

Tips to Create a Small Business Marketing Plan



Creating a small business marketing plan can be a daunting task for new entrepreneurs. It is important to build a plan that will raise your brand awareness and help you reach your sales objectives.

A successful marketing strategy will involve a robust online presence, direct mail advertising and a method for building your loyal customer base. Before you start crafting your first Instagram post or designing a direct mail marketing postcard, take time to develop a strategic small business marketing plan.

Do Your Research. The first tip for creating a small business marketing plan that will generate results is to do your research. It's important to identify your target market to ensure your plan reaches the correct demographic. Define your ideal customer by learning where they live, their traits and trends. Understanding the values, needs and concerns of your target market can help you personalize your marketing message to appeal to your customers.

Understand the Competition. In addition to putting your ideal customer on paper, a part of your research should focus on the competition. Doing a deep dive

on your competition will allow you to gain a competitive advantage. Learn what your competitors are doing well and where they're falling short. Understanding your competition can help you develop a unique selling proposition that you can capitalize on with your marketing efforts.

Decide on a Budget. While many businesses may be compelled to limit their marketing budget during this unique time as a way to cut costs, research reveals companies who invest in marketing during a recession bounce back faster than companies who opt to cut their ad spending. A good rule of thumb is to spend between 5 and 10 percent of your gross revenue on marketing.

Develop Your Message. The average attention span of an adult is only eight seconds, and new research from the Technical University of Denmark, indicates the abundance of information at our fingertips is narrowing our attention span further. Your marketing pitch needs to be short, sweet and to the point to capture the attention of your audience.

Determine How To Reach Your Target Market. Once you understand your target audience, it's time to decide how to reach your customers. Even if you have a shoestring marketing budget, your plan needs to combine a number of different marketing techniques.

- **Direct Mail Marketing.** Direct mail postcards are a low-cost solution for small businesses. Postcards are tangible and eye-catching with bright, beautiful colors. Every Door Direct Mail® Marketing will blanket specific ZIP codes with your message. Our Town America can send both saturation and targeted direct mail marketing postcards to your existing customer list – the choice is yours. With our company, direct mail results are easy to track and are known to generate results.
- **Online Marketing.** Social media advertising is another tool for advertising your small business – cost dependent upon your needs, market and demographic. Seven out of every ten Americans use Facebook, and 74 percent of users check it at least once per day, according to a study by Pew Research. You can also advertise through paid Google Ads. Since it can get pricey and over-saturated, it's a good idea to supplement with direct mail to be sure your prospects are actually laying eyes on your ad.

- **New Mover Marketing.** Our Town America specializes in new mover marketing, which focuses on capturing new residents before they form loyalties to other businesses. We send new residents an upscale welcome package full of proven one-time-use offers with industry-leading response rates – only *one* from each industry. After the new family visits your business, Our Town America can send a follow-up thank you and/or additional offer to solidify them as loyal customers. These extra efforts don't go unnoticed by customers, and your response rates will prove it!
- **Find Some Partners.** There are numerous local businesses trying to reach customers on a limited budget. Network with local businesses in your community to help cross-promote your brands. Local businesses can band together to offer bundled promotions or reciprocal website links to advertise.

Leverage Your Community. Small business owners are the backbone of any local community. Becoming an active member of your community is key to your business' success. Join the local chamber of commerce and accept an offer to sponsor a 5K or one of the local sports teams and, if appropriate, set up a table at your local farmer's market. Showing the community that you value their traditions and members will help build trust in your brand and bolster sales.

Track Your Results. Tracking your marketing results will allow you to know what is working best for your business, and what could be tweaked. If email marketing is not measurably adding to your marketing efforts, it may be time to rethink the frequency of your emails or their content, for example. If a particular direct mail offer results in a spike in business, you may want to send it to a wider audience to further build foot traffic. Or, in the case of our new mover program, just continue on with the program — as we mail to a brand new audience of new movers every single month.

Our Town America understands the importance of tracking your return on investment, that's why we created the TruTrak® mobile app. It allows you to track your return on investment, gather detailed demographic data of new customers, and validate and scan redemptions at point of sale. Businesses can also use the app to trigger a second mailing to customers.

If you're ready to form a successful small business marketing plan, Our Town America is here to help. For more information about new mover marketing, visit www.ourtownamerica.com.