

# Online Marketing Playbook



## GROW AND THRIVE IN A DIGITAL WORLD

When it comes to downtown business and economic development, Jacksonville Main Street is a leader in providing small businesses with support and vital tools, like this downloadable Online Marketing Playbook, created with the help from Groupon to help entrepreneurs grow and thrive in a digital world.

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## TIPS FOR BEGINNERS

### ESTABLISH YOUR BRAND

Your brand is your promise to your customer. It tells them what they can expect from your products and services, and it differentiates your offering from your competitors'. Your brand is derived from who you are, who you want to be and who people perceive you to be.

Are you the innovative driver in your industry? Or the experienced, reliable one? Is your product the high-cost, high-quality option, or the low-cost, high-value option? You can't be both, and you can't be all things to all people. Who you are should be based to some extent on who your target customers want and need you to be.

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Defining your brand is like a journey of business self-discovery. It can be difficult, time-consuming and uncomfortable. It requires, at the very least, that you answer these questions:

- What is your company's mission?
- What are the benefits and features of your products or services?
- What do your customers and prospects already think of your company?
- What qualities do you want them to associate with your company?

Do your research. Learn the needs, habits and desires of your current and prospective customers.

Need more help? Leverage the expertise and resources we have available at Jacksonville Main Street.

Once you've defined your brand, you'll want to get the word out and consistent messaging will be key. Here are a few simple, time-tested tips:

1. Get a great logo. Place it everywhere.
2. Write down your brand messaging. What are the key messages you want to communicate about your brand? Every employee should be aware of your brand attributes.
3. Integrate your brand. Branding extends to every aspect of your business--how you answer your phones, what you or your salespeople wear on sales calls, your email signature, everything.
4. Create a "voice" for your company that reflects your brand. This voice should be applied to all written communication and incorporated in the visual imagery of all materials, online and off. Is your brand friendly? Be conversational. Is it ritzy? Be more formal. You get the gist.
5. Develop a tagline. Write a memorable, meaningful and concise statement that captures the essence of your brand.
6. Design templates and create brand standards for your marketing materials. Use the same color scheme, logo placement, look and feel throughout. You don't need to be fancy, just consistent.
7. Be true to your brand. Customers won't return to you--or refer you to someone else--if you don't deliver on your brand promise.
8. Be consistent. We placed this point last only because it involves all of the above and is the most important tip I can give you. If you can't do this, your attempts at establishing a brand will fail.

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## WEBSITE BASICS

84% of U.S. consumers believe a business with a website is more credible than one that only has a social media page. To be credible and attract new customers, a website can make a difference especially as COVID-19 restrictions make in-person business more difficult.

Whether you lack the time, money or technical skills to create a website, drag-and-drop website builders can get you up and running in minutes - no tech experience necessary.

Here are few of the easiest do-it-yourself website building tips to get you started:

1. Start with a simple site plan. Grab a piece of paper and map out the pages you want in your main navigation menu. List any other subpages and where they'll go. This will help you stay organized before you start building.
2. Keep your navigation menu short. A good rule of thumb is to have no more than 5 options in your top navigation menu.
3. Think about your audience. If you know specifically who you are trying to reach, you can create a website that's targeted to what they need.
4. Invest in a domain name.
5. Check how your website looks on a mobile phone.
6. Monitor your website traffic, even if it's low. See your progress over time and watch your traffic grow. You'll also learn more about where your visitors come from so that you can optimize your online marketing in the future.

## HELPFUL LINKS

- [SEO Tips for Small Businesses](#)
- [Google Website Builder](#)
- [The 21 Best Free Website Builders](#)
- [Building a Business Website: A Small Business Guide](#)
- [How to Set up a Website in 2021: An Updated Beginner's Guide](#)
- [How to Make a Website 2021: An Easy Beginner's Guide](#)

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## GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

Not only does Google My Business make your business easier to find, but you can reach potential customers that would otherwise have to drive by to find your business.

This must-have is a free tool that allows you to promote your business profile and website on Google Search and Maps. With a Google My Business account, you can see and connect with your customers, post updates, and see how customers are interacting with your business on Google.

Start by managing your Business Profile. By adding the most basic information about your business - location, hours, contact information, and an up-to-date photo of your shop or favorite product - potential customers will see your best self in your local listing.

Looking for another way to engage with customers? Google My Business also allows customers to leave reviews and book services right from your profile. The more engagement you have, the more potential customers will trust in your brand, and the more likely they are to walk through your doors. As long as you're providing quality products and a quality experience, over time, you'll start to collect more reviews and a higher overall rating (responding to reviews helps with this as well). This is especially helpful when there are competing businesses nearby and you need to gain a competitive edge.

## HELPFUL LINKS

- [Google My Business](#)
- [Find and manage your business](#)

## CREATING A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE

You've known for a while that social media for small business is important – but 2020 has made it essential. At a time when money is tighter than ever, social media can be a lifeline.

While social media can serve many functions, here's a quick look at some high-impact benefits of social media for your business:

- Low-cost brand recognition with free social media accounts or small-budget brand-awareness initiatives
- Targeted reach through tools, such as Instagram Ads or Facebook Ads, that homes in on specific demographics (i.e., age, gender, salary, location, etc.)

- Event promotion through features such as Facebook Events and Facebook Groups
- Customer service options that endears you to customers

You can use social media to show off your personality and get to know your customers better while also growing your business:

1. Determine which metrics matter. While it's tempting to obsess over followers and likes, those metrics don't necessarily serve your business goals. Some businesses get more out of a small, local following than a large following that includes people who will never walk into your location.

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2. Use reports to analyze what's working (and what isn't): With reports, you can compare metrics such as engagement rates, click-throughs, and follower demographics to determine which type of content resonates with your audience.
3. Own your personality. On social media, your followers come for your products and services – they stay because they like your style. Think of your social media as an extension of your brand's voice, tone, and personality. Make your brand's persona part of your branding guidelines, and let your unique personality shine in your posts.
4. Use social media to provide great customer service. Here's the bottom line: most of your customers expect support via social media and are almost equally likely to praise or complain about your response, so you might as well make it a great interaction. People want quick responses from empathetic humans who are prepared to resolve problems.
5. Schedule a baseline of posts. Just because social media is on 24/7 doesn't mean you have to be. You can schedule posts ahead of time to ensure that your brand has a consistent presence.
  - a. Scheduling also gives you more visibility into your messaging over time. When you can look at all of your posts across platforms for the coming weeks, it's easier to ensure that you're varying your content. Plus, when you plan ahead, you have more time to pop in on different platforms for real-time engagement.
6. Authentic social media posts. People want to see a genuine personality on social media. If you're simply going through the motions with generic posts and occasional product features, your customers won't have a reason to stick around and engage with you. Authenticity is about owning the tone and style your fans have come to expect from you and using social media to listen to and engage with your audience. Put real effort into varying your content and keeping it authentic.

## HELPFUL LINKS

- [Easy guide to social media for small business](#)
- [How to Create a Social Media Marketing Plan From Scratch](#)

## COMMUNITY MANAGEMENT: ENGAGING WITH CUSTOMERS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

Once you've set up your online presence with whatever social media channels you think are right for you, focusing on engagement is a must. It's not enough to just post photos or status updates; you have to connect with your audience. Building an effective engagement strategy can increase the value of your online business, solidify your brand, and create customer loyalty.

Think of engagement as building a relationship. Social media allows you to talk directly to customers and followers. You can build relationships over time, rather than asking for a sale upfront. When people engage with your content or ads, it's a great idea to engage back. This helps to build trust and form a loyal following. As fans share and like your content, you rise in the social algorithms and gain new, free, exposure. You also nurture

relationships that can develop into sales over time.

You can also build relationships with other business owners and influencers in your community. Maybe the local juice shop allows the florist to sell seasonal bouquets in their shop. By sharing photos and tagging each other, you get exposure to each others' audience! Collaborate by sharing each other's content, doing collaborations, or hosting contests together - get creative!

And don't forget to use social media as another form of customer service. Customers frequently share feedback in comments on Facebook or message you directly on Instagram. They want to be heard! Use this as an opportunity to connect and engage directly with a potential customer.

### HELPFUL LINKS

- [10 ways small businesses can improve their social media presence](#)
- [How to improve your social media engagement](#)
- [20 ways to build a social media presence for your business](#)

## ADVANCED STEPS

### EMAIL MARKETING & NEWSLETTERS

Email marketing is one of the best ways for small businesses to cultivate ongoing and productive relationships with their customers. Regular contact with your customers will help you build trust - and once trust is established, you can motivate your customers to action.

1. **Content:** Put yourself in the shoes of the reader. If you had subscribed to your company's newsletter, what sort of information would you want to see? And what would quickly make you hit 'unsubscribe'?
2. **Subject lines:** A good subject line can mean the difference between your subscribers opening your newsletter or sending it directly to the trash. Make it short and concise. Let the reader know they can expect to find inside.
3. **Scheduling:** Don't bombard your subscribers with emails, this will only result in them unsubscribing! Lay out a scheduling plan - you should avoid emailing your subscribers more than once a week. Once a month or bi-weekly is optimal. Plan what you're going to send in advance and schedule your newsletters to go out an optimal time.
4. **Drive readers to your site:** What's the purpose of sending your contacts email newsletters? What action do you want them to take? Make this the focus of your email with a button or bold text. Drive them to take action!
5. **Test, Test, Test:** Once you start sending out newsletters, you have a chance to experiment. Don't be afraid to play around with your subject lines, formatting, and calls-to-action to see what works best for your specific audience.

### HELPFUL LINKS

- [11 Free Email Marketing Tools to Save You Time and Money](#)
- [6 Best Free Email Marketing Services Compared](#)
- [The 14 Best Free Email Marketing Services: How far can \\$0 get you?](#)
- [A Beginner's Guide to A/B Testing: Email Campaigns That Convert](#)

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## PAY PER CLICK

Users who visit search engines already know what they want and are actively looking for your business or someone like your business. With PPC, you only pay when people click on your websites or landing pages. Sample platforms using PPC - Google, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter.

Tips to leveraging Pay Per Click:

1. **Develop Your Strategy:** The first step to develop a campaign strategy with a budget. The key to a good PPC campaign is to utilize your understanding of your target audience to pick relevant keywords and phrases most likely to reach them. Selected keywords should be directly associated with your products or services. Picking keywords with high commercial intent, meaning the intention of the searcher is to make a purchase, is a great method to get the most value out of your PPC campaign.
2. **Optimize Your Landing Pages:** If users click on your ad, it will direct them to a landing page, so it's crucial for your landing page to encourage viewers to act. When developing your landing page, review the following tips:
  - Create a landing page with a distinct call to action, whether it is scheduling an appointment, buying a product, subscribing,

calling for a consultation. Ask yourself what you ideally want viewers to do after viewing your page and be clear about it.

- Use your landing page to tell viewers what makes you and your business special and to convince them to pick you over the competition.
3. **Be Aware of Your Quality Score:** If you use Google AdWords, checking your quality score and continually striving to enhance it can help you increase the value of your PPC campaign. Google decides your fee, as well as what ad it shows and where it shows the ad based on your ad's quality score. So, an ad with a higher quality score earns lower costs per click and higher exposure rates. Google measures these scores with ratings from 1 to 10 and considers click-through rates, relevance of ad text and keywords, relevance and quality of a landing page, and earlier AdWords conduct.

Increasing your quality score enables you to get more value for what you pay per ad click and enhanced exposure, so tracking your score on a regular basis and readjusting your keywords for better results is an excellent way to access these benefits and get an edge over your competitors.

## HELPFUL LINKS

- [11 Free Email Marketing Tools to Save You Time and Money](#)
- [6 Best Free Email Marketing Services Compared](#)
- [The 14 Best Free Email Marketing Services: How far can \\$0 get you?](#)
- [A Beginner's Guide to A/B Testing: Email Campaigns That Convert](#)



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## CONTENT: VIDEO IS KING

It is not hard to see why video is so popular these days. It is an easy-to-digest format that gives our eyes a rest from the incredible amount of written information online. It gives a more real-life picture of what message or product you are trying to inform your users about, it is also so easy to share across multiple platforms.

Consumers like it because it's easy to digest, entertaining and engaging. While there is certainly a trend towards higher quality video on a professional level, this is not really needed, as anyone can jump onto their laptop or cell phone and create their own video in very little time at all.

Before creating a video to share on behalf of your business, be clear on its purpose, whether it's a customer review, product, sale, or special celebration, an effective video/content strategy is needed. Videos can explain, help, educate

consumers about your topic/product/service and it can be used in conjunction with instructions, customer service activities, and a whole other range of situations.

Other things to consider are to figure out what the ideal video length is for your or site. As a rough rule of thumb, lengths should be - Instagram: up to 30 seconds, Twitter: up to 45 seconds, Facebook: up to 1 minute, YouTube: up to 2 minutes.

To ensure the best engagement and accessibility to your video, maximize your SEO by including captions for autoplay (this will depend on platform) and keeping the video on silent if it's on a landing page. Videos on landing pages can be very effective but only if they don't scare or annoy viewers. You'll also want to be sure to keep your video mobile friendly across the board. Also always track and measure the performance of you videos.

## SELLING MERCHANDISE ONLINE

Today's small businesses have a ton of options to sell merchandise online. Take a look at these popular options.

1. **You own Ecommerce store:** Building an ecommerce store from scratch is a traditional option. While it takes some work, it gives you the most control. With this option, you'll need to leverage your website to have a "Shop" portal and manage it independently.
2. **Hosted Ecommerce platform:** With hosted sites, the majority of the work is already done for you. This offering gives you all the functionality of your own ecommerce site. But you don't have as much control over the details. Each one allows you to quickly set up a storefront from a select set of options. Often, you can choose from themes and templates. And some even offer further customization options. They also give you instructions for adding products, photos and other content to the site.

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3. Marketplace sites: With marketplace sites like Groupon, Etsy, eBay, and Amazon, small businesses can sell their products alongside other sellers. These options may be less personalized and may also charge a listing fee or take a percentage of each sale. However, these sites have one very clear benefit over other options - a built-in audience.
4. Social media: For most businesses, it makes sense to meet customers where they already spend time. The options for selling products on social media vary by platform. Platforms like Facebook and Instagram let users purchase products right from pictures or posts within the app. The built-in audience is definitely the key benefit of this option.

## HELPFUL LINKS

- [What is the best platform to sell products online?](#)
- [6 best online marketplaces to sell your products](#)

## INFLUENCER MARKETING

Who better to create advertising your customers love, than the customers themselves? Influencer Marketing is the fastest-growing customer acquisition marketing method. Online influencers - people who champion your brand - can be super effective for establishing brand trust and gaining a following. As a bonus, they are often well within the budget range of smaller brands.

For a business in Jacksonville, not only does it make more economic sense to use micro-influencers, but it is also a more effective way to grow your business and cultivate customers. Why is this? Consumers love hearing from other consumers. While Influencers are usually individuals with thousands of followers, the typical approach can be tailored for Jacksonville.

Are there people in your community that have a wide reach? Do you have a customer who is active on social media? Partner with these people to leverage them as local influencers! Work together or have them create a few posts you like, negotiate the price of each submission, and then scale the campaign up to the level that suits your business. The more they share, the more exposure you get.

Keep in mind, while there are tools and companies that can identify and track influencers that may work for you, feel free to keep this simple and work directly with an existing customer or two to leverage them as influencers.