

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

September 2021

7 Common Welcome Email Mistakes Businesses Need to Avoid

*5 Powerful
Mobile Marketing
Strategies for Your
Business*

*Social Media
Marketing*

*10 Reasons to
Document Your
Business Processes*

*How Content
Marketing Works and
Why Every Business
Needs It*



**Infographic:
2021 Pinterest
Statistics**

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LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

2021 continues to be a challenging year, with fires, floods, virus variants, labor challenges and supply chain issues. It is more important than ever to ensure you are maximizing your marketing efforts to grow your business in a cost-effective manner.

Our goal is to provide you information that can help. In this month's issue, we've included several interesting articles and tips that you can apply immediately to help you grow your business.

In this month's issue, you'll find articles on Email, Social Media, Content Marketing, Marketing Strategies and more.

As in every issue, you'll find new versions of our popular Marketing Calendar and Infographic.

If you like the magazine, and know other local business owners that could benefit from receiving our magazine each month, please do us (and them) a favor by forwarding a copy to them.

If you have any comments about this issue or would like us to help you with your marketing please do not hesitate to contact us.

Be Well!

Raj Deshpande
CEO
CroydonGate

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A Little About Us

Local Business Marketing Magazine is proudly provided by CroydonGate.



CroydonGate was started with one goal in mind. We wanted to use the scientific approach to Online Marketing and use our expertise to help our clients achieve their goals – whether it was to increase sales & customers, branding, website design, Social Media Marketing or Mobile marketing. We wanted to give our clients the ability to leverage the same cutting edge marketing platforms that the Fortune 500 organizations use, at affordable rates.

We are a one-stop-shop for all Online Marketing needs. Our Google Certified AdWords and Analytics Experts, Social Media Marketing Gurus and expert Web designers provide the professional service to our clients which results in consistently higher ROI for our client's Online Marketing Investment.

Our goal is not just getting the customers to your site but to put a plan in place that will get them to take that next crucial step of calling you or placing that order online.

We use a scientific approach to the Online Marketing and we use Google Analytics, Multivariate A/B Testing, Sale/Search Funnel reports and other industry leading tools to understand the customer dynamics and we accurately optimize the Online Marketing parameters so that the marketing campaign works at a maximum efficiency level and increases our client's profit while reducing the conversion costs.

Give us a call to learn how we've helped businesses like yours grow revenue. If you have any questions, or would like to know how we can help you meet and exceed your marketing goals, please contact us.

Did you know that we are a full-service ad agency? Did you also know that we specialize in helping small and medium sized businesses? We customize a program that meets the needs and budgets of each of our clients, and we offer Free Initial Consultations. Give us a call to learn how we've helped businesses like yours grow revenue. Some of our services include:

- Mobile Marketing
- Web Services
- Reputation Management
- Promotional Items
- Online Marketing
- Social Media Marketing
- Branding
- Conversion Optimization



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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

September

Hispanic Heritage Month
Baby Safety Month
Self Improvement Month
National Cholesterol Education Month
National Suicide Prevention Month
World Alzheimer's Month

Sep 6 - Labor Day (U.S.)
Sep 11 - Patriot Day (U.S.)

4th - National Wildlife Day
4th - Bacon Day
4th - World Beard Day
5th - Day of Charity
5th - Cheese Pizza Day
7th - Day of Clean Air
7th - Beer Lovers Day
10th - World Suicide Prevention Day
10th - 401(k) Day
12th - Grandparent's Day
12th - Video Games Day
13th - Hug Your Boss Day

13th - Peanut Day
13th - Celiac Disease Awareness Day
14th - Eat a Hoagie Day
17th - Citizenship Day
18th - Cheeseburger Day
18th - Batman Day
18th - Clean Up Day
19th - Wife Appreciation Day
21st - Puppy Mill Awareness Day
21st - World's Alzheimer's Day
21st - Day of Peace
22nd - Autumnal Equinox
22nd - Ice Cream Cone Day
24th - Heritage Day
25th - Cooking Day
25th - Daughters Day
27th - Google's Birthday
28th - Drink Beer Day
28th - Good Neighbor Day
29th - VFW Day
29th - World Heart Day
29th - Starbucks Day

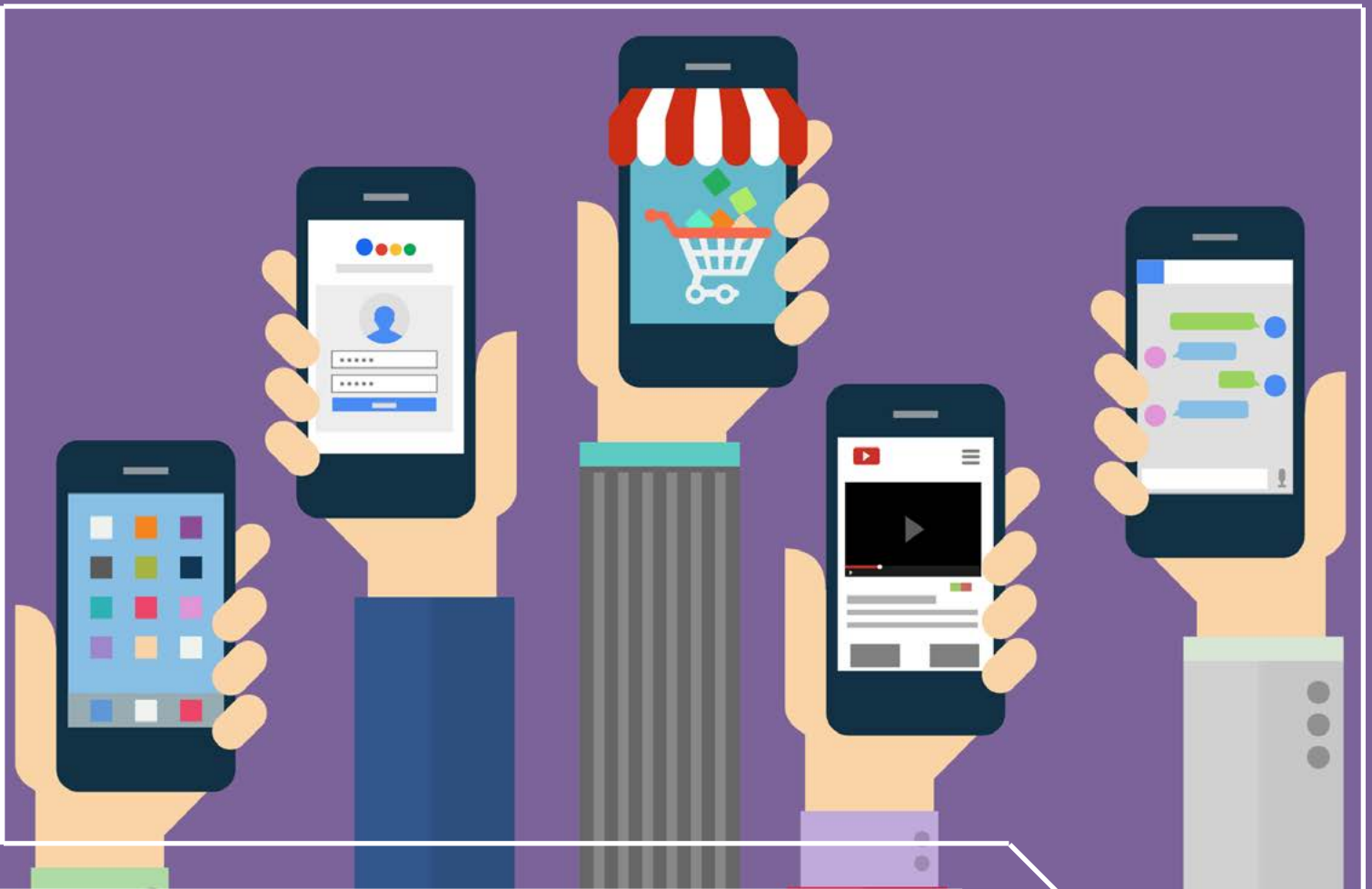
October

Adopt A Dog Month
Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Bullying Prevention Month
Car Care Month
Dental Hygiene Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
Emotional Wellness Month
National Pasta Month

Oct 11 - Columbus Day (U.S.)
Oct 31 - Halloween

1st - International Coffee Day
1st - Homemade Cookies Day
2nd - Non-Violence Day
3rd - Techies Day
4th - Child Health Day
4th - Taco Day
4th - Vodka Day
4th - World Animal Day

5th - Do Something Nice Day
6th - Noodle Day
9th - Beer & Pizza Day
10th - World Mental Health Day
10th - Father-Daughter Day
12th - Savings Day
13th - Stop Bullying Day
14th - Dessert Day
15th - Global Handwashing Day
15th - Boss's Day
17th - Pasta Day
18th - Chocolate Cupcake Day
20th - Medical Assistants Day
21st - Get to Know Your Customers Day
21st - Back to the Future Day
23rd - Make A Difference Day
26th - Pumpkin Day
28th - Chocolate Day
29th - Frankenstein Day
30th - Candy Corn Day
31st - Knock-Knock Jokes Day



5 Powerful Mobile Marketing Strategies for Your Business

Businesses need to constantly stay on top of the latest and greatest marketing methods. While content marketing, social media marketing, and email marketing are all incredibly effective for getting customers, you should also make use of mobile marketing. Tons of consumers now use their smartphones daily and, if you can tap into this market, you could boost your sales significantly.

Since many people are constantly on their phones, you must find ways to promote your business in ways that they'll see right on their smartphones. Fortunately, there are many effective ways to encourage people to buy from you using their mobile devices. Here are five of the most powerful mobile marketing strategies for your business.

1. Build A Mobile-Friendly Website

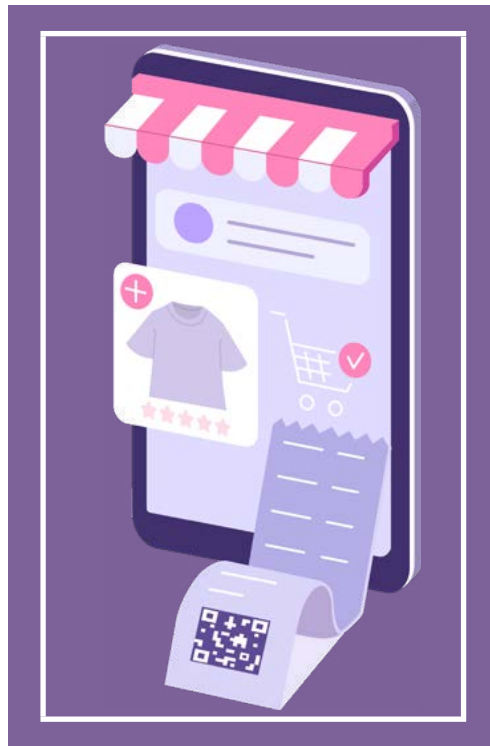
Before doing anything else, you need to make sure that your brand website is mobile-friendly. Nowadays, it's not enough to have a fast and efficient business website that runs well on all computer browsers. You also need to consider how your website looks and works when people are using it on portable devices.

You should take measures to ensure that your website is easy to use via smartphones. You might want to use large text in your content and break it into small paragraphs. You should also make it so the buttons used to browse are large enough for people to press while they're using a small screen.

On top of this, you should make sure that people can easily buy from your business while using a smartphone. Luckily, online shopping cart platforms make it easy to do this. You might also want to enlist the help of a professional web design service to ensure that your website is as mobile-friendly as possible.

2. Create A Mobile App for Your Brand

Another powerful way to tap into the growing market of persistent smartphone users is to create a mobile app for your brand. Even if your website is already easy to use via mobile browsers, an app made specifically for your business can offer an even more satisfying customer experience and even help you improve customer retention.



Think of popular examples such as Amazon Shopping and the Nike app. These make customers more likely to buy from their brands as they're constantly present on their phones. What's more, they

allow these businesses to show mobile users special sales promotions while also collecting helpful analytics to improve their sales efforts.

Making an app isn't easy without some advanced programming knowledge. However, you don't need to be a programming whiz to build an app for your brand. Simply plan what kind of features you want your app to include and get in touch with a marketing company or professional app development service to help you.

3. Use SMS Marketing

If you've ever used email marketing, you know how effective it can be for keeping your brand in consumers' minds, promoting your products, and attracting more sales. SMS marketing can be used in many of the same ways you'd use email marketing, the only difference is that the messages are sent directly to the SMS inboxes of your subscribers.

Much like with email marketing, you'll need people to opt-in. You might want to include a form on your website or

allow customers to tick a box when they complete a purchase to allow SMS alerts from your business. Once you build a list of numbers, you can start marketing to them via short and enticing text messages.

You might want to send out special coupons or alert consumers to flash sales via SMS marketing. You can also use SMS marketing to collect feedback from customers. It's also a great way to encourage people to download your app, especially if you do so with the offer of a special discount for their first mobile purchase.

4. Boost Your Social Media Marketing Efforts

Social media marketing is incredibly effective for businesses of all sizes. You can reach a huge audience by regularly posting content on platforms like Facebook, Twitter, and LinkedIn. However, even if you're already using social media to market your business, you should boost your efforts for smartphone users.

Many consumers idly browse social media apps like Instagram and Twitter in their downtime. As

such, a well-timed social media post about a flash sale or a new product launch can entice them to buy from you. You should also use social media to cross-promote your brand app if you have one.

You can even increase your success by using social media platforms that are designed primarily for smartphones. For example, you could use Snapchat and TikTok to post entertaining videos about your products or services. These platforms are growing fast, and you can bring your business to the attention of many new people this way.

5. Offer Instant Support Via Mobile

Offering rapid customer support is one of the best ways to increase your sales. In many cases, casual consumers might be considering buying something from your business but want to ask a question first. What's more, existing customers might have queries or complaints. If you can deal with these requests instantly, you'll boost your customer acquisition and retention rates.

While offering speedy phone support and live

chat features on your website will help, you should also find ways to deliver rapid customer support to mobile users. Many businesses now use WhatsApp to answer questions from customers directly. Other messaging apps like Facebook Messenger can also help.

Make sure your customers know how to reach you and make it as easy as possible for smartphone users to get an instant answer. You might also want to consider using your social media channels to offer customer support. If people see you delivering satisfying customer service via Twitter or Facebook, they're more likely to consider using your business.

Mobile marketing can be incredibly helpful for your business. Not only can these methods help you bring in plenty of new customers, but they can also help you keep existing customers and increase repeat purchases. Make sure your business is as accessible as possible to people using any kind of smartphone or portable device and you'll be set up for continuous success in the future.

Today's Marketing Platforms Have You Not Sure Which Way To Go?

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10 Reasons to Document Your Business Processes

Documenting business processes might seem like a waste of time. After all, why would you want to write down what you already know? However, there are many benefits to be gained from process mapping that you may not have considered. Indeed, documenting business processes could reveal inefficiencies, improve customer service, and save you money. Here are ten benefits your company could gain from mapping business processes.

1. Identify Redundant Tasks

Documenting business processes can often uncover redundant tasks. For example, you might find that people are completing tasks because “that’s the way it has always been done” or “that’s how I was told to do it.” A typical example of a redundant task would be a report that someone produces that no one ever reads. But process mapping might show that the information in question takes a day to



prepare but is then simply filed away.

2. Remove Duplication of Effort

In addition to redundant tasks, process mapping will also uncover duplication of effort. For example, the sales department might be keeping records of prospects and customers. The customer services department has its customer records. And,

much of the primary customer information is also held by the finance department. All of which leads to the same data being captured three times. And the possibility that the three data sets do not match.

3. Highlight the Need for Investment in IT

Implementing a centralized CRM (customer relationship management) system could eliminate the



duplication mentioned above. And this is a prime example of how process mapping will help identify where investment in IT could save time and money. Documenting business processes might also highlight applications that need replacing or upgrading.

4. Remove Knowledge Gaps

Often, how to perform specific tasks exist only in one employee's head. So, when that employee leaves the company or is off sick, no one knows how to cover that person's job. Having a complete set of document processes for a role eliminates this knowledge gap. Someone new can pick and run with almost any role in the organization should the need arise.

5. Prepare for Disaster Recovery

If there is a disaster like a flood or fire, records can be lost, computer equipment destroyed, and trading interrupted. And getting operations up and running again fast will be essential for the survival of the business. But, without proper process documentation, disaster recovery will be much more challenging. You might not know what software apps were loaded on computers, for example. It may not be known who is responsible for getting systems back online. Determining the order that business functions need to be brought back online might also be an issue.

6. Define Employee's Roles and Responsibilities

A significant benefit of documenting business processes is that you will define employees' roles and responsibilities clearly. At the end of the process, each employee will have a job description. And you will be able to set expectations and targets for each role. That will give employees guidance on what is expected of them and give you a means of assessing performance. Having well-defined job descriptions will also assist in the recruitment process.

7. Identify Training Needs

A process mapping exercise will also help you identify training needs. And, in subsequently training your employees, you will gain better employee engagement and workers better able to do their jobs. So, the

process of documenting your business processes will improve staff morale and increase efficiency.

8. Ensure Adherence to Regulatory and Legal Requirements

There are many occasions when a business is required to demonstrate its adherence to legal and regulatory requirements. There might be specific safety standards in your industry, for example. Financial institutions will have practices that must be followed. And you will need to adhere to predefined standards to achieve industry accreditations. Documenting business processes will help ensure that these rules, regulations, and legal requirements are followed. And you will have documentary evidence of adherence to procedures and standards.

9. Provide Insight into the Running of the Business

Documenting business processes is very likely to

unearth some surprises, too. You might find that are some inefficient practices you were unaware of, for example. And you might discover some star employees going the extra mile who deserve some recognition. It is almost impossible for managers and business owners to see everything that goes on in a business. But documenting



processes and regularly reviewing those processes will help you better understand and manage what is happening in your organization.

10. Prepare for Growth and Change

Having all your business processes will better prepare you for change. You will, for example, be

able to assess the effect on resources of expanding the business. You will have a head start when you want to invest in a new IT project, and you will be able to manage things like office relocations better. Process mapping is the starting point for preparing for most types of business change. So, if your processes are already well-documented, you will be able to react to change faster and more efficiently.

As the above points demonstrate, there is much to be gained from documenting your business processes. Process mapping can improve efficiency, reduce costs, and prepare your business for change. Yes, the process can take

some time when you are starting with a blank sheet. But completing the process will likely bring immediate rewards. And after that, the maintenance process documentation becomes much less of a challenge, but the documentation will continue to provide benefits.



7 Common Welcome Email Mistakes Businesses Need to Avoid

Among all types of business emails, welcome emails continue to receive the highest open rates. In a recent study, over 80 percent of people opened a welcome email after it arrived in their inbox (1). This is why businesses should seize this valuable opportunity to engage potential customers.

Unfortunately, many businesses still miss the mark when it comes to their welcome emails, which gives competing businesses the edge. To improve your email marketing results from the

outset, steer clear of the following seven welcome email mistakes.

1. Not Saying Thank You

First, it's important to get off on the right foot. Thanking subscribers for joining your list is not only good manners, but it also brings a human touch to your email. More importantly though, saying thank you to subscribers shows you appreciate their time. It's a small gesture, but many businesses still forget to do it.

2. Including Too Much Information

In introductory emails, it's important not to overwhelm subscribers with too much copy or too many images. Welcome emails should be concise, uncluttered, and easy to understand. Instead of talking about your business too much, focus on how you help customers. But keep it brief to hold people's attention.

According to one study, over half of all marketing emails analyzed contained

300 words or less (2). Another study found that emails with 50 to 125 words typically received the highest response rates of at least 50 percent (3). With people receiving more emails than ever before, it makes sense to keep them short.

For subscribers that want to learn more about your business, include a link to either your About page or another landing page.

3. Not Setting Transparent Expectations

In the early stages of your relationship with subscribers, it's important to build trust. One of the simplest ways to do this is by disclosing what kinds of content you'll be sending in the future, and how frequently subscribers will hear from you.

Will you be sending one email per week? Can subscribers expect to receive special discounts in future emails? Whatever your plans, being transparent from the beginning will encourage more people to read future emails. If there's any doubt about your intentions, people might simply unsubscribe.

If you can, give new subscribers the option to choose which types of content they receive and how often. For example, provide a link to a landing page on your website where users can set their email preferences.

4. Failing to Connect on an Emotional Level

If your current welcome emails lack emotional triggers, it's time for some changes. You need to quickly make subscribers feel that your business is the right fit for them. There are a few ways to do this:

Share your values and vision to establish brand compatibility. For example, explain why you started your business.

Share your personal story or business journey to build empathy. For example, describe how you overcame any challenges. Provide evidence of your competency to increase consumer confidence. For example, state how many other customers you've helped in the last month.

In short, make people understand why you're the best business to help them. Each one of the above tactics helps readers

feel something, which matters a lot when there are so many other brands competing for attention. If you can do all three, even better.

5. Asking Too Many Questions

You might be tempted to ask your subscribers "what are you struggling with?" or "what do you want to hear about next?" but you should already know what problems many of your customers are facing. Vague questions like these just give the impression that you don't understand your audience.

Your welcome email isn't a customer research tool; it's an introduction to your business, a confirmation of your capabilities, and an opportunity to set your business apart from the competition. It's not wrong to ask for feedback from your audience, but your welcome email isn't the best time to do it. Save your questions for further down the line.

6. Not Offering a Promotion

Because more people tend to open welcome emails, don't waste the opportunity to engage

new subscribers with an offer of some kind. Including a discount code or exclusive offer for new members is a great way to make subscribers feel like they've made the right choice. It can also get people talking about your business.

7. our Call-to-Action (CTA) Text Isn't Benefits-Oriented

In a welcome email, the fewer CTAs the better; too many can lead to confusion and inaction. However, if you want to improve conversions, every CTA should emphasize the specific

benefits of taking action, whether it's the text on the button or the text surrounding it.

For example, if you're offering a discount code, avoid button text like "Get your discount here." How big is the discount? When will the user get the discount? Be specific to add clarity and urgency. For example, "Get my 15 percent discount today" is much better. Using the word "my" also personalizes the offer.

The welcome email is one of the most important emails you'll send to subscribers. Having gained

someone's email address, you should seize the opportunity to grab their attention, communicate your brand message, and connect with potential customers on a deeper level.

It's not easy to craft the perfect welcome email; sometimes it requires some trial and error to get it right. However, by avoiding the mistakes outlined here, you should be able to create a more compelling welcome email that stands out from the competition and lays a strong foundation for future email campaigns.

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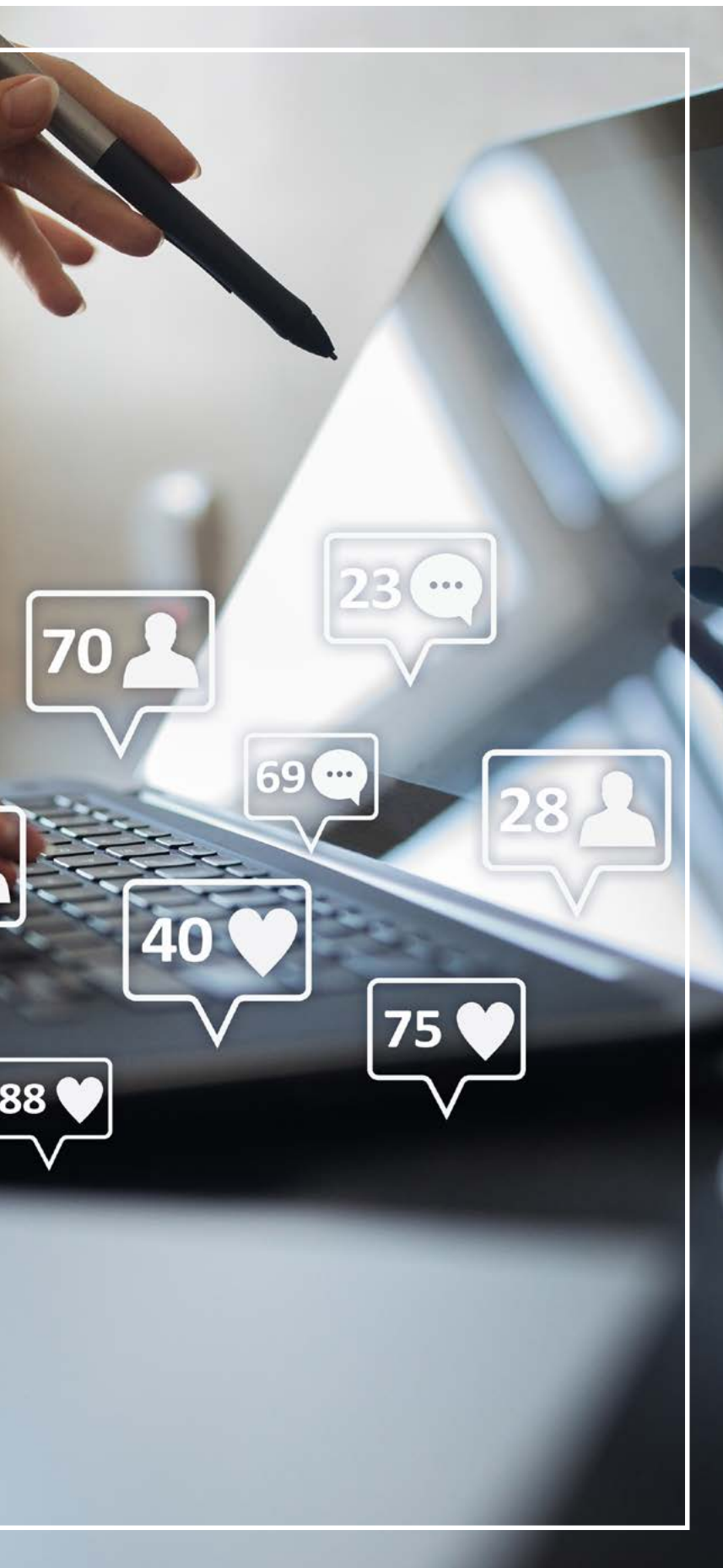
Social Media Marketing

The most important thing to remember about social media is that, while most social networks provide all the tools their members need to become content producers, the content produced for these platforms will always be user-generated and submitted by members.

Whether the content is text, photos, videos, pins, customer reviews, a blog, a vlog, and/or links to other noteworthy social networking websites, the content always comes from the user, not from the publisher. The social network provides the platform and all the tools necessary for a piece of content's distribution, but it remains separate from the actual content if only to ensure the content's integrity.

A company is only as strong as its weakest customer relationship, and social media can help brands reach their customers in highly effective and extremely affordable ways. Businesses should look to social media to help them add interactivity to a website, for brand management, to build fanbases, to engage customers, to collect customer feedback, and encourage social shopping.





Add Interactivity to a Website

Adding social media to a dull website can turn it into an active, search engine optimization (SEO)-friendly site, a highly interactive destination that draws interested users and/or customers who can become active participants in the marketing of the site and company. Adding “Like” buttons makes it easy for users to share content through Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, Twitter, WeChat, WhatsApp, Pinterest, Discord, and YouTube. On those social sites, businesses can add images, GIFs, videos, music, reviews, etc., that will keep customers interested in the company’s products as well, potentially, attract new customers. A brand’s website can suddenly become a destination to visit and revisit, which will have the added effect of increasing the site’s SEO.

Brand and Anti-Brand Management

Online brand communities can foster emotional bonds between brands and their customers. Brands can create channels on social networks like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, YouTube Snapchat, and LinkedIn, where the brand can interact with their customers in a one-to-one conversation. Wikis and discussion forums are also useful for brands to relay important

technical information about their products or the history of their company. Innovation hubs can extend the discussion forum as well as allow users to post ideas they might want the company to explore. Brands can also use content aggregation sites to share all kinds of content, including instructional videos or corporate messages should a social media crisis suddenly flare up.

Anti-brand initiatives usually come into play once a business find itself under attack. Anti-brand websites are easy to set up and are often used as a weapon to organize boycotts or protests. The internet has made it easy for disgruntled consumers to broadcast their messages of complaint far and wide. The internet extension .sucks can be purchased from many internet providers, and it doesn't take much to get a website online these days. Many current anti-brand websites are catchy, and they poke fun at a targeted company with domain names like Northwest Airlines' Northworstair.org,

Safeway's Shameway.com, Coca-Cola's Killercoke.org, etc. All joking aside, these websites can be highly damaging to a brand, and do fall under protected free speech so are not easy to have removed.

With anti-brand websites, the goal is to push a negative opinion of a targeted company, often based on a disgruntled customer or employee's experience with the brand. These single voices shouldn't be discounted, because they can reverberate through social media instantly, creating highly negative sentiments that can quickly take on a life of their own as they reverberate powerfully through multiple social media channels.

Build Fanbases

Whether they're called fans, friends, followers, pinners, or subscribers, building a community of users will help a business grow its customer base as well as let these customers participate in a conversation about a brand. The best way for brands to encourage

engagement and interaction on social media channels, even highly text-driven ones like Twitter, is to constantly put out quality content that includes images, GIFs, videos, and/or multimedia links within a post. Keeping fans updated on the latest brand events and company developments will keep the brand top of the mind with consumers. Running competitions is also another great way of fostering engagement, but the most important thing is to keep the engagement going, continuously push quality content that is interesting, so fans and customers have reason to return.

"If you make customers unhappy in the physical world, they might each tell 6 friends. If you make customers unhappy on the Internet, they can each tell 6,000 friends."

Words by Jeff Bezos

Engage Customers and Potential Customers

Social media has really upped the ante when it comes to customer

engagement because, through these channels, customers can both connect with brands they are interested in as well as join a community of like-minded people who support and empower the brand. What social media has added is the horizontal customer-to-customer engagement that can be an important part of increasing marketing reach, perhaps even making a piece of content go viral.

Engagement encourages engagement and brands should use make sharing content as simple as possible. Engagement, however, isn't just about pushing content onto platforms, it can also be about listening to the customer's voice. Smart brands listen to what their customers, potential customers, and the customers of their competitors are saying and doing online and then acting on that information appropriately.

Whether the engagement is through tweets, pins, images, videos, games, messages, blogs, PowerPoint presentations,

or even podcasts, engaging on social media allows brands to align their content creation with their company priorities. Social media engagement can both guide the conversation as well as generate buzz for a brand's new products and/or solutions. Ultimately, social media engagement lets brands stay connected with their customers, and it fosters a two-way dialogue that should help shape the company's growth and bottom-line performance.

Harvest Customer Feedback

Social media is the perfect platform to harvest customer feedback and to learn about customer behavior. Nothing compares to the data measurement capacity of a mobile phone or a tablet, which can track a sale from the ad exposure, followed by the persuasive effect of the advertisement and, finally, to the actual purchase of the product advertised. In some situations, a product can be purchased with a mobile payment app on the phone so every aspect

of the sale, from discovery through to final purchase as well as the product download, was contained within the mobile phone. Mobile analytics can effectively track all the steps to purchase, revealing information like a mobile user's network, his or her device, and its location. Today's mobile devices can capture mobile metrics such as link tracking for campaign analysis and page tracking for site analysis. By analyzing the vast amounts of unstructured social media data, businesses can discover important brand and customer trends.

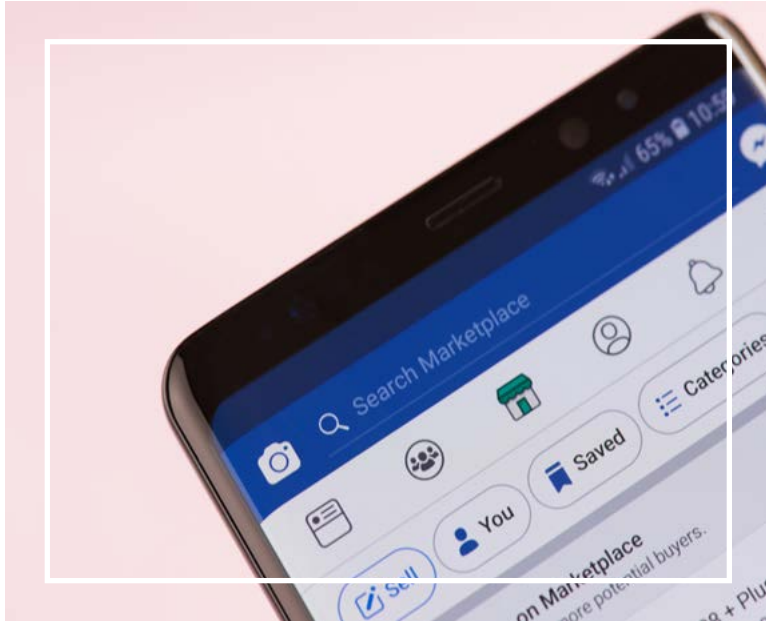
Text mining and Natural Language Processing (NLP) is a form of data mining that attempts to find patterns, models, and/or trends in either structured or unstructured data to understand user sentiment. Today, many companies are using social media to listen to and engage with their customers, using it to handle customer complaints, product suggestions, and the overall customer opinions of a company.

Social media is also being used for highly effective competitor analysis. Brands should constantly monitor their social channels, as well as their competitor's channels.

Competitive benchmarks should be set, and information should be gleaned from social media conversations, both about the brand and their competitors. Once social media sentiment has been benchmarked, brands will be able to analyze the ongoing impact of marketing campaigns, allowing them to tweak areas of their marketing spend and budget. All in all, social media has become a great channel for brands to both harvest their customer's sentiments and gain a real competitive advantage for their products and services.

Social Shopping

Today's online shoppers are more socially active than they've ever been,



and shopping has become a participatory event, with buyers and potential buyers sharing their knowledge about a company's products and services with the community at large. Since their users were already actively discussing products on their social sites, it only made sense for social media platforms like Facebook, Instagram, Pinterest, and WeChat to figure out ways to help their users buy the products they discuss. Although it took a little while, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, WhatsApp, and WeChat have the ability for interested buyers to purchase products directly from brands.

Twitter is especially useful for brands who want to quickly move perishable inventory. United and

JetBlue use it to sell last-minute airline seats. The same can be done with hotel rooms, concert and theater tickets, and sporting event tickets. WeChat might be showing the future of social

shopping, as they have a created a portal where groups can be set up by brands to showcase the latest product offerings. Small mom and pop shops throughout China use these groups to connect with their customers. Group-buy and flash-sales sites are popular in China, and they use WeChat to clear out inventory. Branded WeChat stores, also known as "Service Accounts", let buyers purchase products from several large Chinese and US retailers.

Today, brands are recognizing the importance of social media by building communities of customers that let these people express their opinions about the brand, both positive and negative.

Many companies are now building online communities directly into their company's website. Apple's online store has a built-in community that allows interested buyers to ask questions about products and services. These questions are answered by Apple's customers, and there are thousands of active conversations going on at one time. It's part of the Apple ecosystem that entices users and convinces them to pay the "Apple tax", as it has become known, i.e., the additional price Apple users are willing to pay for a product that differs little to a competitor. This community has become a portal where Apple customers actively answer questions from others, and it is word-of-mouth marketing on steroids. It's a platform that enhances loyalty and provides a customer service department to Apple that is basically free for them, beyond the charge of hosting their online store. Perhaps it's not quite social media per se, but it did grow out of communities that had popped up throughout social media

before.

Social media managers should be going out of their way to produce content that attracts comments, views, pins, likes, and, above all else readerships. However, social media marketing becomes exponentially more powerful if users can be persuaded to create relevant and original content. A Facebook "like" is nice, but it requires little to no effort for a user to click on a 'like' button. A comment, however, is considerably more valuable because someone has actively gone through the process of writing down a comment to recommend or even attack a product and these reviews are highly important in a future purchaser's judgment of the product. Brands should always be listening for both positive and negative sentiment about their products, and social media can be a highly inexpensive way to capture it.

Social media is the perfect place for both brand and anti-brand management. Businesses should be

cognizant of the threat anti-brand activity presents. The internet has presented businesses with the ability to reach consumers in extremely cheap and easy ways, but there is a downside to this as it can give a loud and reverberating voice to jaded customers or disgruntled employees. These messages can also quickly go viral, as humans seem to be highly attuned to negative messages, and businesses need to counter adverse stories in the social media world. "A lie can travel halfway around the world while the truth is putting on its shoes," is a quote attributed to many, and today that lie would encircle the globe before the truth even woke up, so it's imperative that businesses be ready to counter any negative press once it comes their way.

All in all, social media is a powerful platform that can amplify a brand's voice, create communities for customers to promote the brand, and protect it from bad actors who might be out to do it harm, as well as encourage social shopping.

How Content Marketing Works and Why Every Business Needs It



Content marketing involves attracting and keeping customers. Yet not just any old content will do. It must be unique, relevant, and useful to a targeted audience.

Content marketing is nothing new. For generations, people have been buying products simply because they received some free information or were given some basic advice on how to solve a problem. Often, consumers just wanted some questions answered, but ended up buying. The content a business provided prompted that sale.

It is only the online part that is relatively new to content marketing strategies.

Consumers can search and find answers in an instant, so a business needs to have articles, videos, and other information available online at all times.

People like to buy, but they do not like to be sold to. Content marketing works because it distributes information without pushing a sale. Videos, blog posts, infographics, and social media messages should never directly sell a product. The slow dripping of content subtly encourages a purchase but doesn't hard sell to the customer.

Content marketing is a long-term commitment. Amateur marketers create a blog article or social media post and expect it to go viral. Unfortunately, attracting the kind of attention hardly ever happens. So, frustration sets in, and the excited, motivated marketer walks away and calls content marketing a failure.



The experienced marketer sticks it out and continues to accumulate content, writing engaging articles and producing entertaining content consistently creating content for an extended period can be daunting. Yet, it will be well worth it, as content marketing remains the most powerful way to attract leads and customers.

Content marketing is like a salesperson who never takes a day off. Once a video or blog post appears online, it will be there to engage, teach, and sell whenever a prospect clicks on it. It works around the clock, attracting engagement and collecting leads.

However, content marketing only works if it speaks directly to a consumer, and some research is required to create a successful campaign. Find out who is most likely to need a product and provide content that person will

find useful. For example, a company that sells pet health supplements would create and direct content toward pet owners concerned about their dog's health.

A business can significantly boost credibility and brand awareness with content marketing. With consistent, high-quality content, a company can gain visibility and expert status in a particular industry. Consistent exposure through different media channels will create familiarity with a company, and familiarity leads to trust and confidence if done right. A consumer will more likely make a purchase if they know the company will still be around to support the product they buy.

Part of an effective content marketing strategy is determining where your target customers are. Look at the demographics of the people likely to buy a product and

the typical way they consume content. Younger audiences tend to be on social media, so reaching them means posting content on Facebook, Twitter, or even TikTok. Promoting content through email and newsletters tend to produce better results when an older consumer is the objective.

Longtime marketers measure content success, and that measurement is crucial. If a particular blog post or video does well, similar content is created. Of course, the failures are forgotten and hopefully not repeated.

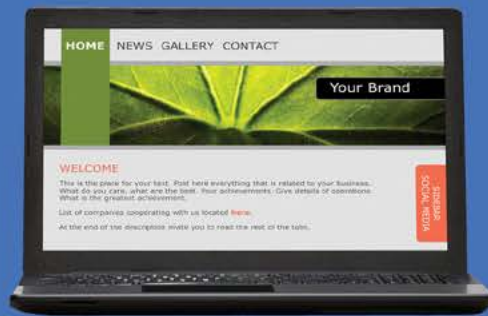
Staying focused and being in it for the long haul are the keys to content marketing. While it may seem a bit fruitless in the beginning, posting useful, entertaining, and consistent content will attract new leads and keep customers coming back to buy over and over.

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FUN FACTS

September is one of the warmest months in the Southern United States. Northern states have warm September days, but the nights get much cooler. It is also harvest time for crops. And, in Switzerland, it's called Harvest Month.

The definition of a Harvest Moon is the full moon closest to the fall equinox. The Harvest Moon was thus named because it rises within a half-hour of when the sunsets. In the early days, when farmers had no tractors, it was essential that they work by the light of the moon to bring in the harvest.

September Milestones:

- Sept. 2nd, 1963 - CBS Evening News expanded from 15 minutes to 30 minutes, the first network to do so. NBC Followed on September 9th.
- Sept 3rd, 1995 - eBay was founded.
- Sept 7th, 1998 - Google was founded by Stanford University students Larry Page and Sergey Brin
- Sept 11th, 1966 - The Beatles recorded their first single Love Me Do
- Sept 21st, 1970 - The first game of NFL Monday Night Football was played between the Cleveland Browns and the New York Jets. Cleveland won 31-21.
- Sept 29th, 1996 - Nintendo 64 game system debuted in America. It came about in Japan a few months earlier.

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2021 Pinterest Statistics

89% of users use Pinterest for purchase inspiration

66% of users say they go to Pinterest to find new ideas, products or services they can trust

98% of users have tried something they've seen on Pinterest

97% of the top searches on Pinterest are unbranded

459 million monthly active users



45% of people in the US with a household income over \$100k are on Pinterest

50% of US Pinners frequently shop on Pinterest

Pinners spend 80% more in retail than non-pinners

85% of users have bought something based on Pins they see from brands



82% of people use Pinterest on mobile



People watch close to 1 billion videos a day on Pinterest

92% of Pinterest advertisers rank the platform first for reputation

8 in 10 Pinterest users say the platform makes them feel positive

80% of US moms are on Pinterest



80% of millennial women & 40% of millennial men are on Pinterest

Users are 3x more likely to click over to a brand's website on Pinterest than any other social media platform

Advertisers can reach more than 200 million people on Pinterest

Pinterest generated nearly \$1.4 billion in advertising in 2020

85% of Pinners say they use Pinterest to plan new projects





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