With all of the marketing channels available today, creating a marketing plan for your small business can be overwhelming. As technology evolves, many of the platforms and options available to small business owners for marketing their products and services also seem to evolve at a daunting pace — staying on top of (and implementing) the latest trends can be a job in itself!

Thankfully, there are ways to be successful while keeping it simple. We're here to help!

This Simple Guide to Marketing for Small Businesses teaches you how to identify your goals, target your customers, develop your messaging strategy and customize it for different platforms, and use data analytics to measure your results.

How to Use This Guide

Each section of the SimpleTexting Guide to Marketing for Small Businesses includes a helpful checklist that provides a general overview of what steps you'll need to take in order to be successful.

We encourage you to revisit this guide and review the checklists periodically as you refine your campaigns and develop new ones for seasonal promotions, different market segments, new product releases, and more.

Check List

☐ **Get online.**
Setting up a website is the first step to establishing an online presence.

☐ **Be mobile friendly.**
Studies show that (x percentage of American/Canadian audiences/need stat here) use their mobile devices for just about everything! Making sure that your business is accessible anytime and anywhere can give you a competitive advantage.

☐ **Claim your brand online and establish a consistent voice.**
Your customers and leads can find you faster when your business shows up regularly in search results on sites like Yelp and Google.

☐ **Be social.**
Use social media platforms like Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram to interact with your customers.

☐ **Build an email database**
(such as MailChimp) to keep in touch with your customers.

☐ **Use free online tools**
(such as A, B, C, and D) to establish and manage your online presence.

☐ **Share your story and promote your news.**
Whether it's on your blog or through social media, keep your customer base in the loop about what's going on.

☐ **Research text marketing options**
to help you easily connect and build relationships with new and existing customers.

☐ **Research paid online advertising options**
to reach customers on search engines and popular social networks.

☐ **Determine whether traditional advertising is a fit for your business**

01
Determining Goals

Begin with the end in mind. Let's start with some basic questions to help guide the process.

What do you want to achieve from your marketing?

Increase sales

Build a social media presence and gain followers

Build a customer database

Gain a competitive advantage against my competition

Whatever your goal may be, it's essential that you set smart goals so you can easily measure how you're stacking up to those end initiatives. A good set of guidelines to keep in mind when setting goals are to set SMART goals.

Specific

Define the goal in as much detail as possible. Who will be involved? Why is this goal important? Where is the goal going to be completed?

Measurable

Determine how you will track your progress and measure your desired outcome. This guideline relates to the KPIs that will be discussed below.

Attainable

Your goals should be realistic. You want to be sure your goal is within reach or the likelihood that you'll actually achieve it will decrease.

Relevant

The goal should align with all of your other short and long term initiatives. The time and energy put towards achieving the goal should be worthwhile to the overall success of your business.

Timely

Set a deadline to complete the goal. When a goal is anchored within a timeframe, it sets a sense of urgency for completion.

Example

Say you've recently launched a business that sells handmade pottery. You know that Facebook is going to be one of your primary marketing outlets and you want to build a fanbase. Setting a goal to get 100 Facebook likes on your business page by July 31st is a much more impactful goal than 'get more Facebook likes.' With a clear end goal and timeframe in mind, you can easily track your progress toward that goal of 100 likes.

After you have set your SMART goals, you'll be ready to develop a plan to achieve them. The first step in any marketing effort is to identify your target audience.

Identifying Your Target Audience

Ask yourself, "who are the people that are most likely to perform the actions I have set as my goal?" Rather than sending your message out into the online oblivion, have a clear picture of who it's intended for and tailor your message accordingly.

Depending on your product or service, you may consider factors such as age, location, income, career, education, interests and hobbies when identifying your target audience. In addition, determining which type of media your target customer is regularly consuming will help you decide which marketing channels make the most sense for you to use. Understanding your audience allows you to reach them more effectively.

Setting a Budget

As a starting point, you will need to determine the total amount that you plan to put toward your marketing efforts. From there, you can allocate amounts toward each individual marketing channel or campaign. Knowing exactly how much you're putting into each channel or campaign will allow you to better assess the return on investment you're seeing as a result.

If you're a relatively new business, you will want to keep costs as low as possible in the beginning as you focus on growing your business. Luckily, there are many low cost marketing outlets you can take advantage of for managing your social media accounts.

Choosing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

How will you measure the effectiveness of your marketing? Select metrics or KPIs that are relevant to your goals. Your KPIs might be different for each marketing channel. Here's a few examples:

Text Marketing

A good measure of the effectiveness of your text marketing strategy is to look at the rate at which your subscriber list is growing. A steady growth rate indicates that you've successfully added new subscribers to your campaigns and also retained existing subscribers.

Twitter

If the primary goal of your Twitter strategy is user engagement, a beneficial KPI to set for a Tweet would the number of retweets you receive. If users are retweeting your posts, you can conclude that your content was compelling enough to warrant a share.

PPC

The clickthrough rate of a search text ad is an excellent KPI to consider when measuring the effectiveness of a paid Google ad campaign. If a high percentage of customers are clicking that particular ad, you can conclude that the ad copy you have written is compelling and effective in connecting with your target customer.

Your brand is your best means to form relationships with your customers.

Setting Yourself Apart

What sets you apart from your competition? In other words, what is going to make a customer come to you over someone else that offers the same product or service? Once you pinpoint the specific points that make you special, you have what is referred to as your unique selling propositions (USPs). Your USPs should be the focus of your marketing message.

Example
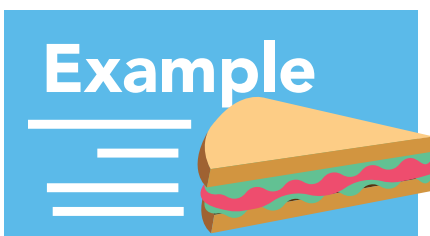
If you are a deli that happens to be the only restaurant in your area that offers free delivery to customers, this should be a selling point highlighted in your marketing.

Staying on Message

Think of your brand as a personality. All of the marketing efforts you make help your customers get to know you better, adding attributes and traits to that personality as they know it. It is essential that you are consistent in your messaging so you build a consistent persona with your customers. Whether it be a Facebook post or a marketing flyer, maintain your tone and messaging. Keep your focus on your USPs whenever possible. You should consider the type of industry you're doing business in when determining the right tone to take with your message. For example, a clothing store can take a more lighthearted approach to their marketing than a law firm.

Setting Up Your Website

It is estimated that 81% of shoppers research online before making a purchase decision. Whether you're a brick and mortar restaurant or an online shoe store, it is imperative to have a website to simply let customers know you exist in the ever growing competitive landscape online. Without a website, you run the risk of being invisible to customers online which equals missed opportunities to reach customers.

Beyond that, a good website can establish you as a credible business to customers and is a means to communicate information like your location and product offering. The design and messaging of your website should align with all of your other branding. "You only get one chance to make a first impression", and your website is the only first impression that over 90% of your potential buyers will get - make it a good one!

1   **Choose a platform.**

Choose a platform on which to build your website. There are countless user friendly options available to small businesses today. Do your research on which platform makes the most sense for you to build your site and manage your content on. WordPress is one of the most popular platforms utilized by small businesses today.

2

Choose your domain name & hosting.

Choose a domain name and find a space to host your site. Your domain name should be a close to your business name as possible. Depending on your website's platform different hosting providers may be your best option. For WordPress sites, WPengine provides great services and security. Amazon cloud services or a solution like HostGator may also be worth considering if you're looking to host your site on a virtual private server.

3

Create and design your site.

Many of the website platforms offer free templates that make web design a breeze. As always, keep the design consistent with all of your other marketing for branding purposes.

4

Make sure it's mobile friendly.

Mobile devices are changing the way people search for products and make purchases on the Internet. This is especially true for location-based search queries. Of the 30 billion mobile searches a year, 12 billion are local.

Claiming Properties

You want to ensure that you are visible to customers on as many platforms as possible. In order to do so, you will want to take the steps to claim your listing on various websites. Claiming your business lets customers know you exist and also prevents other businesses from potentially claiming your listing. The most important websites to claim your listing on are listed below.

Google My Business   **Social Media Profiles**   **Yelp**   **Business Directories & Yext**

Glassdoor   **Implement Schema Markup code**   **Crunchbase**
          to help search engines crawl your site and better understand your content

The process to claim and verify your listing will vary for each site. It may be helpful to put together a spreadsheet to track your progress towards verification for each. You'll also want to review the information that each website has listed for your business to confirm that it is all accurate. Your core business details should be identical on all websites. Include as much information as the website will allow. For example, Google My Business gives you the option to include photos in your listing. If the field is available, you should be provide what they are requesting. Consider it free marketing!

Taking the steps to claim these listings also sets you up with a strong set of relevant links back to your website which can you help you show up for searches right off the bat.

Keep in mind that you will want to keep these listings as up to date as possible. For instance, if you make a change to your store hours, you should also update your business listings. This will keep your customers in the know.

Getting Started

- ☐ **Establish SMART goals**

- ☐ **Identify your target audience**

- ☐ **Determine your budget and how much you plan to allocate to each channel**

- ☐ **Select a platform to design your website on**

- ☐ **Choose and purchase your domain name**

- ☐ **Design your website and add content**

- ☐ **Confirm that your website is mobile friendly**

- ☐ **Set up or claim your Google My Business page**

- ☐ **Fill out all of the available business information fields on your Google My Business page**
  (name, address, phone number, photos, social media links)

- ☐ **Set up or claim your Yelp page**

- ☐ **Collect at least 5 Yelp reviews**

- ☐ **Set up or claim any other business listing sites that make sense for your industry**

Social Media

Social media channels are excellent outlets to utilize to engage with your customers and continue to build your brand. Your customer will always be your most important audience on any social media platform.

Before you get started, know your audience and do your research about which social media platforms will be the most effective to reach your target customer. If a social media platform is not a fit for your target customer, your time is likely better spent elsewhere. For example, research has found that Pinterest is largely used by women. If you are marketing a male-focused product, it may not be necessary for Pinterest to be a significant part of your social strategy. The platforms on which you choose to engage should work together to achieve your overall social media goals.

Tips for Getting Started

Plan ahead. Build out your content calendar for the upcoming week or month for each channel. Having a clear content plan in place helps create a picture of the types of content you have planned and your overall messaging. It can also help you stay on track with your goals. From day one, establish a strategy for how often you plan on posting and stick with it. The strategy should strike a balance between posting much too often and overwhelming people and not posting enough where users could potentially forget about you. Many social media platforms allow you to schedule out posts in in advance, which can help keep you on track with your posting plan.

When developing your content, focus on creating things that your customers will be most likely to engage with and share. Get creative with the types of content you are posting. Whether it be an image, a video or a shared article, your end goal should always be user engagement. When considering what to post where, remember that all social media platforms are not created equal! In addition to tailoring your message for your target customer, you should also be tailoring for the specific social media channel that you are posting on. Through trial and error, you will be able to figure out which types of content work best on each platform. It can be helpful to look to similar brands' accounts for inspiration as to what has worked well for them.

Keep in mind, an effective social media strategy is a big time commitment. Make sure you don't bite off more than you can chew. Confirm that you have the time and bandwidth to maintain and be active on all of the social media platforms you choose to engage before you get started.

Metrics That Matter

Depending on the social media platform you're using, you'll want to track different metrics to help gauge the level of user engagement. For any type of social post you will want to track the number of likes and shares you're receiving. If that number is low, you're not resonating with your target audience and should rethink the types of content you're posting. In some instances, the goal of your post will be to drive customers to your website. Installing Google Analytics on your site will allow you to track all traffic coming in through social media.

We've included some tips on how to get started on the most commonly used social media platforms. While these are the most commonly used channels, depending on your industry it may also make sense to get involved in more specialized social networks (Inbound.org, Houzz, etc.) For example, Houzz is a platform for home remodeling and designs that brings together homeowners with home professionals. If you're an interior design business, Houzz would be a good fit.

Tips on how to get started on the most commonly used social media platforms.

Facebook

What Should I Post?

Any content relevant to your business- photos, videos, articles

How Often Should I Post?

Post new content as often as twice a day to stay visible on your followers' newsfeeds

Tips for Success

- Encourage customers to like your page to stay in the know.

- Use Facebook as a platform to build relationships with your audience. Engage with them by asking questions to start a conversation and responding to comments quickly.

Instagram

What Should I Post?

Photos and videos of your products, services and employees. Keep text to a minimum as this platform is intended to be driven by visuals.

How Often Should I Post?

Aim for once a day. Less than that and you might get lost in the feed. More than that and your followers might feel 'spammed'.

Tips for Success

- Use hashtags. Users can filter their feed by hashtag which can lead to new followers.

- Be social. Follow accounts similar to you. Like and comment on posts. This can help reach new followers.

LinkedIn

What Should I Post?

Business focused content with a more professional tone.

How Often Should I Post?

Limit to one post per day maximum.

Tips for Success

- Include a link back to your website in posts when possible to drive traffic.

- Encourage your employees to create and maintain profiles to help build your business' presence.

Pinterest

What Should I Post?

Mostly photos, but don't make it all about you. Pin a healthy mix of your own products and other related items to build your brand's personality.

How Often Should I Post?

Pin as often as you see fit, as long as the content aligns with your brand's personality.

Tips for Success

- Organize your pins in boards to help pinner seamlessly navigate your content.
- Link pins of your products and services back to your website to drive traffic.

Snapchat

What Should I Post?

Photos and videos of products, services and employees. Give followers a behind the scenes look at your business.

How Often Should I Post?

As long as your content is fun and engaging, snap as often as you'd like. Since posts to your story only live for 24 hours, keep a steady stream of content coming to keep the story alive.

Tips for Success

- Be creative! Take advantage of all of the fun filters and features. Use geofilters, draw on your photos and have fun with it.
- Create custom filters for events and encourage attendees to use them on snaps.

Twitter

What Should I Post?

Post pictures, videos, articles, and even retweet content you believe is interesting and relevant to your business.

How Often Should I Post?

Post several times a day, but space your tweets out throughout the day so you're not overwhelming fo

Tips for Success

- Tweets are limited to 140 characters, so the small message you are sending must be impactful and to the point.
- Use hashtags. By hashtagging particular keywords, your tweet can fall into a list of what is trending and therefore, is more likely to be seen.

Social Media

- ☐ Set up your social media business pages

- ☐ Fill out the basic information, making sure it's consistent and accurate across all channels

- ☐ Upload a high resolution version of your logo to use as your profile picture

- ☐ Follow, like or connect with 50-100 users or businesses on each channel. This will encourage them to follow you back, helping to establish a follower base.

- ☐ Plan out and, when possible, schedule your first month of content to include a variety of types of content like images, videos and relevant articles to share.

- ☐ Determine a KPI for each channel to measure performance

- ☐ As your follower base grows and users begin to interact with your posts, stay on top of them and make sure your commenting back, liking posts, etc.

Email has been a proven outlet for marketers to reach customers for many years. With a large reach (who doesn't have an email account these days?) and relatively low costs, it is an effective way to get your message out to your customer. Things that you'll want to consider when crafting your email marketing campaign:

Building a Subscriber Base

In order to run a successful email marketing campaign, you'll need to build out a base of subscribers. In order to do so, you should exhaust your resources and ways to collect emails. Whether it is requesting emails from customers at point of purchase in store or online, always be collecting emails to expand your subscriber base. Utilize your website to collect emails and encourage subscriptions by prompting customers to enter their email and subscribe. Offering some type of incentive after signing up can make sense in some instances. Once you have an established base of subscribers, focus on consistently delivering useful content to ensure your customers stay subscribed

Newsletter Management Apps

Managing your email campaign can be a cumbersome and time consuming task. Luckily there are many applications that are available for small businesses to employ to take care of all of the details. A few of the benefits of utilizing a newsletter management application are: access to a library of email templates available for use, detailed analytics information and the ability to segment audiences based on behavior. Some of the most popular newsletter management applications today are **MailChimp** and **Constant Contact.**

How to Increase Open Rates

In order for your email campaign to be effective, you'll want to utilize the below strategies to increase the number of customers actually opening your email message.

Craft an effective subject line

Step one of increasing open rates is to craft an effective subject line. Your subject line is essentially your first impression and you want to make it strong. Consider your audience and select a subject line that will catch your customer's eye amongst all of the countless other emails in their inbox.

Use the right content

Send the right content to the right audience. Include content that your customers are going to find interesting and want to read. Your content should be relevant to your subject line.

Don't overdo it

Consider how often you're sending emails- too often? Not often enough? We've all been made a victim of those businesses who send way too many emails. Harassing a customer is an easy way to earn yourself an 'unsubscribe'. On the other hand, if you're not communicating with your customers enough, they're likely going to forget about you and be less likely recognize your name as it comes through their inbox.

How to Improve Clickthrough Rates

In order for your email campaign to be effective, you'll want to utilize the below strategies to increase the number of customers actually opening your email message.

Content. Content. Content.

To put it simply, the easiest way to improve your clickthrough rates is to provide meaningful, useful content. A strong understanding of your target audience will allow you to choose the most effective content to include.

Choose a proper subject line

Consider the verbiage of your links. Similar to the subject line of the email, you want this to be compelling enough for a customer to want to click it. Call to actions tend to be effective, but avoid using the 'click here' verbiage.

Use multiple links

Include more than one link to a page in the email to increase the likelihood of that link being clicked.

Metrics that Matter

Open rates and click rates will be two of the most important metrics to track with an email marketing campaign. Email marketing applications offer advanced analytics reporting for your campaigns to help you connect sales directly back to your campaigns.

Email Marketing

- ☐ **Create a plan for collecting customer emails to build your subscriber list**

- ☐ **Select an email newsletter management application**

- ☐ **Put together a plan for frequency and timing of email marketing messages**

- ☐ **Determine a KPI to measure performance; i.e. open rate or clickthrough rate**

- ☐ **Implement A/B testing to see which types of subject lines are most effective**

- ☐ **Include links and a call to action in each email**

- ☐ **Review analytics and make adjustments to improve KPIs**

Search Engine Optimization (SEO) is the steps and efforts taken to influence search engine algorithms so your website appears at the top of the search results page for the keywords your website and pages target. Since people click on organic results 94% of the time, it's imperative that you show up in the search results for important and relevant keywords. Where you show up is also important as your ranking position directly impacts the volume of traffic you receive. As a small business you'll likely want to execute strategy around local SEO in addition to traditional SEO.

Local SEO Tips

Be consistent

Be sure to use the same Name, Address, Phone Number (NAP) and in the same structure each time you reference your business. Consistency with NAP helps search engines place you in local based queries.

Increasing your citations

Increasing your citations across trusted sites can also help improve where you rank in local search results. Sites like Yext and Moz Local can help with this effort.

Ongoing Support

There are steps you can take both on your site and offsite that can influence where you show up on the search results page. The onsite elements, or those controlled by your webmaster, that can impact your site ranking pertain to the HTML structure of your site, the architecture of your webpages and the content on each page of your site. Google and Bing offer the below onsite guidelines for improving your organic search ranking. Keep in mind, onsite optimization is an ongoing process, not a day's project. For this reason, many businesses choose to employ an SEO agency to take care of the day to day onsite optimization elements.

1 **Create content for users**

should be created for real users, not search engines

2 **Clear hierarchy & structure**

text links should allow users to navigate to other pages on the website. Every page on the site should be reached from at least one text link.

3 **Accurate onsite element usage**

each page should accurately use HTML tags and be descriptive when possible

- Title tags should be descriptive and relevant to what the page is about

- Image tags should use alt tags

- Headers should be used properly and in the correct order

- Meta descriptions

4 Use canonical tags

5 Keyword rich URLs

Easy for users to read and include keywords; this helps search engines identify and understand the purpose of each page

6 Fresh content

update regularly with latest and most accurate information available

7 Keyword optimization, link reclamation and interlinking opportunities

Tools

There are numerous tools available to small business owners to aid in optimizing their website for better search ranking positioning. A few worth exploring would be:

Ahrefs

allows you to track backlinks, keywords and brand mentions. You can also gain insight into your competitors' backlinks and how they are ranking for keywords.

Moz

offers business a complete set of SEO research and analytics tools. With a variety of products available, Moz has solutions to help with strategy for overall search, local search and content marketing.

HARO

Help a Reporter Out, provides a platform to pitch content to journalists for pick up in some of the top media outlets. Content pick up leads to high quality backlinks which can improve online presence.

Google Analytics

is available to anyone with a website for no cost. After installing the required code on your site, Google Analytics will track all of the traffic coming into your website whether it be from organic or paid. It also provides insights helpful in analyzing the quality of traffic coming in, like the average amount of time spent on site and the number of visitors who convert on site.

Content Marketing is just as important for your business as anything else, content that is shareable can be more effective than any amount of money spent on traditional advertising. Search engines love content - the more you have the more frequently search engines crawl your pages, leading to more possibilities to rank higher. Not only do search engines love content, but more importantly, people do as well. Having content that is relevant to your audience and is of value is, well, invaluable.

If you are a restaurant you could blog about your new menu items, and maybe even share a recipe or two every now and then - who doesn't click on delicious food images and recipes? If you are a car dealership, you could write content around how to save money on car repairs, or how to winterize your car for safely. These things would be relevant and useful to your audience as well as many other people, which could lead to social sharing and visits to your page, ultimately increasing your ranking within search engines.

Something to keep in mind when adding content, are keywords. What keywords do you want to rank for when people are searching in Google. If you are an insurance agency you may want your site to show up when people search for "Insurance" or "Insurance in [city]" or "Best insurance in [city]. But beware, keywords like "Insurance" are hard to rank for because there are many very large companies out there with a ton of content and money backing that keyword. So, if you are a smaller company, maybe you go for a more targeted, long tail keyword that has less competition so you are more likely to rank. For instance, if you wanted to show up for "Quick Insurance Quotes in Anywhere, USA" you would need to include that keyword naturally in the copy of the post, the title, headers and ALT image tags(if you include any images in your post). Then, of course you need to **promote that content** as much as you can to gain the largest amount of viewers possible.

Blog/News

Your blog is an excellent onsite resource not only for sharing relevant and engaging content with visitors, but also optimizing for search engines. When planning out your blog content for the upcoming quarter, consider the target keywords you want to be showing up in searches for and build relevant content around those keywords. As you develop your blog posts, you'll want to include the targeted keywords in the title of the post and also a few times in the body of your post. Your writing style and keyword usage should feel natural to your reader, so do not attempt to 'stuff' keywords into your content to the point where it feels forced. Use synonyms and related words that improve the quality of your content. The goal should be for a reader to not even catch on to the keyword usage.

Create a blog or news section of the site with information about the cars you sell so you can add value to your potential customers. A good way to create local content that people will want to read is by having someone in your IT department or social media team (if you have one) write a weekly blog post between 350-500 words. Remember, it isn't all about you. Be a good steward of the community. Topics should include information that people actually want to know about. This could include:
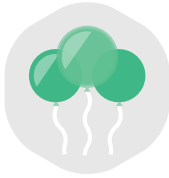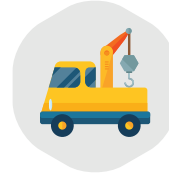
local events

upcoming model
launches specific to
your brand(s)
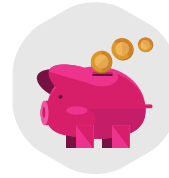
charity or fundraising
opportunities

local neighborhood news

community construction
that could impact residents
and/or traffic

SEO

- [ ] Implement Schema Markup code to help search engines crawl your site

- [ ] Increase your citations across trusted sites using tools like Yext and Moz Local

- [ ] Use a consistent Name, Address Phone Number (NAP) when referencing your business

- [ ] Select 5-10 keywords you would like to optimize your site for

- [ ] Create content around those keywords

- [ ] Take the steps to optimize your site (link to onsite optimization section)

- [ ] Add a blog or news section to your website. Curate content around your keywords.

- [ ] Utilize the many available tools to track and analyze your website traffic

$ **07**
PPC

Pay Per Click advertising can be a great addition to your overall online marketing strategy. A large benefit of PPC is that you only pay when a customer actually clicks your ad, so your associated cost is directly related to the number of customers actually reached. Also, your ads start showing up as soon as you begin bidding so it can be implemented quickly.

As a starting point to developing your PPC strategy, determine which search engines you'd like to bid on. While Google holds the majority of market share, it can also be effective to show your ads on other search engines such as Bing and Yahoo. Select keywords relevant to your business to bid on. Put yourself in the mindframe of your target customer- what types of searches are they going to be doing related to your product? These are the keywords you should be bidding on. Google offers an excellent resource in its Keyword Planner tool to help you make decisions and develop your strategy around targeted keywords.

Setting bids

Begin by setting your daily and monthly budgets. Based off these budgets, set your bid for each keyword. Your bid is one of the many factors taken into consideration when the search engine decides which position your ad shows up in. The higher up on the page your ad appears, the more likely it is to be seen and therefore clicked. You want to ensure you're bidding high enough to be competitive, but not too high that you're potentially overpaying per click.

Monitoring your campaign/Metrics That Matter

In order to measure the effectiveness of your PPC campaign, you'll want to monitor metrics like ad position and clickthrough rate. If you're consistently seeing that your ads are being placed on the second page of search results, it's likely time to reevaluate your bids or selected keywords. Likewise, if your clickthrough rates are low (<1%) this means customers are likely either not finding your ad copy relevant to what they're searching for or just not compelling enough to actually click through to your website. This is a sign that it is time to rewrite your ad copy.

PPC

- ☐ Choose which search engines you will run campaigns on

- ☐ Use the Google Keyword Planner to select the keywords you'll bid on

- ☐ Group similar keywords into ad groups

- ☐ Set bids for each ad group

- ☐ Write text ads for each ad group. Write at least 2 ads for each ad group.

- ☐ Track performance by looking at metrics like click through rate and ad position

Display Advertising

Display advertising, or online banner ads, are an excellent addition to your online strategy to aid in building your brand and keeping you top of mind for your customers. With a standard cost per click model, display advertising can be extremely cost efficient since there are so many available web placements to bid on.

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Platforms

Similar to PPC, in order to have banner ads placed on various websites, businesses must bid on available placements. There are many display advertising platforms that automate the bidding and placement process, freeing up small business owners' times to focus on overall strategy. Google Adwords and Adroll are two such platforms that help with display advertising efforts.

Strategy

Often a good starting point for a display campaign is to blend retargeting with a general display proponent. With retargeting, a dropped cookie on a user's browser allows your retargeting banners to follow those customers after they leave your website and continue to browse the Internet. The goal is to keep you top of mind and get them back to your website when they're ready to actually make the purchase. With general display, you can choose website placements that align with your product or service for your ads to appear on.

Things to keep in mind when designing your banner ads

- Keep text to a minimum
- Strong branding/logo placement
- Include appealing visuals
- Incorporate some type of call to action- do NOT use click here

Metrics that Matter

Since the primary goal of display advertising is brand awareness, focus more on clickthrough rates to see what type of impact you're making. Google AdWords and Analytics will allow you to see this percentage.

Display Advertising

- ☐ **Choose platform to advertise on**

- ☐ **Select placements or websites for banners to be shown on**

- ☐ **Setup retargeting campaign**

- ☐ **Design banner ads**

- ☐ **Upload banners and launch display campaigns**

Geo targeting

Geo targeting is the method of identifying the geographic location of a website visitor and delivering different content to that visitor based off his or her geographic location as designated by city, state, zip code, etc.

Examples Of Geo Targeting

1 On a basic level, geo targeting can allow a website to display content in the language that coordinates to the website visitor's IP address.

2 Google utilizes geo targeting to deliver relevant, local search results when a user performs a search for queries like 'Italian restaurants' or 'shoe stores nearby'.

3 It allows small businesses to tailor content such as promotions based off where customers are physically located.

4 **Platforms**

PPC and other forms of paid online advertising give businesses the ability and option to geo target with ads.

5 **Strategy**

Geotargeting allows small businesses to narrow the focus of some types of online marketing campaigns to only go after selected geographic areas that you designate. Based off existing data and trends, concentrate your marketing dollars into the areas where you feel you are most likely to get the highest return on your investment. Platforms give you the option to target by geographical region, state, city or even zip code. Decide what makes the most sense for you before you implement.

Geo Targeting

☐ **Determine which states to target with your marketing**

☐ **Determine which cities to target with your marketing**

☐ **Determine which zip codes to target with your marketing**

☐ **Implement your geographical strategy in online platforms**

One of the most efficient ways to market to past customers is through text marketing. Once customers have signed up for your text marketing lists you can continue to provide them regular updates and offerings and be confident that the message will get read by your customers as over 90% of text messages are read.

Basics

Types Of Campaigns

Communication is typically one way with text marketing and there are numerous types of campaigns you can employ to achieve various marketing objectives. Offer focused campaigns can be extremely effective for driving immediate sales. Offers can be price focused, offering a % off total purchase, or focused on a specific product, offering a coupon code for discount on a specific purchase. You can learn more about the many types of texting marketing campaigns in Simple Texting's
Ultimate Guide to SMS Marketing.

Objectives

The various types of text marketing campaigns can be instrumental in helping to achieve many different objectives. Before you begin any type of text marketing campaign, you should clearly identify and state the objective you're aiming to achieve. While the most common objective of a text marketing campaign is typically to drive sales, some of the other common objectives for text marketing are brand awareness, customer education, lead generation and increase website traffic.

Building a mobile subscriber base

To have a successful text marketing campaign, you first need to generate mobile subscribers to receive your messages. Customers can opt in with their mobile phone numbers through the their mobile form, through the web or by completing a paper form. Utilizing other marketing channels to advertise the mobile opt-in credentials can assist in building out your initial subscriber base.

Compliance

It's imperative that all of your text marketing messages are in compliance with legal guidelines and adhere to industry standards.

TCPA

The most important regulation to follow is that of the Telephone Consumer Protection Act. The TCPA requires that all businesses obtain written consent from consumers before adding them to text marketing campaigns. Consent can be collected from the consumer through a text opt-in, written form or a website form submit. The consent language should be straightforward so consumers know exactly what they are signing up for.

The Industry

In addition to the TCPA, stay aware of the governance bodies that play a role in enforcing compliance rules. For example, the Federal Communications Commission or FCC enforces federal law and regulations outlined in the TCPA.

Tips for Success

Be engaging.

The content of your messages should be engaging and to the point. Since you're working with a limited number of characters for each text, each word of your message should be carefully crafted and strategized. Assume that each customer may not actually read your whole message and prioritize the most important points in the beginning of your message.

Time your messages.

Timing can play a big part in how effective your text marketing campaign is. Consider factors like day of the week and target customers' work schedules to determine the most optimal times that customers will be most receptive to your messages. Also, think about the specific times of day that customers will prefer not to be disturbed and avoid sending any messages in those time frames. For example, sending a text in the wee hours of the morning advertising a promotion could likely cause a customer to unsubscribe after you disrupt their beauty sleep.

Be consistent.

As with all of your marketing strategy, focus on staying on brand. Use the same tone and voice you've established in your other marketing to communicate with customers.

Metrics that Matter

You'll want to closely track the size of your subscriber list and the growth rate of the list over time. Attrition rate and response rate are also good indicators of the effectiveness of your campaign.

Text Marketing

- [ ] **Set objective for text marketing campaign**

- [ ] **Select a KPI to measure performance on (ex: response rate, attrition rate)**

- [ ] **Review TCPA and other industry standards to ensure compliance**

- [ ] **Build a list of customer phone numbers. Obtain written consent from subscribers by having customers opt in on their mobile phones, on your website or on a paper form**

- [ ] **Set up a confirmation text to go to subscribers with important information and disclaimers**

- [ ] **Determine message frequency- build a plan for the number of messages that will go out weekly and monthly and the timing of your messages**

- [ ] **Write your messages**

- [ ] **Implement A/B testing to see which content is most effective**

Basics

When to Deploy

While small businesses are shifting more of their marketing dollars towards digital, it may still make sense to utilize traditional advertising in some instances. TV, radio and print media have a long history of effectiveness and could be a good complement to your digital strategy.

Objectives

As with all of the other marketing channels discussed, it's important to begin with a goal in mind and consider your audience. What types of traditional media does your audience consume regularly? Once you have narrowed this down, this will help guide your traditional marketing strategy. If you determine that a large portion of your target audience are still newspaper subscribers it would make sense to allocate some of your budget towards newspaper advertisements.

Note

While traditional advertising mediums have a large reach, it can be more difficult to determine whether your message has actually reached the end user. As a general rule, traditional marketing mediums are often more expensive to advertise on, but if they are an effective means to reach your target audience the additional cost could be worth it.

Text Marketing

- ☐ Consider your audience to determine which traditional advertising mediums make sense for your marketing strategy

- ☐ Purchase ad space

- ☐ Design ads

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Conclusion

Every business is unique and thus requires its own specialized marketing mix. Through trial and error you'll figure out what channels are most effective in reaching your target audience. Be creative and try to have fun along the way!