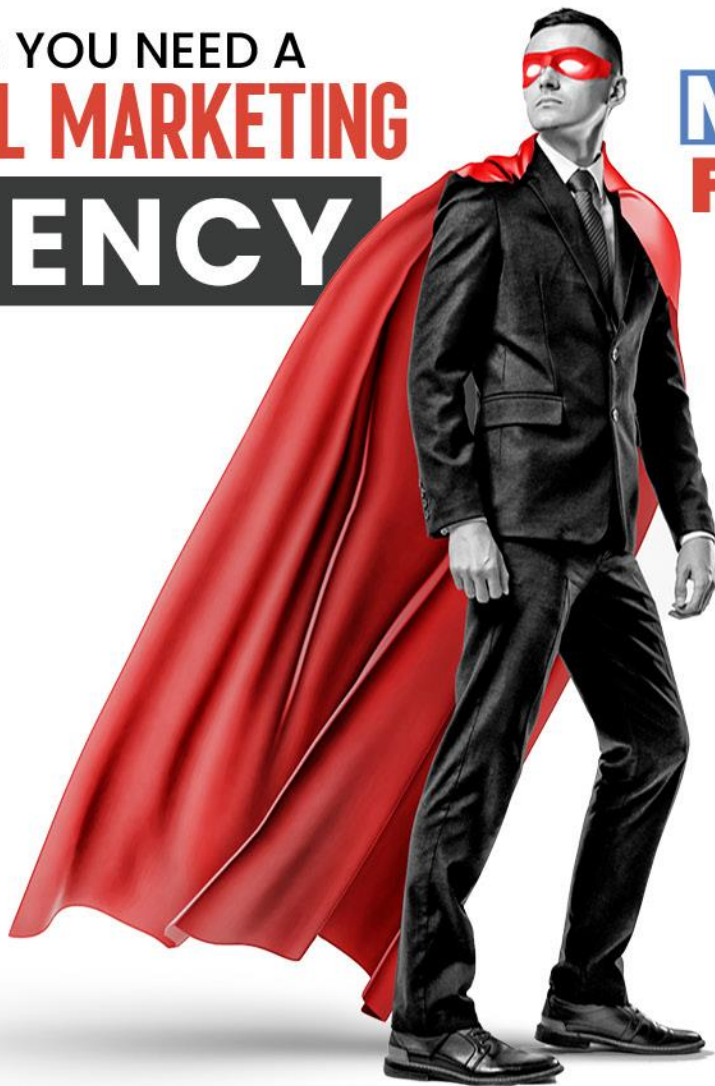


# # IndustryInfluencers

Issue #95

11 SIGNS YOU NEED A  
**DIGITAL MARKETING**  
**AGENCY**



5 LOCAL  
**MARKETING**  
**Fails to Avoid**

CRACKING THE CODE  
**TO CREATING**  
GREAT LOCAL CONTENT

*Standing Out*  
**AMONG YOUR**  
Competitors

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Whether you're remodeling your home or repairing your car, DIY'ing it isn't always the best approach. Digital marketing is no exception: You can run an in-house operation

for a while, but not forever. Your business's future and success are dependent on your ability to reach out to potential customers, attract and engage them, and convert them into paying customers. Has your business plateaued? Here are some signs you need a digital agency.

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Everyone makes mistakes, especially when trying out new marketing strategies. However, when your small business is putting its reputation (and money) on the line to experiment with new digital marketing strategies, making certain mistakes can be (literally) costly. With that in mind, let's look at 5 of the most common local marketing fails and how to avoid them.

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In the past, local marketing was easy. You paid for a listing in the Yellow Pages, printed flyers, and possibly placed an ad in the local newspaper. Then came web marketing and everything changed. Content is now King, and creating compelling local content is just as essential as oxygen. But creating content can be easy once you've cracked to creating content that Google loves and your audience can relate to. Read on to learn more!

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If only more people were aware of my existence...but my industry is so competitive that it's impossible to stand out. This is the most common

issue we hear from business owners. But standing out is easier than you think! So let's get right into it. If you're wondering how to get more eyes on your business, we're sharing our best ideas you can try to stand out in a sea of samesies.

## Welcome

### #IndustryInfluencers

MONTHLY MARKETING MAGAZINE



LOCALLY-OWNED BRANDS

Your brand is the vehicle of your organization's heart and soul. It expresses your passion. It shares your purpose. It makes your mission clear. Your brand exemplifies your life's work, hopes, and dreams.

IN THIS ISSUE

- Brand Marketing
- Relationship Marketing
- Digital Marketing
- Content Marketing
- Direct Marketing



The #IndustryInfluencers Magazine is dedicated to the passion and purpose-driven, success-seeking brands who choose to exemplify their brand from the inside out.

A leading resource guide to help local brands to distinguish themselves as influencers in their niche. Our elite subscribers understand that consumers have evolved. Today's buyers both embrace and expect a brand experience. Topics covered in the #IndustryInfluencers Magazine aim to lead brands to illuminate their vision through their brand's - identity, -personality, and -culture while crafting messages to position the brand as their customer's obvious choice; ultimately increasing brand awareness & equity.

**Our goal is clear.**

My team and I publish this magazine for brand leaders like you to build a **purposeful, thriving brand that helps you to define your life's work.** I hope this issue of the **#IndustryInfluencer Marketing Magazine** will help you implement strategies and tactics that position your brand to **stay fresh, relevant, and in the lead.**

At its core, the **#IndustryInfluencer Marketing Magazines** is published monthly to serve the dreamers who can't fight off those 3:00 am **BIG** ideas. The go-getters like you, who have the courage to pursue doing what they love but may not have the strategy or the know-how to execute a plan to make their dream a reality, yup, we are here for you, every month with a new issue filled with marketing tactics, tools, and best practices for your successes.

Be well.

Callahan  
@lamACallahan

## PUBLISHED BY



CONTACT

- 929-92-BRAND
- hello@acibranding.com
- acibranding.com
- NYC | CLT | ATL | MGM

#ACIagency



WHERE INDUSTRY INFLUENCERS BRAND THEIR WHY

At ACI Branding, we believe your brand influences most in-house decisions, best practices, and every marketing activity. For this reason, our boutique marketing agency specializes in holistic brand management and integrated marketing communications. We offer exclusive specialized custom-tailored services for sophisticated individual and small-sized brands. We help brands share their story to attract buyers who are more likely to buy from them, as well as whom they can best serve with excellence.

**Exemplify your brand from the inside out.** We help ensure your brand stands out, representing the epitome of your mission, values, passion, and purpose; in all customer and employee touch-points. We craft visual identity and messages to illustrate the brand's personality; through creative media, including print collateral, digital assets, and your brand's identity (logo, trademark, icon, font, color palette.) Our goal is to ensure they complement, cooperate and collaborate with each other consistently with synergy.

ACI Branding Where Industry Influencers brand their **WHY**



# 11

## Signs You Need A **DIGITAL MARKETING** **AGENCY**



You can only get so far by doing it all yourself.

Whether you're remodeling your home or repairing your car, DIY'ing it isn't always the best approach. Digital marketing is no exception: You can run an in-house operation for a while, but not forever.

Your business's future and success are dependent on your ability to reach out to potential customers, attract and engage them, and convert them into paying customers. Without digital marketing, this is extremely difficult, if not impossible.

So, what are some signs it's time to chat with a digital agency?

If your digital marketing efforts aren't delivering the results you'd hoped for, it may be time to hire an agency. Other signs that you should hire a digital marketing agency include:





## 1. IT'S BROKEN

When you first started your business, you had to do everything yourself or with a small team. It worked for a while: you came up with great ideas, generated leads, and increased your sales. Then something strange happened: website traffic slowed, leads dried up... Whatever got you this far has broken down.

At this point, you need new ideas and new people to help you come up with and carry out a plan that will get you the results you want. This is another sign to consider hiring a digital marketing agency to help you take your business to the next level.

## 2. YOU'RE OVERCOMMITTED

With everything on your plate, you probably don't have enough time to create a comprehensive digital marketing strategy.

Let's be honest. Digital marketing is a time-consuming endeavor that includes SEO, content marketing, website updates, social media management, email marketing, and analytics. Unless you have the extra time and resources to learn how to become a bonified marketing expert, then hiring an agency while you focus on your core business is probably a more productive use of your time.

## 3. YOU'RE OUT OF YOUR LEAGUE

You know your business and industry inside and out, better than anyone right? But you're no digital marketing guru. You are not equipped with the skills, or experience necessary to develop and roll out a digital marketing strategy that is likely to succeed. And that's okay. You're better off allocating your time & resources to the business you've created. Website development, graphic design, content creation, SEO, analytics, social media, technology, and a variety of other tools are all play a role in digital marketing and all tied together.



#### 4. YOU COULD NOT CARE LESS

You recognize the value of digital marketing for your company, but you don't understand how it works or how it's done, or you simply don't care. You're no dummy, you know it works and you want results. But you can't or don't want to be involved in the process of getting them. So if digital marketing isn't your jam and you'd rather spend your time on other parts of your business, then it may be time to delegate it to an agency with a passion for digital marketing.

#### 5. RETURN ON INVESTMENT IS UNDERWHELMING

Digital marketing can be a roller coaster, especially nowadays. Your marketing needs to evolve as the web evolves. So setting up multiple traffic streams to keep a steady flow of eager buyers incoming to your business is the way to go but unfortunately the rock solid strategies you've used just a couple years, or even months ago aren't driving customers to your business like they used to. And now your bag of tricks isn't generating the ROI it once was, and you're out of ideas.

This is yet another sign it's time consult with an agency. A good digital marketing agency will track your ROI so you can cut wasteful spending and optimize your campaigns while suggesting fresh new ideas that are working for local businesses right now.

#### 6. YOU'RE ON A TIGHT BUDGET

You can't grow your business without marketing. Let's just make that clear.

This normally means 1 of 2 things. A small budget could mean that the business doesn't understand how important digital marketing is or that it doesn't make enough money to spend on digital marketing.

Working with a marketing agency does not have to be expensive. In fact, it can be much more expensive building/maintaining an in-house marketing department. A dedicated space, skilled staff, ongoing training, salaries and benefits, specialized technology, and other costly components are all required for an in-house operation.

This is where a reputable digital marketing agency shines because they'll already have the team in place, tools, and expertise ready to go from day one and you don't have to worry about training, paying salaries or providing benefits.



## 7. YOU NEED MORE TARGETED TRAFFIC

A slow flow of new leads and customers indicates a less than optimal digital marketing strategy. Maybe you're using the incorrect channel or channel combination. Perhaps your website is out of date, your content isn't engaging visitors, or your social media activity is insufficient. You might be targeting the wrong people

These are just some of the many challenges that a digital marketing agency takes on in order to help you reach your target demographic and bring in more business.

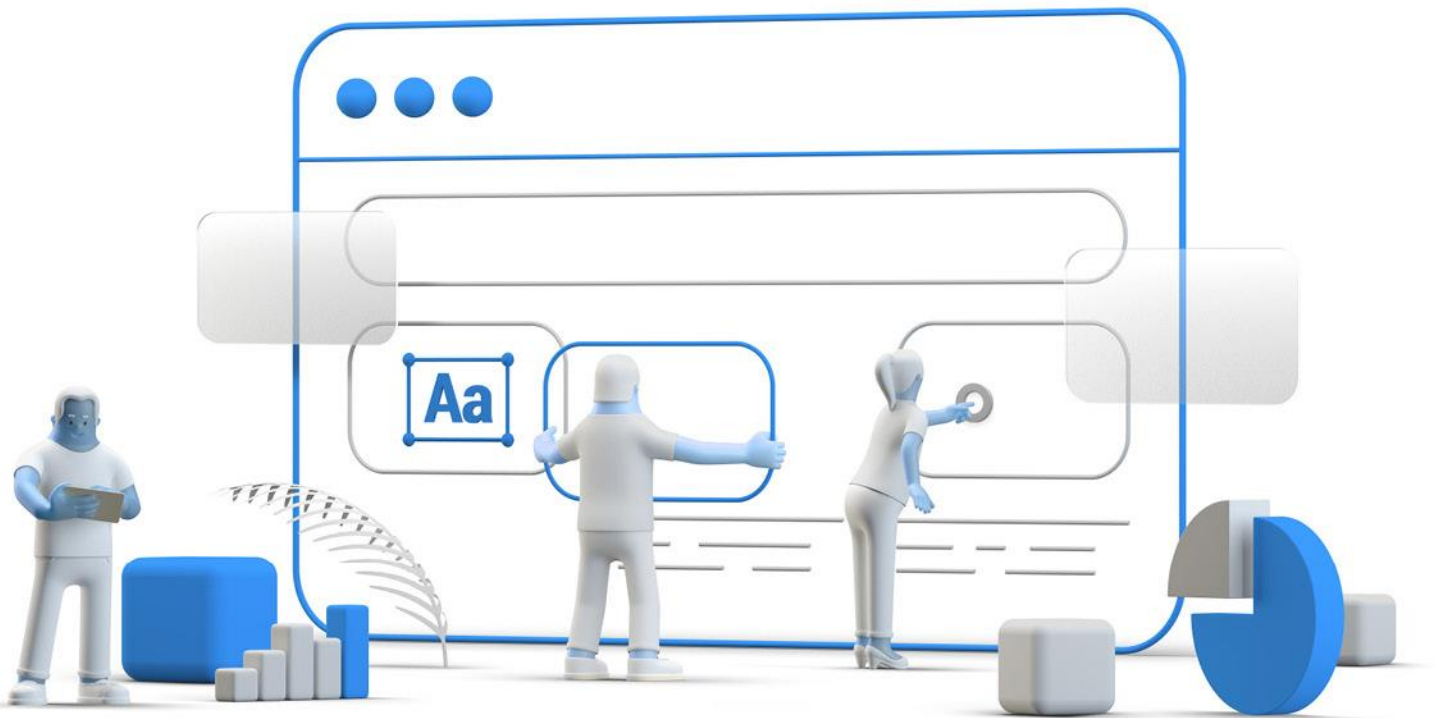
## 8. THE COMPETITION IS WINNING

When your competitors' websites and blog posts rank higher than yours in Google search results and you can't avoid their social media activity, you know they're beating you. Clearly, they're spending a lot of money on digital marketing to expand their business and capture customers and sales that could be yours.

Consider it a wake-up call. You can do it if they can. But chances are you won't be able to do it alone. To get there, you'll need the right combination of content creation, citation and link building as well as social media, and analytics support. This is where an agency comes in handy.







## 9. YOUR WEBSITE REQUIRES AN OVERHAUL

Your website is the public face of your company. Customers visit it to learn more about your products and services and to make purchasing decisions. A well-designed, user-friendly website improves their interaction with your brand and speeds up the conversion process. An out-of-date, broken, or confusing website turns them off and undermines your brand's credibility.

An outdated appearance, low Google rankings, dwindling traffic, incorrect information, infrequent content publication, and technical difficulties are all serious issues that should be addressed right away.

## 10. YOU CAN'T CREATE ENOUGH CONTENT

Do I really need to say it? Okay, fine... Content IS King. Now more than ever. Content and engagement is how Google measures success. If you go two to three weeks without creating and publishing new content, you need additional help. A lack of fresh content harms your website's Google ranking and significantly reduces user engagement. When there's nothing interesting to follow, followers leave and don't come back.

You should be adding new content to your website on a weekly and daily basis for social media. This content should be interesting, relevant, and useful to your intended audience. If you find yourself falling behind, it's time to hire a digital marketing agency.





## 11. YOU AREN'T MEASURING RESULTS

One of the major advantages of digital marketing over traditional marketing is analytics. You can track, measure, and analyze the performance of your marketing campaigns using digital marketing to determine what works and what doesn't. This knowledge enables you to tailor your efforts in order to maximize your results and budget.

Is your digital marketing strategy producing results? Are your efforts bearing fruit? You're wasting time and money if you don't know, and you need an agency.

### **Wrapping up,**

In today's online world, establishing a solid digital marketing strategy and understanding how to apply it is pretty much essential for your success of your campaign. You may be a determined do-it-yourselfer, but unless you are well versed in all forms of digital marketing, you will require the expertise of an agency sooner or later. In the long run, acting sooner will save you more time and money.



# 5 LOCAL MARKETING FAILS TO AVOID



Everyone makes mistakes, especially when trying out new marketing strategies. However, when your small business is putting its reputation (and money) on the line to experiment with new digital marketing strategies, making certain mistakes can be (literally) costly.

With that in mind, let's look at 5 of the most common local marketing fails and how to avoid them.





## 1. A User Experience That is Focused on You Rather Than Them

A website's visual impact is important, but it also needs to support an engaging and efficient customer journey.

Your audience visits your site to solve their problems and alleviate their pain points, not to learn about your products. Your products could be the solution to their problems but they're not picking up what you're putting down.

So, if you have a lot of visitors to your site but they aren't converting the way you want them to, it's time to take a step back and evaluate your user experience.

Consider a Home Page refresh, new Landing Pages, or an update to your payment options or check-out process, as examples.

According to recent Bain research, companies that excel at Customer Experience grow revenues at a rate that is 4%-8% higher than the market average.





## 2. Reluctant to Experiment With New Marketing Channels

Marketing is constantly evolving, and the only way to effectively promote your business on a consistent basis is to keep up with the changes and be open to trying new marketing activities.

However, many small business owners make the mistake of focusing solely on one, relatively simple marketing technique. For example, they may build a following on Instagram and believe they can avoid using other marketing methods.

So, what happens if your target audience unfollows you on IG? Okay so It's unlikely that would happen, but it is possible. Trends fade all the time. Websites that were popular yesterday may not be so popular in the future. You must plan ahead and do everything possible to spread the word about how awesome your business is through multiple ways. That doesn't mean you should spend all of your time marketing, but it does mean you should diversify and not put all your eggs in one basket.





### **3. You Haven't Claimed Your Social Media Pages Yet**

You don't have to be active on every social media site out there. What you should do is spend a few minutes claiming your business name on all relevant sites and posting some basic information about your business. If a potential customer searches for you on Instagram, you want them to find accurate information, such as your address, phone number, email address, and business hours.

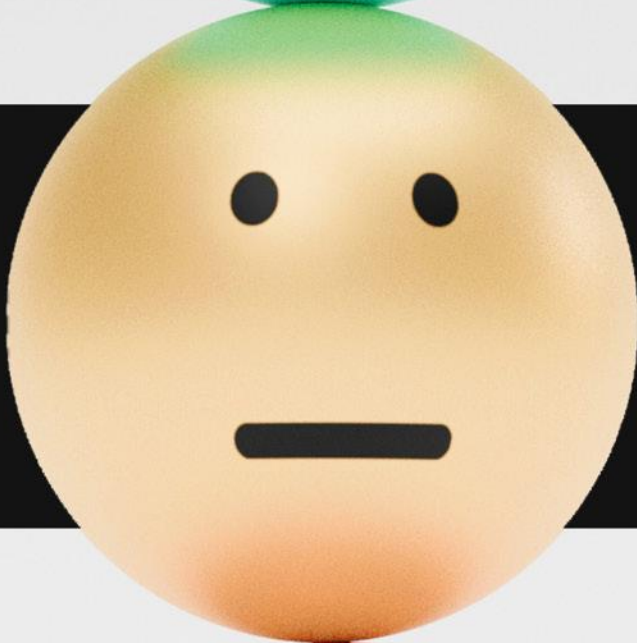
If you don't claim your business, your leads may end up on a page run by a stranger, someone who isn't looking out for your best interests. So a few minutes now can save you a lot of trouble later.





#### 4. You Are Not Managing Your Reviews.

Local businesses rely heavily on online reviews. People who frequent your business can easily leave reviews on sites like Yelp, Angi, and Google. According to research, more than 80% of all consumers rely on online reviews before making a purchase, but many local business owners don't do everything they can to ensure that their reviews are beneficial



The first step is to claim your business listing on all local review sites. Customers can leave reviews even if a business hasn't created a listing, so you might be surprised at how many reviews you have if you haven't checked. Check your existing profile to ensure that all relevant information, such as your contact information, hours, and prices, is correct.



The second step is to devise a system for responding to reviews. It's a good idea to keep an eye on your accounts. Positive reviews can be responded to with a simple thank you, but negative reviews require a bit more finesse. Responses that remain positive are the most successful. If possible, try to take the conversation offline and do whatever you need to do to resolve the situation.



## 5. You Are Not Being Consistent With Your Brand

Everything you do online has an impact on your brand. If you have more than one person posting on your behalf, whether on your blog, website, or social media, you must have a well-defined strategy in place to ensure that everything associated with your company reflects your brand. That is, your colors and fonts should be consistent with your logo. However, it also implies that the tone of what you post must be consistent with the personality of your brand.

Creating a customer profile can assist you in identifying your core customers and tailoring your brand to them. Consider the tone of some major corporations, such as Red Bull and Rolls Royce. Red Bull employs brash, hip language that reflects their brand and audience, whereas Rolls Royce employs elevated language that addresses their core customers.

The good news is that these five errors are simple to correct. If you notice any of these flaws in your own marketing efforts, take the time to correct them and get back on track. Your company will be grateful in more ways than one!







# *CRACKING THE CODE* **TO CREATING GREAT LOCAL CONTENT**

In the past, local marketing was easy. You paid for a listing in the Yellow Pages, printed flyers, and possibly placed an ad in the local newspaper. People were aware of who you were and where you were.

Then came web marketing and everything changed. At first, the advice was to focus on general keywords. However, Google and other search engines' algorithms have evolved over time. They now prioritize local search above all else.

Why does that matter? In short, creating compelling local content is not optional. It is as essential as oxygen. You need to demonstrate to potential clients that you are an active participant in the neighborhood, which requires you to go beyond simply providing an address.





## THE FUNDAMENTALS OF LOCAL MARKETING

I've already written a lot about local marketing, but I think it's important to include a short summary of how to optimize your website and content for local search. Keep these things in mind:

- ✓ **Optimize your site for mobile search and make sure it looks great on mobile devices.**
- ✓ **Optimize your site for local voice searches and “near me” searches.**
- ✓ **Choose local keywords with a high search volume that are highly relevant to your business. The name of your city, state, or neighborhood, as well as keywords relevant to your business, are the best local search words.**
- ✓ **Use rich snippets to include important geographic information in your Google search results.**
- ✓ **Obtain links from important local sites to your site. Remember that when it comes to link building, quality trumps quantity. To build your local SEO “cred,” focus on local business guides, the Chamber of Commerce, and related local businesses.**
- ✓ **Encourage your customers to leave reviews and link to your review pages on your website. Customer testimonials, which go into a bit more depth than reviews, are also very important.**

Following these tips will help you get started, but you'll still need to create compelling local content to attract customers.





## LOCAL CONTENT CREATION TIPS

Once your site has been optimized for local searches, you should concentrate on creating local content. This entails more than simply incorporating local keywords into general content. You'll need to demonstrate to site visitors that you're a part of a local community.

### HERE ARE A FEW SUGGESTIONS TO GET YOU STARTED.

**1. Determine your audience's interests and then write about them.** Of course, you don't want to stray too far from your business, but there's nothing wrong with getting excited about topics that are important to your audience. You could, for example, write about an upcoming community event or the year's first major storm. If you already have a customer avatar, this should be even easier.

**2. Write a blog about local events.** Local events are important in every community, from small rural towns to large cities. As a business owner, you should be aware of these events and look for ways to write about them that are rel-

evant to your company. It will be simple if you plan to sponsor a booth at your local fair.

However, local charity events and holiday celebrations allow you to talk about your community and why you love it.

**3. Create case studies that are relevant to local prospects.** One method is to create an "insider's guide to..." that demonstrates your knowledge of the area. A landscaper in Southern California, for example, might discuss the risk of wildfires or provide advice on how to get rid of black widow spiders.



**4. Discuss local news.** Use news image. Did your neighborhood Little League team advance to the playoffs? Was your town featured nationally somehow? Is there going to be a new business in town? Any of these things could be turned into blog posts, and they're especially effective if you can find a natural way to connect the story to your business.

Staying connected to your community online is a great way to get ideas for local content. You could like your local Chamber of Commerce on Facebook, subscribe to your local newspaper, and go to the library to see what new flyers have been posted on the bulletin board.







## WHAT IS YOUR CONTENT'S INTENT?

When creating local content, one of the most important things to remember is that every blog post or social media update you write should have a clear intention that is related to your business.

What exactly do I mean? Simply put, you can't waste time blogging about something if you don't know why you're writing about it. Sometimes the intention is obvious. You own a hardware store, and blogging about winter snowfall predictions might help you sell some shovels and snowblowers, or at the very least some Ice Melt.

At times, however, the intention may be a little more difficult to pin down. There's nothing

wrong with that, but don't skip this step. If you're inventive enough, you should be able to connect any piece of content you create to your company.

For example, suppose you want to blog about a local charity event but can't think of an organic way to connect it to your business. Instead of giving up, consider donating a portion of your sales to charity or organizing a fundraising event with other local business owners.

The key is to make your local content relevant to your company and its target audience. You can still share general content, but if you want your business to grow, you must share local content.



# STANDING OUT

AMONG YOUR

# COMPETITORS

"My customers appreciate the excellent quality, service, and attention to detail that I provide. If only more people were aware of my existence...but my industry is so competitive that it's impossible to stand out."

This is the most common issue we hear from business owners. It's also been a challenge for us. So let's get right into it. If you're wondering how to get more eyes on your business, we're sharing our best ideas you can try to stand out in a sea of sameness.







## SURPRISE & DELIGHT

So many businesses claim to provide the best service. When you ask them how they can improve, they list things like “delivering on time” or “delivering quality work.” Personally, I consider these to be standard operating procedures; I expect them.

When you have a surprisingly good or surprisingly bad customer service experience, you are more likely to remember it. However, mediocre service is unlikely to stick with you long enough for you to tell anyone about it.

Businesses that stand out are those that make you feel like your satisfaction is always their top priority. They actively seek ways to go above and beyond, turning challenges or mistakes into opportunities to delight.

Don't settle for mediocrity. If you want to be memorable, go above and beyond—every time. Would someone tell their friends about your customer service experience? Use that as a general rule.

## MAKE A NAME FOR YOURSELF



Have you ever heard the expression “the riches are in the niches”? It's much easier to stand out and become known for one, very specific thing than it is to try to sell everything to everyone. Your competitors are fewer in a niche market, your marketing dollars can be spent more stra-

tegetically, and you can often charge more because you're a specialist.

Are you the best pet photographer in town? Do you make an awesome vegan pizza? Focus, claim, and own it.





## BE NOTICEABLY DIFFERENT

It is our responsibility as business owners to be able to confidently tell potential customers why we are worth their time and money. When there is nothing distinctive or distinguishing about your products, services, or brand, price becomes the only variable. And, if the only differentiating factor is price, we become magnets for bargain hunters looking for the best bang for their buck.

Stand out by identifying areas where you can provide value that your competitors cannot, or by addressing customer pain points that your competitors are not. When you look deeper, you'll discover that there are far more opportunities to stand out than you realize.

## TAKE CUSTOMER FEEDBACK SERIOUSLY & APPLY IT



Too often, we assume what our customers want and need instead of asking them.

Collecting customer feedback can help you identify potential product and service offerings that your customers want but that you aren't yet providing. It can also assist you in determining where your customers are confused or require additional assistance. Feedback also provides insight into the words and phrases your customers are using to describe their problems, which will help you assist them.

You'll be able to truly get to know your customers and how you can better serve them if you survey them. If you follow their advice, you'll be able to understand what they consider to be exceptional customer service, must-have products, clear marketing, and much more.





## **GIVE THE IMPRESSION YOU CARE**

Your brand's visual appearance is your customer's first impression of your company and sets the tone for all subsequent interactions with you. You want them to say to themselves - 'Wow! I'd love to work with this brand,' not 'If this is how their website looks, how will the quality of their work or service be?'

If your website, logo, or marketing materials are sloppy, it sends a message to your customers that you don't value your brand enough to invest in it. Even if you're just starting out or don't have a lot of money to spend, there are designers to suit every budget and business type. Make your brand stand out by ensuring that it appears polished, professional, and trustworthy at all touchpoints.

## **GIVE (AND RECEIVE)**



Building trust with your target audience takes time and, in many cases, multiple interactions. Asking someone for a sale is the business equivalent of asking for their hand in marriage, and shotgun weddings are relatively rare. If the 'marriage proposal' fails, ask them out on a date instead—consider offering a free trial, sample, information (blogs, videos, PDFs), or a free initial consultation to reduce risk perceptions, create goodwill, and build your relationship.

When we give generously to potential customers, we break down barriers, attract people to our business, assist our customers in getting to know us, build trust, and foster reciprocity.





## REWARD LOYAL CUSTOMERS

"Repeat buyers generate the same revenue as five new customers combined and are nine times more likely to convert," says the study. (Autopilot).

Yes, existing customers are just as important and valuable to impress as new ones (if not more). Consider differentiating yourself from the competition by rewarding their loyalty with discounts, incentives, exclusive deals, affiliate programs, or referrer bonuses.

Your company's success is directly related to the customers who patronize it. Treat them like royalty and create new ways to wow them in order to stand out in your industry.



# DO YOU HAVE BIG GOALS FOR YOUR BUSINESS?

**You Should....  
And It All Starts Today!**

Because there's never been a better time to boost your visibility online.

## WHETHER YOU NEED:



LOCAL



WEB



SMS



LEAD



EMAIL

Our team has the passion and expertise to help you meet your online goals. No matter what they may be. Connect with us today for a complimentary strategy

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