

The Small Business **Online Marketing** Guide

Tips + Advice to Increase Your Online Presence



- Why you should be marketing your business online
- Case study: Restaurant serves up more sales, visibility
- 7 things you can do today to boost your online marketing
- Worksheet: Create your marketing plan

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The Bistro uses AdWords Express to help increase sales, visibility



HOT TIP

Learn more with Google at google.com/ads/learn.



Welcome

Every day we hear from business owners who think they need special skills to reach new customers online. Overwhelmed by the number and seeming complexity of online marketing options, they sit on the sidelines, eager to get in the game but confused about where to start.

Sound familiar? If so, this guide is for you.

Whether you're new to online marketing or just looking to do it better, the advice in this guide can help you reach your business goals. In fact, you don't even need a website. You'll learn:

- How many new customers you can find online
- How to grow your business using the Internet
- How to measure your results
- How one small business increased revenue 67% with the help of online marketing

We've also created a daily tip sheet filled with ideas to help you begin, as well as marketing plans for three different types of businesses. Get started right away by using the marketing worksheet at the end of this guide to help create your action plan.

Increasing your online presence has never been easier to achieve. We hope this guide starts you on the path to becoming an online superstar.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Brynn Zuccaro". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being more prominent.

Brynn Zuccaro

North America Business Marketing
Google

Why Your Business Needs to Market Online



HOT TIP

Promote specific products in your ads. People who research model numbers online are usually closer to making a purchase.

Did you know that 94% of consumers research products online before buying? Or that three out of five people use search engines as a go-to shopping resource?*

There is no longer any doubt that buyers go online to research and purchase products and services. Companies that have an online presence and market online can reap the rewards of connecting with these shoppers.

The hardest part of doing anything can be getting started, so create your game plan now to begin getting the payback from marketing online. Here's how:

Set your goal

Online marketing can do many things for your business. Choose one or two objectives for starters. For example, do you want to drive visitors to your website, increase foot traffic to your store or restaurant, gather emails for a newsletter or generate more calls, quotes or referrals?

Identify your target

Be clear about the buyers you want to reach. What do they care about most? What are their problems? Have they purchased from you before? Are they currently buying from a competitor? Also consider their gender, hobbies, location and other specifics. These can all help you determine the best ways to reach customers, as well as the messages that will work best.

DID YOU KNOW?

Online marketing doesn't have to be time-consuming or expensive:

- Online outreach often costs less than offline.
- Launching new campaigns can be lightning fast.
- Changes and updates can be made instantly.

**Source: 2010 Compete Online Shopper Intelligence Study*

Learn about current customers

If you have a website, ask your current customers how they found it. If not, ask them where they go online now. This insight can help you focus your efforts.

Check out competitors

Just because a competitor is doing it doesn't mean it works – but it might. Reviewing what your competition is doing can help you create your own unique approach.

Set a strategy

Taking the time to think through your plan before you begin can dramatically improve your results. Choose one or two tactics that work within your budget, that make sense for your audience and that you can commit the time to manage effectively. Many successful online marketers take a “test and refine” approach to receive the greatest payback.

Track your results

Online marketing makes it easier to measure program performance. Take advantage of this by closely monitoring the response to your marketing programs. Increase your investment in the programs that work well and revise components of programs that aren't working.



SPOTLIGHT

bean & leaf

Bean & Leaf coffee roaster and café (www.bean-leaf.com) in New London, Connecticut, wanted to promote its organic, free-trade products and help people find the store. Using Google Places, Bean & Leaf helped increase customers by 10% and was able to connect with new wholesale buyers.



7 Ways to Use the Internet to Grow Your Business

From creating a local listing to mobile marketing, you have many ways to help build your business online. Here's a look at seven of the more popular options:



1. Local listings. Create your business listing on sites such as Google Places (www.google.com/placesforbusiness) so consumers searching for nearby businesses can find yours. Many listing services are free, and some allow you to promote sales and new products. They may also include interactive maps that make it easier to get directions to your store.



2. Social networking sites. Cultivate new business through social networking sites where members share interests. Find groups that relate to your business and then contribute to the conversation. Be sure to shift out of sales mode before you join an online exchange since most social networks frown on blatant business promotion.



3. Search advertising. Place your ad near search engine results at the moment someone is searching for the type of product or service you offer. Using AdWords Express (www.google.com/awexpress), you enter information about your business, location and budget, while AdWords Express chooses the keywords related to your offering. Then, simply provide basic ad copy. You don't even need a website with AdWords Express; simply direct shoppers to your Google Places listing.



SPOTLIGHT



AdWords Express quickly became Cascade Florists' "best tool for success," helping the Seattle shop increase sales by 5% and online traffic by 20%, says owner Rose Chisholm.



4. Customer review sites. Google Places and other review sites allow users to express their opinions about businesses and recommend products and services. Monitor the reviews about your business to ensure it is represented professionally. Respond to the reviews you receive, both positive and negative, so you can thank supportive customers and address concerns quickly.



5. Online classifieds. Like their print counterparts, online classifieds gather advertising and announcements from multiple businesses. Because they appear online, you can use your ads

Comparing Online Marketing Tactics

TACTIC	CHARACTERISTICS					
	Targeted	Flexible spending levels	Highly measureable	Supports graphics or video	Good for special offers	Can include customer reviews
Local listings	√+	√		√	√	√
Social networking sites		√	√	√	√	√
Search advertising	√+	√+	√+		√	
Customer review sites	√					√+
Online classifieds	√	√	√		√	
Mobile marketing	√	√	√		√	
Online videos			√	√+		√

√ = *Effective* √+ = *Highly effective*

to help drive traffic directly to your Google Places listing or website. Performance reports make it easy to spot ads that generate the most results, and edits can usually be done quickly.



6. Mobile marketing. Many smartphone and mobile devices provide web browsing, GPS, cameras and video capabilities. This means you can develop creative promotions with text messages and location-based social networks. You can also target mobile users with your AdWords Express ads.



7. Online videos. Reach new audiences by posting videos on video-sharing sites like YouTube (www.youtube.com). The best videos tend to be short (under three minutes) and include an offer, such as a free copy of a report or a product discount, to motivate people to take action. MobileDemand is one of many small businesses with a YouTube channel to help spread company news and information.



WATCHOUT

Changing your marketing tactics too frequently may diminish your long-term results.

Measuring Your Results



Once you establish your online presence and grow more savvy in online marketing, track your success with these performance measures:

Website analytics

Dig into your visitor data to see where your most promising leads come from. Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) is a great place to begin, and it's free. Tutorials are available to help you get started.

Clickthroughs

The basic measure of an online ad's impact is how many people click on it to visit your site. Clickthrough rates are often strongest with a compelling message or offer, combined with placement on the right sites.

Conversions

How many people who see your ads "convert" into buyers or take a specific action, such as subscribing to your newsletter? Look at your conversion rates to see which outreach efforts are the most cost-effective.

Landing pages

A landing page is a web page to which visitors are sent specifically to take an action. Keep your landing page simple — if you want them to buy, make that the focus; don't distract them with newsletter links, webcasts, blogs or cute puppy videos.

HOW MUCH SHOULD YOU SPEND ON MARKETING?

The amount varies by industry, business size and how much you want to grow your business. The Small Business Administration and SCORE® (Counselors to America's Small Business) put it at between **2% and 10% of sales**.

Depending on your business model, you could spend half of your marketing budget on offline (print ads, brochures, telemarketing) and half on online (search marketing, mobile). The more online oriented your business is, the more you should consider increasing your online spending. Your return on investment will depend on your offer and who you reach out to (current customers or prospects).

Case Study: Google AdWords Express Serves up More Sales and Greater Visibility for Restaurant

The Bistro in Bakersfield, California, once was the place to go when locals wanted a nice dinner, but increased competition has made it harder to fill tables. To help draw customers back, the restaurant needed to swap its old offline marketing habits for more effective online outreach.



Action

The Bistro added pictures and business details to its Google Places page to help build a strong online presence. In January 2011, the restaurant started using Google AdWords Express — an easy-to-use online advertising tool that helps businesses reach local consumers — by showing an ad for The Bistro next to relevant search results.

“The opportunity for placement seemed great,” says Kelly Tackert, who handles The Bistro’s online marketing. “Even if you’re not at the top of the organic results, AdWords Express gives you an ad that’s displayed prominently on the page.”

Tackert crafted the ad text and selected categories, including restaurant and live music, to help determine when the ad appears. He reviews the ad’s performance each month and likes that he can see how many times it has been viewed and how many potential patrons clicked on the ad.

Results

The Bistro’s revenue for 2011 has increased 67% compared to 2010. AdWords Express has played a significant role. The restaurant is now first among the sponsored links when consumers search for restaurants in Bakersfield.

“It’s an efficient way to get our name out there and gain visibility,” Tackert says. “The placement businesses get enables them to better compete with the larger businesses. Plus, it doesn’t take much time to manage.”

SITUATION

- Restaurant needed cost-effective online advertising to recapture local business
- Wanted to generate buzz after extensive renovations

OUTCOME

- Google AdWords Express contributes to 67% increase in revenue
- Offers easy, cost-effective online advertising with little time commitment



HOT TIP

Go online and read other AdWords Express success stories at www.google.com/awexpress.

Tip a Day: Map Your Path to Online Success

Online marketing can make your head spin. There are countless options, experts, trends and changes. That’s why we created this Tip-a-Day feature. Bit by bit, following easy-to-take steps, you can start marketing your company online or step up your current efforts.

	MONDAY	TUESDAY
WEEK 1	Claim your free Google Places listing. Add photos and coupons to your listing (www.google.com/placesforbusiness) and make it easy for your customers and prospects to find your business.	Use your email signature to sell. Don’t let your emails go to waste. Include the URL of your website or sales page in your signature (sig) file.
WEEK 2	Start a blog. Blogs are a great way to demonstrate your expertise and start conversations with all kinds of visitors – who may become great customers.	Review your “About Us” information. Does yours say who you are and what you do in easy-to-understand language? If not, change it.
WEEK 3	Consider building a website. If you want a basic site, get started with a template from an online website development tool.	Launch an email newsletter. Update your customers on important company news and industry events. Online email services can help you get started.
WEEK 4	Make an e-book. Combine several articles or blog posts you’ve written into an e-book and give it away. You’ll need a word processing program that turns a document into a PDF, or use an online self-publishing service.	Add a sitemap. Sitemaps help ensure that search engines look at every page of your website. You can also submit an XML Sitemap to Google (www.google.com/webmasters).

Plan on 30 minutes or less a day. Over the course of a month, you will be surprised at how much you accomplish!



WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
<p>Survey your customers. Put together an online survey and find out what your customers think about your products, your customer service or whatever else you are curious about.</p>	<p>Test paid search. Set up a Google AdWords Express account (www.google.com/awexpress) and create a search ad in minutes. Include prices, special offers and unique selling points.</p>	<p>Offer freebies. Offer a free bonus with an order to anyone who buys from you. If you sell to other businesses, a free special report can help boost your credibility and drive sales.</p>
<p>Get social. Use social media sites to connect with prospects and customers in your target demographic by sharing information and engaging in conversations.</p>	<p>Sell your benefits. Look at how you describe your products and services. Do you say how they solve problems? Remember: people buy results, not products.</p>	<p>Add on-site product reviews. Let your customers rate your products. Solicit testimonials from past customers.</p>
<p>Know your customers. Google Analytics (www.google.com/analytics) can help you measure site traffic and track Flash, video and social networking sites and applications.</p>	<p>Add site search. Help visitors find what they're looking for by adding a search function like Google Site Search (www.google.com/services/websearch.html).</p>	<p>Simplify the shopping process. Many sites make it difficult for shoppers to complete basic tasks. Have others test your site and fix any stumbling blocks they find.</p>
<p>Use clear navigation. Step back and look at your website candidly. Can first-time visitors find the information they're looking for? If not, change it.</p>	<p>Record a video. Use short (three-minute) videos to explain how to do a task that relates to your business. Then, post it on YouTube (www.youtube.com).</p>	<p>Get involved. Get active in your small business community — your chamber of commerce, local events or other networking opportunities. Online networking services can help you network and plan meetings.</p>

Online Marketing: Something for Every Business

Online marketing success stories can sometimes leave a small business owner wondering if it would really work for them. What if you don't have a website — can you still reach customers online? Fear not. With all the online marketing options available, one (or more) is likely to help almost any business. Here are strategies to help three particular kinds of businesses. Use them to help start or improve your online marketing efforts.



STOREFRONT BUSINESS

Main Street is full of companies with a prominent storefront and no website. Gift shops, restaurants, wine stores and other storefront businesses can use an online presence to help drive offline success.

1. Claim your Google Places listing.
2. Drive traffic to your Google Places listing with AdWords Express.
3. Promote your business on customer review sites.
4. Create a blog.
5. Offer incentives for location-based activities, such as visiting your store multiple times.

LOCAL BUSINESS

Traditional companies — plumbers, real estate agents and the like — can gain loads of payoff from online marketing by making it easy for customers to find them.

1. Claim your Google Places listing.
2. Submit your site to online directories. Don't forget any trade organizations you belong to.
3. Use social media to connect with target customers and prospects.
4. Set up an AdWords Express account that targets local consumers browsing the Internet.

ONLINE & OFFLINE BUSINESS

For businesses that are online and offline — think a bed and breakfast or a toy store — the sky is the limit for attracting business and connecting the two.

1. Claim your Google Places listing.
2. Collect email addresses from physical visitors to start an e-newsletter.
3. Distribute online coupons through your website.
4. Set up an AdWords Express account to target pre-qualified leads.

Worksheet: Create Your Marketing Plan

Now that you are thinking about new ways to grow your business online, use this worksheet to choose the most effective vehicles to promote your products and services. By defining your goals and assessing the resources, you'll help improve your follow-through and increase your chances for success.

SECTION 1. STRATEGY

1. I want to:

- | | |
|-----------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Increase awareness of my company | <input type="checkbox"/> Find new customers |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sell more to existing customers | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

2. My customers are primarily:

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Local | <input type="checkbox"/> In the United States |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In my state | <input type="checkbox"/> Global |

3. Most of my customers found my business by:

- | | |
|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Search engines / online ads | <input type="checkbox"/> Print advertisements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Word of mouth / referrals | <input type="checkbox"/> Radio / TV advertisements |
| <input type="checkbox"/> In-person presentations | <input type="checkbox"/> Direct mail |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Phone calls | <input type="checkbox"/> News coverage / press releases |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Yellow Pages / other directory | <input type="checkbox"/> Foot traffic / walked by |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Billboards / other signage | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |

4. My customers visit these websites regularly:

- Search engines (*List names, URLs*):
-
- Social media sites (*List names, URLs*):
-
- Shopping sites (*List names, URLs*):
-
- Local directory listings (*List names, URLs*):
-
- Customer review sites (*List names, URLs*):
-
- Other (*List names, URLs*):
-

5. Internal assets I can use to build my business online:

- Google Places listing or website
- Landing pages
- Blog
- Staffer(s) available to help
- Online videos
- Staffer(s) available to answer calls
- Special offers, such as coupon codes
- Other

6. Online tactics that may fit my business include:

- Local listings (*Rationale?*): *e.g., I can write a strong offer to help move a slow-moving item.*
- Social networking sites (*Rationale?*):
- Google AdWords Express (*Rationale?*):
- Customer review sites (*Rationale?*):
- Online classifieds (*Rationale?*):
- Mobile marketing (*Rationale?*):
- Online videos (*Rationale?*):

7. Companies I follow that do these activities well:

Business Name:	Online Activity:	Lessons Learned:
<i>e.g., Acme Inc.</i>	<i>Uses AdWords Express to highlight firm.</i>	<i>Test AdWords Express to drive traffic.</i>
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SECTION 2. CONTENT

Take these steps to create an AdWords Express ad or classified ad that grabs viewers' attention and gets results.

1. Customers buy from my company because:

- a.
- b.

2. I want people who find my company online to:

- a.
- b.

3. Online specials I could offer:

- a.
- b.

SECTION 3. PLANNING SPECIFICS

1. My online efforts will be managed by:

- Me
- Staff member(s)

2. I will spend this much on my online marketing each month:

- Less than \$250
- \$250-\$500
- \$501-\$1,000
- More than \$1,000

3. For the next three months I will:

Action Item:	Platform / URL:	Frequency:
<i>e.g., Make and share tutorial videos</i>	<i>YouTube.com</i>	<i>Every other month</i>
.....
.....
.....

4. I will measure my success by:

Metric:	Platform / URL:	Goal:
<i>e.g., Video views</i>	<i>Partner site</i>	<i>50 per month</i>
.....
.....
.....



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