.



Create Lookalike Facebook Audiences

If you're planning on running Facebook ads, a Lookalike
Audience is might be a good way for you to reach new people
who are likely to be interested in your business. These
audiences tend to convert really well because they target
people who are most like your established customers!



Launch Story Ads on Instagram

Instagram Stories Ads is one of the newest kinds of ads available to businesses on the platform. Brands can advertise on Instagram Stories with photo or video content.



Top 3 Mistakes to Avoid in Ad Campaigns

01

Who is your audience?

The biggest benefit of running targeted ads is being able to properly target who will get to see the ad itself. So don't skip over or take likely the Audience section of each platform. Make sure you're adding the proper demographic and interest parameters for each so you can reach maximum results.

02

Don't forget your keywords

Ok, they're hard to forget but, in general, be hyper aware of them. Adding the right keywords for your audience's interests will make or break your ad. Perform thorough research and add enough keywords.

03

Track, track, track

As mentioned earlier, monitoring your ads is key! Don't spend more money than you have to on ads that might not be the right fit for you. Ads are influenced by an unimaginable amount of variables and closely monitoring your campaigns can help you visualize which efforts are yielding better results for you. Once you find a winner, do more of the same.



Take Action!

If you've been putting marketing in the back burner for a while, these ideas will be sure to get you back in the game. So start now, take one of these initiatives and put them to work for you.

Don't know how to get started? Talk to us, we can help.

