

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

September 2025

**Starting to
Plan for the
Upcoming
Holiday
Season!**

**Understanding
Analytics:**

**What Small
Business Owners
Should Actually
Track**

**Infographic:
2025 Social
Media Usage**

**Short-Form Video
Marketing:
What Works Now
(and What Doesn't)**

**How to
Foster
Innovation
Within a
Small Team**

**From
Founder
to CEO:
Developing
Leadership
Skills for
Growth**

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Welcome to the September Issue!

As the busy fall season begins, now is the time to shift gears, set clear goals, and get ahead before the holiday rush kicks in. This month's issue is packed with strategies to help you lead with clarity, market more effectively, and make smart, forward-thinking decisions for your business.

Here's what's inside:

- Planning for the Holiday Season – Get ahead with smart prep strategies that drive results.
- Fostering Innovation in Small Teams – Simple ways to spark creativity without a big budget.
- From Founder to CEO – Leadership tips to help you step confidently into your next chapter.
- Understanding Analytics – What data to track and what to ignore.
- Short-Form Video Marketing – What's working now (and what's not) on Reels, TikTok, and more.

We hope this issue gives you the tools and inspiration to finish the year strong. If you enjoy it, pass it on to a fellow business owner, and if you're not subscribed yet, now's the time!

Alyssa Engle
Marketing Manager

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

September

Suicide Prevention Month
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
Hispanic Heritage Month

Sept 1 - Labor Day (U.S.)
Sept 11 - Patriot Day (U.S.)
Sept 22 - First Day of Fall

1st – World Letter Writing Day
4th – Wildlife Day
5th – Cheese Pizza Day
6th – World Beard Day
6th – Read a Book Day
7th – Beer Lovers Day
7th – Grandparents Day
8th – Physical Therapy Day
10th – World Suicide Prevention Day
12th – Video Games Day
12th – Chocolate Milkshake Day
13th – International Chocolate Day
13th – Peanut Day

14th – Eat a Hoagie Day
15th – World Engineers Day
16th – Guacamole Day
17th – Apple Dumpling Day
18th – Equal Pay Day
18th – Cheeseburger Day
18th – U.S. Air Force Day
19th – Talk Like a Pirate Day
21st – International Day of Peace
21st – World’s Alzheimer’s Day
21st – World Gratitude Day
21st – Miniature Golf Day
22nd – Ice Cream Cone Day
22nd – Family Day
22nd – Hobbit Day
25th – Lobster Day
25th – Daughters Day
28th – Sons Day
29th – World Heart Day
29th – Coffee Day
30th – International Podcast Day

October

Breast Cancer Awareness Month
Bullying Prevention Month
Domestic Violence Awareness Month
National Pasta Month

Oct 14th - Columbus Day (U.S.)
Oct 31st - Halloween

1st - International Coffee Day
1st - Homemade Cookies Day
2nd - International Day of Non-Violence
3rd - World Smile Day
4th - Truckers Day
4th - Golf Lovers Day
4th - Taco Day
5th - Be Bice Day
5th - World Teachers’ Day
6th - Coaches Day
8th - Stop Bullying Day
9th - International Beer & Pizza Day
10th - World Mental Health Day
12th - World Arthritis Day

12th - Pulled Pork Day
13th - Breast Cancer Awareness Day
13th - M&M Day
13th - Indigenous People’s Day
14th - Be Bald and Be Free Day
16th - Global Cat Day
16th - Boss’ Day
17th - Pasta Day
18th - Chocolate Cupcake Day
19th - World Humanitarian Action Day
20th - International Chef Day
21st - Apple Day
21st - Back to the Future Day
22nd - Nut Day
24th - Food Day
25th - Make a Difference Day
26th - Pumpkin Day
27th - American Beer Day
28th - Chocolate Day
28th - First Responders Day
30th - Candy Corn Day
31st - Knock Knock Joke Day

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Starting to Plan for the Upcoming Holiday Season



***How to Position Your
Small Business for Success***

The air may still feel like late summer, but if you're a small business owner, now is the time to turn your attention to the holiday season.

While your customers are just starting to think about pumpkins and gift wrap, you should already be strategizing. Why? Because the businesses that win the holiday rush aren't the ones who react—they're the ones who plan ahead.

The fourth quarter of the year represents the biggest revenue opportunity for most businesses, both in e-commerce and brick-and-mortar. But with rising competition, tighter ad costs, and shifting consumer behavior, it takes more than throwing up a few holiday decorations and crossing your fingers. To make the most of the season, you need a clear plan—and that starts right now.

Start With Last Year's Lessons

Before looking forward, take a moment to look back. What worked well during last year's holiday season? What flopped? Did you run out of inventory? Was your website traffic high but conversions low? Reviewing your past performance helps you identify where to double down and where

to pivot. Pull reports on sales, ad campaigns, email performance, and customer feedback. Data is your most honest advisor.

Define Your Holiday Goals Now

Are you aiming to increase overall sales, attract new customers, or clear out inventory? Different goals require different strategies. For example, if your goal is customer acquisition, you might offer lower-cost gift items to introduce new buyers to your brand. If you want higher revenue per order, you could focus on bundles or upsells. Be specific. "Sell more" is not a strategy. "Increase average order value by 15%" is.

Map Out Your Promotions and Offers Early

Waiting until November to decide on holiday deals is a recipe for stress. Instead, start planning your promotions now—even if you tweak them later. Will you run a Black Friday sale? Offer a gift-with-purchase in December? Host a local holiday pop-up? Write it all down and build a timeline. Planning early ensures you're not scrambling later—and gives you time to promote your offers properly.

Audit Your Website and Online Store

Before the holiday rush hits, make sure your digital storefront is ready. Is your website mobile-friendly? Are your product descriptions updated and clear? Do your checkout and shipping pages reflect current policies and cut-off dates? You don't want a last-minute shopper abandoning their cart because your site won't load on their phone. A seamless shopping experience is a competitive advantage.

Review and Prep Your Inventory

The holidays are not the time to run out of your bestsellers—or be stuck with slow-moving stock. Use your past data and current trends to forecast inventory needs. If you haven't placed orders yet, now's the time. Supply chains can be unpredictable, and the earlier you secure what you need, the better. Consider creating holiday-exclusive bundles or limited-edition products to drive urgency and make inventory go further.

Refresh Your Branding for the Season

People are drawn to brands that feel festive and relevant. You don't

need a total rebrand—but subtle changes like holiday-themed product photos, seasonal packaging, or themed social media graphics go a long way. Think cozy, cheerful, and celebratory. It helps your brand feel like part of your customer's holiday experience—not just another sales pitch.

Create a Holiday Content Calendar

The best holiday marketing campaigns are consistent, not chaotic. Sit down and map out your content for the next few months. What emails will you send? What social media campaigns will you run? Will you use blog posts, reels, or gift guides? Having a content calendar allows you to stay visible without being overwhelming. It also frees you up to focus on operations once things get busy.

Segment Your Email List

Email will be one of your most powerful tools this season—if you use it wisely. Start segmenting your list now. Consider groups like past holiday buyers, high spenders, local customers, or first-time buyers. Tailoring your messages to each group

increases engagement and conversions. And don't forget to warm up your list with value-driven content before hitting them with sales.

Plan for Paid Ads—Even on a Small Budget

Ad costs rise dramatically during the holidays, especially in November and December. That's why it's smart to start testing early. Run small-budget ads in September or October to find your best-performing creative and audiences. Then, scale what works during peak season. If your budget is tight, focus on remarketing ads to people who've already interacted with your brand—those are your warmest leads.

Don't Ignore Local Opportunities

If you have a physical location or serve a local market, lean into community-based holiday efforts. Think Small Business Saturday events, craft fairs, or partnerships with local influencers. Offer exclusive in-store promotions, collaborate with nearby businesses, or host a holiday open house. Local marketing feels personal—and that's exactly what people crave during the

holiday season.

Optimize for Last-Minute Shoppers

No matter how much you plan, there will always be procrastinators. Prep now for them. Highlight fast shipping options. Create digital gift cards. Offer "last-minute gift" bundles. Make it easy for those December 22nd shoppers to buy something meaningful without stress. A smooth, fast checkout could be the reason they choose you over someone else.

Train Your Team and Set Expectations

Even if you're a team of one, you need a plan for handling increased volume. What's your return policy? How will you respond to customer questions quickly? Do you need extra help packing orders or managing emails? Set expectations with your team now. The smoother your backend runs, the better experience your customers will have—and the more likely they are to return.

Prepare for Post-Holiday Retention

The sale doesn't end on December 25th. In fact, the real magic happens after.

Plan now for how you'll turn holiday buyers into loyal customers. That might mean a January follow-up email, a thank-you discount, or a loyalty program invitation. Holiday shoppers are often first-timers—don't let them disappear after the season ends.

Monitor Trends and Stay Agile

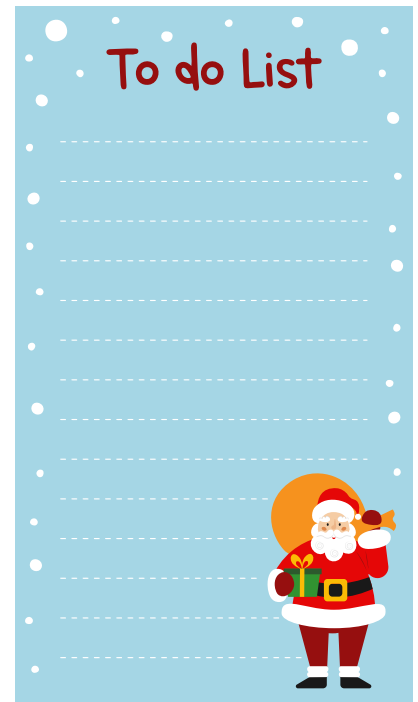
Things change fast during the holiday season. Be prepared to adjust your strategy based on what's working. Maybe a product goes viral. Maybe your audience responds better to behind-the-scenes videos than polished ads. Stay

connected to your analytics, keep an eye on competitors, and be ready to pivot. Agility is an asset, especially when paired with a solid plan.

Success is in the Prep

The holiday season can be the most profitable—and most stressful—time of year for small businesses. But it doesn't have to be chaotic. When you start planning early, you position your business to thrive, not just survive. With the right mix of strategy, creativity, and preparation, you can finish the year strong, serve your customers well, and set the stage for an even better

2026. So grab your calendar, pour a cup of coffee, and get planning—your future self (and your bottom line) will thank you.



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How to Foster Innovation Within a Small Team

Simple ways to keep ideas flowing without a big R&D budget

Innovation isn't just the playground of big-budget corporations with shiny labs and endless funding. In fact, some of the world's most disruptive ideas have come from small, scrappy teams who simply knew how to think differently. The truth is, you don't need a research and development department to foster a culture of innovation—you need

the right mindset, a bit of structure, and a willingness to listen.

For small businesses, innovation is often a necessity rather than a luxury. When resources are tight and competition is fierce, new ideas can be the edge that keeps you moving forward. But how do you spark creativity when

you're juggling deadlines, client demands, and limited budgets? It starts with shifting the way you think about innovation. It's not just about tech breakthroughs—it's about finding better ways to serve your customers, streamline your processes, and adapt to change.

Build a Culture Where Every Idea Counts

Innovation thrives in a culture of trust. If your team doesn't feel safe sharing ideas—especially the weird or “half-baked” ones—they'll stop speaking up. As leaders, we must actively create a space where suggestions are welcomed, not judged. That means ditching the “we've always done it this way” mindset and rewarding initiative. Remember: even a “bad” idea can lead to a brilliant one with the right conversation.

Make Brainstorming a Habit, Not an Event

Waiting for a quarterly strategy meeting to brainstorm? That's too late. Innovation should be baked into your weekly routines. Whether it's 15-minute idea sprints during team huddles or a shared digital whiteboard where thoughts are logged throughout the week, small rituals keep creativity alive. The key is consistency. Regularly scheduled creative time sends a powerful message: ideas are

part of our everyday work, not an afterthought.

Encourage Cross-Pollination of Roles

In small teams, job titles often bleed together—use that to your advantage. A customer service rep might have brilliant product improvement ideas because they hear client pain points firsthand. A designer could suggest marketing tweaks. Encourage your team to look beyond their roles and collaborate in new combinations. When different perspectives collide, innovation is often the result.

Set Constraints to Fuel Creativity

It might sound counterintuitive, but constraints can actually spark better ideas. A limited budget, a tight timeline, or a specific goal can force your team to think more creatively. Ask questions like: “How would we solve this with \$100?” or “What would this look like if we only had 24 hours?” These limitations shift the focus from what's not possible to what's necessary—and that's often where the best ideas are born.

Celebrate the Process, Not Just the Outcome

If you only reward ideas that lead to immediate results, you'll discourage experimentation. Innovation is messy. Not every idea will be

a home run—and that's okay. Celebrate effort, courage, and curiosity. Highlight someone who took initiative, even if their idea flopped. Over time, this builds a culture where people feel safe taking smart risks.

Use Customer Feedback as a Goldmine

Your customers are constantly telling you what they need—are you listening? Small teams can use customer feedback as fuel for innovation. Encourage your team to collect, document, and reflect on client suggestions, reviews, and complaints. Set aside time to review feedback regularly. What trends do you notice? What problems keep surfacing? Sometimes, the next big idea is sitting in your inbox, just waiting to be noticed.

Invest in Learning—Even If It's Free

You don't need a massive training budget to build an innovative team. Free webinars, podcasts, LinkedIn Learning courses, and even YouTube tutorials can expand your team's thinking. Encourage each team member to spend an hour a week learning something new—and then share it with the group. This kind of shared learning sparks conversation, introduces fresh perspectives, and reminds your team that growth is part of the job.

Implement a “Test and Learn” Framework

Rather than debating whether an idea will work, create a culture of experimentation. Encourage your team to test small ideas quickly and learn from the results. For example, instead of overhauling your entire onboarding process, try a tweak with five new clients and gather feedback. This low-risk, iterative approach allows innovation to happen in real time, without the fear of costly failure.

Lead by Example

Want your team to think creatively? Show them how it's done. Leaders set the tone for innovation. Share your own ideas—especially the imperfect ones. Ask questions instead of providing answers. Be open about your own learning process. When your team sees you taking risks, exploring new concepts, and staying curious, they'll feel empowered to do the same.

Remove Friction Points That Kill Creativity

Sometimes, it's not that your team lacks ideas—it's that they don't have the space to think. Endless meetings, unclear priorities, and reactive fire drills can strangle innovation. Take a hard look at your processes: are there bottlenecks or habits that drain creative energy? Streamline where possible, delegate where necessary,

and protect “thinking time” as fiercely as you protect deadlines.

Use Tools to Capture—and Revisit—Ideas

Ideas are fleeting. One moment they're exciting, the next they're forgotten under a pile of emails. Implement a simple system to collect and revisit them. This could be a shared Google Doc, a Slack channel, or a physical whiteboard in your office. The goal is to make it easy for team members to jot down sparks of inspiration—and revisit them during planning sessions or slow periods.

Recognize and Reward Innovation Publicly

Recognition is rocket fuel for innovation. When a team member proposes a creative solution or improves a process, shine a light on it. This doesn't mean cash bonuses every time—simple shoutouts in meetings or internal newsletters go a long way. Public praise creates a ripple effect, showing others that new ideas are valued and encouraged.

Break the Routine Once in a While

Sometimes, a change of scenery is all it takes to unlock creativity. Consider hosting occasional off-site meetings, walking brainstorms, or themed workdays. Injecting

novelty into the routine re-energizes the brain and helps people see problems from a different angle. Even something as simple as rearranging desks or rotating project roles can offer a fresh perspective.

Keep Innovation Tied to Purpose

Lastly, always connect innovation to your mission. Remind your team that creative thinking isn't just about novelty—it's about better serving your customers, growing your business, and making a difference. When people understand why their ideas matter, they're far more likely to contribute meaningfully.

Innovation is a Mindset, Not a Department

You don't need bean bag chairs, million-dollar budgets, or innovation officers to spark creativity. What you need is intention. You need to nurture an environment where curiosity is safe, experimentation is expected, and everyone feels like a contributor to something bigger. In a small team, every voice has weight. That's your superpower. With the right systems, encouragement, and leadership, your team can become an idea-generating machine—no lab coats required.



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From Founder to CEO: Developing Leadership Skills for Growth

*Making the mindset shift as your
business matures*

Starting a business is like jumping off a cliff and building the plane on the way down.

In the early days, you're everything—creator, customer service rep, marketer, sales team, and janitor. But as your business grows, so must you. And that means making one of the hardest transitions in entrepreneurship: evolving from founder to CEO.

It's not just a change in title—it's a complete mindset shift. Founders are doers. CEOs are leaders. Founders are in the weeds. CEOs work above the weeds. This change doesn't happen overnight, and it doesn't happen naturally. It requires intention, new skills, and sometimes, a bit of letting go.

So how do you make that leap from scrappy startup founder to visionary CEO? Let's walk through the transformation step by step.

Understand That Growth Requires New Thinking

The mindset that helped you survive in year one won't help you scale in year five. Early-stage businesses thrive on hustle, speed, and improvisation. But once you're growing, that same "do it all myself" approach becomes a bottleneck. The CEO mindset is about systems, strategy, and scale. It's about moving from reactive to proactive. That starts with acknowledging that what got you here won't get you there.

Let Go of Control (Yes, Really)

One of the hardest things for any founder is releasing control. After all, you built this business from scratch. It's your baby. But trying to micromanage every detail as you scale will crush your growth. Leadership means trusting others to carry out

your vision—even if they don't do it exactly like you would. Smart CEOs build teams, delegate decisions, and create a culture of accountability instead of control.

Shift From Operator to Architect

As the founder, you were the chief operator—hands-on in everything. But as CEO, your role is to design the blueprint, not lay every brick. That means stepping back to think about the big picture: What markets should we pursue? Where is the company going in the next 3–5 years? What systems and structures do we need to get there? This strategic thinking becomes your most important job.

Develop Emotional Intelligence (EQ)

Technical skills may have gotten you started, but emotional intelligence will take you further. As a CEO, you're not just managing projects—you're managing people. Your ability to listen, empathize, give feedback, and build trust will shape the culture of your company. Strong EQ fosters resilience, loyalty, and collaboration. And if you're not great at it yet? Good news: it's a skill you can learn.

Communicate Vision Clearly and Often

When you're small, it's easy to keep everyone on the same

page. But as your team grows, clarity gets lost. That's why CEOs must become relentless communicators.

You need to constantly share the vision, explain the "why" behind decisions, and remind your team of the bigger mission. It's not about motivational speeches—it's about anchoring your people in purpose.

Start Thinking in Terms of Teams, Not Tasks

As a founder, your to-do list was your lifeline. But CEOs don't just check tasks off—they build teams that execute. That means hiring strategically, building strong onboarding processes, and setting up clear performance expectations. Your job becomes less about doing and more about empowering others to do. Great CEOs aren't great at everything—they build teams that are.

Embrace the Numbers

Many founders avoid the financial side—until it bites them. CEOs, on the other hand, get fluent in the language of business. You don't need to be a CPA, but you do need to understand cash flow, profit margins, customer acquisition costs, and forecasting. These aren't just numbers—they're your compass. Making decisions without them is like flying blind.

Create Repeatable Systems and Processes

Scaling a business isn't about working harder—it's about working smarter. Systems are what allow your business to grow without falling apart. That could mean SOPs for customer service, automated marketing funnels, or consistent hiring protocols. As CEO, your job is to make excellence repeatable. The more you systematize, the less your success depends on any one person (including you).

Build a Circle of Advisors

Leadership can be lonely. As your role changes, you may find fewer people who truly understand the weight you carry. That's why building a trusted circle—mentors, coaches, peer groups—is so essential. They can offer perspective, challenge your thinking, and help you see around corners. Remember: even the best CEOs don't go it alone.

Start Thinking Like an Investor

CEOs think about return on investment—not just in dollars, but in time, talent, and energy. Every initiative should be evaluated through the lens of: Is this moving us closer to our strategic goals? Is this worth the resources we're putting in? Founders often chase shiny objects. CEOs stay focused on what drives the

company forward.

Get Comfortable With Tough Decisions

Here's the unglamorous truth: leadership means making hard calls. Whether it's letting go of a team member who isn't working out, shutting down a product line, or saying no to a tempting opportunity, tough decisions come with the territory. As CEO, your job is to act in the best interest of the business, not just your comfort zone. That takes courage—and practice.

Focus on Culture as a Growth Strategy

Culture isn't just a buzzword—it's your company's operating system. It defines how decisions get made, how people collaborate, and what behaviors are rewarded. A strong culture can attract top talent, increase retention, and even improve performance. As CEO, it's your responsibility to define and protect that culture. And it starts by modeling it yourself.

Accept That Your Role Will Keep Evolving

The transition from founder to CEO isn't a one-time leap—it's an ongoing evolution. As your company grows from five people to 15 to 50, your role will shift again and again. What matters is staying self-aware, being willing to grow, and not clinging

to old versions of yourself. Leadership is a moving target. Stay flexible and curious.

Create Space to Work On the Business

When you're deep in the day-to-day, it's hard to think strategically. CEOs must protect time to work on the business—reviewing goals, analyzing performance, envisioning the future. Block off CEO time in your calendar. Take a quarterly retreat. Step back so you can look forward. This is where the real growth happens.

In Summary: The Founder Builds It, the CEO Scales It

Making the shift from founder to CEO is one of the most important—and challenging—transitions you'll face in business. It requires letting go of the hustle, embracing strategic thinking, and stepping fully into leadership. But with the right mindset, the right habits, and a willingness to grow, you'll not only lead your business—you'll transform it.

You don't need to have all the answers. You just need to be willing to ask better questions, surround yourself with smart people, and commit to becoming the leader your company needs next.

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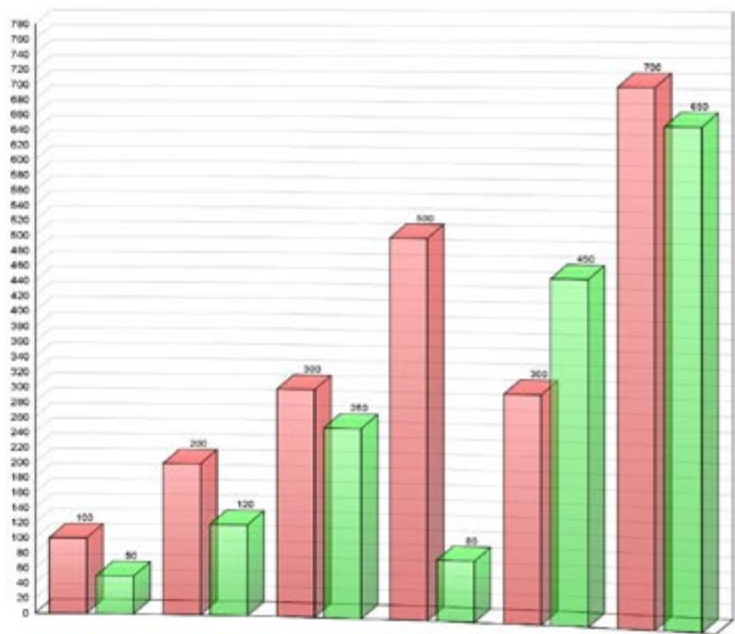
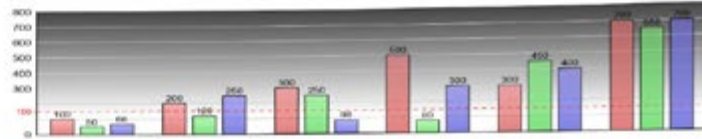
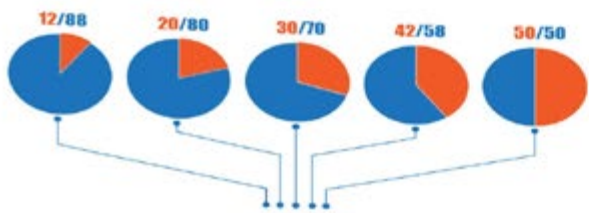
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Understanding Analytics: What Small Business Owners Should Actually Track

Running a small business today means wearing many hats—manager, marketer, accountant, customer service rep, and sometimes even delivery driver. With so much on our plates, it's easy to overlook the numbers that truly matter. We know analytics are important, but with dashboards filled with charts and metrics, how do we know what's worth tracking and what's just noise?

The truth is, most small business owners don't need to become data scientists to make analytics work for them. What we need is a clear understanding of which metrics actually drive growth, and how to use that information to make smarter decisions. Let's break it down step by step.

Why Analytics Matter More Than Ever

Think of analytics as the GPS of your business. Without it, you're driving blind, relying on gut instincts instead of real data. That may work for a while, but eventually, you'll hit a roadblock. Analytics give us the ability to identify what's working, what's not, and where to go next.

In fact, according to Forbes, businesses that use data-driven strategies are 23 times more likely to acquire customers and six times more likely to retain them. For small businesses where every customer counts, that's not just helpful—it's essential.

Vanity Metrics vs. Actionable Metrics

One of the biggest pitfalls we face as business owners is

getting distracted by vanity metrics. You know the ones—likes, impressions, page views. They make us feel good, but do they move the needle? Not always.

Actionable metrics, on the other hand, are tied to real business outcomes. These are the numbers that influence revenue, customer loyalty, and growth. The trick is to learn to separate the fluff from the facts.

Website Traffic: Not Just How Many, but Who

We often obsess over how many people visit our website, but the real question is: who are they, and what are they doing once they arrive?

Google Analytics, or similar tools, allow us to dig deeper. Are visitors staying on your site or bouncing off after a few seconds? Are they coming from search engines, social media, or referrals? Understanding not just how much traffic you're getting but also where it's coming from helps you know where to invest your marketing dollars.

Conversion Rate: The Ultimate Health Check

Website visitors are nice, but paying customers are nicer. Your conversion rate—the percentage of visitors who take the action you want, such as making a purchase, filling out a form, or booking a call—is the ultimate health check for your website.

If your traffic is high but conversions are low, it's like hosting a packed party where

nobody dances. Something is off—maybe your message isn't clear, your site is confusing, or your call-to-action isn't strong enough. Tracking this metric helps pinpoint what needs fixing.

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC)

Do you know how much it costs to get a new customer? Many small business owners don't, but it's one of the most critical numbers to track.

Customer Acquisition Cost (CAC) includes ad spend, marketing expenses, and even time invested in sales. If it costs you \$100 to land a customer who spends \$80, you're losing money. Tracking CAC helps ensure your marketing campaigns are profitable rather than just busywork.

Customer Lifetime Value (CLV)

If CAC tells us how much it costs to get a customer, Customer Lifetime Value (CLV) tells us how much each customer is worth over time. Together, these metrics are like peanut butter and jelly—they're good on their own, but together, they tell the full story.

For example, if your CAC is \$100 but your average customer spends \$500 over their lifetime, that's a win. The higher the CLV, the more you can justify investing in marketing and customer experience.

Social Media Engagement That Matters

It's easy to fall into the trap of chasing followers, but

engagement is where the gold lies. Comments, shares, saves, and clicks to your website matter more than vanity likes.

Ask yourself: are your social channels driving conversations, building community, and leading people to take action? If the answer is yes, you're on the right track. If not, it may be time to adjust your content strategy.

Email Marketing Metrics

For small businesses, email remains one of the highest ROI marketing tools. But to make it work, you need to track key metrics: open rates, click-through rates, and unsubscribe rates.

If open rates are low, your subject lines might need work. If click-throughs are low, maybe your calls-to-action aren't clear enough. If unsubscribes are climbing, it could be a sign you're overloading inboxes or not delivering relevant content.

Customer Retention Rate

New customers are exciting, but keeping the ones we already have is where profitability thrives. According to Harvard Business Review, increasing customer retention by just 5% can boost profits by 25–95%.

Tracking your retention rate tells you how well you're nurturing relationships. Are customers coming back for more? Do they become repeat buyers or vanish after their first purchase? The answers lie in this metric.

Revenue by Channel

Do you know which marketing channels are actually driving

sales? Too often, we spread our efforts thin across social media, email, SEO, and ads without knowing what's working.

By tracking revenue by channel, you can focus your energy (and budget) where it matters most. If Instagram is delivering more sales than Facebook, it may be time to double down. If email outperforms ads, prioritize that.

Customer Satisfaction & Reviews

Analytics aren't just about numbers—they're also about customer sentiment. Online reviews, Net Promoter Score (NPS), and survey feedback are powerful indicators of customer satisfaction.

When we track these alongside hard data, we gain a complete picture of the customer journey. After all, happy customers are the best marketers you'll ever have.

Operational Metrics Worth Watching

Marketing analytics are crucial, but let's not forget the back end. Inventory turnover, average order value, and fulfillment times all impact customer experience. If shipping delays or out-of-stock items frustrate customers, no amount of marketing will fix it.

Tracking these operational numbers ensures your business runs smoothly behind the scenes.

Avoiding Data Overload

Here's the catch: more data isn't always better. It's easy to get lost

in dashboards and reports. The key is to focus on a handful of meaningful metrics that align with your goals.

Think of it like fitness tracking. You don't need to monitor every calorie burned or step taken—you just need enough information to know whether you're improving. The same goes for business analytics.

Building a Data-Driven Culture

Analytics shouldn't just live in a spreadsheet; they should guide decisions. Share key numbers with your team. Celebrate wins when conversion rates rise. Discuss improvements when retention dips. When everyone is focused on the same metrics, growth becomes a collective effort.

Clarity Over Complexity

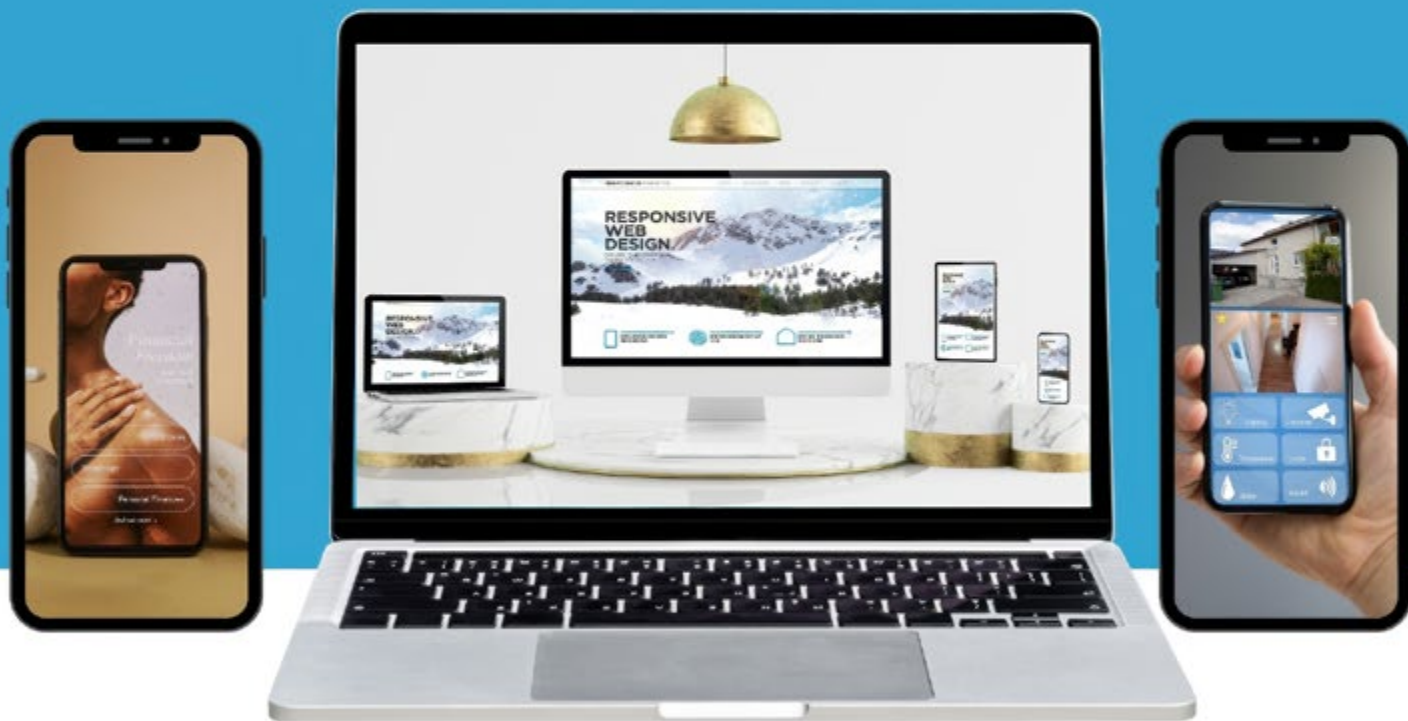
At the end of the day, analytics aren't about chasing numbers; they're about making better decisions. As small business owners, we don't need every chart and graph—we just need clarity.

By focusing on the right metrics—traffic quality, conversion rates, CAC, CLV, engagement, retention, and customer satisfaction—we gain the insights that drive growth. Stop drowning in data and start using it as the compass that points you toward success.

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Short-Form Video Marketing: What Works Now (and What Doesn't)

Reels, TikTok, and YouTube Shorts trends for small businesses

Short-form video isn't a trend anymore—it's the backbone of digital marketing. In a world where attention spans are shrinking faster than your morning coffee, Reels, TikTok videos, and YouTube Shorts have become the go-to format for businesses looking to connect quickly and authentically with their

audience. And the best part? You don't need a film crew or a massive ad budget to compete.

Small businesses have an advantage here. Unlike polished corporations that feel distant or overly scripted, local and small brands feel human. And short-form video thrives

on that exact energy—raw, relatable, real. But if you've been posting videos and not seeing traction, you're not alone. The platforms have evolved, the algorithms have changed, and consumer expectations have shifted.

What worked in 2022 won't necessarily work now.

So let's cut through the noise and talk about what's actually working—and what's a waste of your time—in the short-form video space right now.

What Works Now: Quick-Hook Content

If your video doesn't hook the viewer in the first 2 seconds, it's over. Literally. Platforms like TikTok and Instagram are flooded with content, and people scroll ruthlessly. Start with something unexpected, intriguing, or visually striking. Ask a bold question, show a dramatic before-and-after, or drop a surprising stat. The faster you grab attention, the better your watch-through rate—and the better your chance of being shown to a wider audience.

What Works Now: Storytelling Over Selling

People don't want ads; they want stories. Instead of leading with your product, lead with a narrative. Show the process behind the product, share a customer's journey, or highlight a day in your life as a business owner. These human-centered videos build trust, and trust leads to sales. Bonus: storytelling is memorable. And in a sea of sameness, being memorable is gold.

What Works Now: Educational Value in Under 30 Seconds

The most-watched videos

right now teach people something small, fast, and useful. Think "3 quick ways to style a fall wreath" or "The #1 mistake people make when cleaning their hardwood floors." These bite-sized lessons position your brand as helpful, not pushy. And viewers are more likely to follow, save, or share when they've learned something valuable.

What Works Now: Behind-the-Scenes Content

Transparency is trending. People want to know who they're buying from. Show how your products are made, packed, or delivered. Introduce your team. Share your messy desk or late-night prep session. This kind of content breaks down the barrier between brand and customer, making you more approachable and trustworthy.

What Works Now: Voiceovers and Subtitles

More than 85% of social video is watched without sound. That means your captions aren't optional—they're essential. Use built-in subtitle tools or apps like CapCut to add clear, easy-to-read text. Also, voiceovers are having a big moment right now. Instead of talking to the camera, many creators are filming B-roll and layering in voiceovers to tell the story. It feels more polished and less intimidating to film.

What Works Now: Trends with a Twist

Yes, jumping on trends can help visibility. But here's the catch—you have to make it relevant to your brand. Don't just lip-sync to trending audio without context. Instead, take a popular sound and spin it into something that reflects your business. For example, a bakery might use a trending sound to show the stages of cake decorating, or a service-based business might use it to highlight common client struggles.

What Works Now: Consistency Over Virality

It's tempting to chase that viral moment, but the brands seeing real growth are the ones posting consistently. Whether that's three times a week or daily, set a schedule you can stick to and focus on creating value-driven content. Remember, short-form video isn't about going viral—it's about being visible. One good video might get a spike. Ten good videos builds trust and brings conversions.

What Works Now: Vertical, Native, and Platform-Specific Editing

This one's important. Always shoot and edit your videos in vertical format (9:16) for maximum real estate on the screen. Also, use the in-app tools for each platform—TikTok, Reels, and YouTube

Shorts each favor videos edited natively within their platform. Even little things like adding text, filters, or music inside the app can give you a boost in reach.

What Works Now: Calls-to-Action (CTAs) That Don't Feel Like Sales Pitches

"Buy now" is dead. Instead, try softer CTAs that encourage engagement. "Follow for more tips," "Tag someone who needs to see this," or "Which one would you pick?" turn your video into a conversation. And conversations drive the algorithm. Just don't forget to actually include a CTA—every video needs a next step.

What Doesn't Work: Overproduced, Overly Polished Videos

High production value isn't necessary—and in many cases, it hurts you. Audiences want authenticity, not a commercial. If your video feels like a slick ad, people will scroll right past it. Use your phone. Use natural light. Focus on content that feels real, not rehearsed.

What Doesn't Work: Posting and Ghosting

If you're not replying to comments or engaging with your audience, you're missing half the value of short-form video. The algorithm favors

interaction. Responding to comments, asking questions, and even replying with video comments boosts your visibility and shows your audience that you're present and engaged.

What Doesn't Work: Ignoring Analytics

If you're not looking at your video insights, you're flying blind. Every platform gives you data on views, retention, likes, and shares. Use it. Pay attention to which videos perform best—and why. Did they start with a strong hook? Were they shorter? Did you use a trending sound? Let the data guide your next posts.

What Doesn't Work: Treating All Platforms the Same

TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts are not interchangeable. Each platform has its own culture, trends, and audience expectations. TikTok rewards creativity and humor. Reels is slightly more polished and aesthetic. Shorts leans more into educational and search-friendly content. Customize your approach for each one instead of just reposting the same video across all platforms.

What Doesn't Work: Waiting for the "Perfect" Video

Perfectionism is the enemy of consistency. Many small

business owners hold off on posting because the lighting isn't perfect, or they stumbled over a word. Guess what? No one cares. Just hit post. The beauty of short-form video is that it's disposable and quick. You're not producing a film—you're joining a conversation.

What Doesn't Work: Only Talking About Your Products

If your content is 100% product-focused, it's going to get boring fast. Instead, make your brand part of a lifestyle. Mix in customer stories, tips, humor, and behind-the-scenes moments. Think of your brand like a friend at a party—would you rather talk to the person who only talks about themselves or the one who makes you laugh, teaches you something, and listens?

Attention is Earned in Seconds—So Use Them Wisely

Short-form video marketing is one of the most powerful tools small businesses have right now. It's fast, affordable, and full of potential—but it requires strategy, not just spontaneity.

Focus on storytelling, stay consistent, and don't be afraid to show the human side of your business. That's what builds connection. That's what earns attention. And that's what turns viewers into customers.



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FUN FACTS

September was originally the seventh month of the ancient Roman calendar, which is reflected in its name, derived from the Latin word “septem,” meaning seven. Historically, September marks the beginning of autumn in the Northern Hemisphere, a time of harvest and preparation for the colder months ahead.

- September 2, 1969: The first communication on ARPANET, the precursor to the internet, was sent between two computers, paving the way for modern-day online connectivity.
- September 4, 1998: Google was founded by Larry Page and Sergey Brin, revolutionizing the way we access and search for information online.
- September 9, 1956: Elvis Presley made his first appearance on “The Ed Sullivan Show,” introducing rock ‘n’ roll to a wider American audience and becoming an iconic cultural figure.
- September 19, 1982: Scott Fahlman, a computer scientist, invented the first emoticon, :-), sparking the use of symbols to express emotions in digital communication.
- September 28, 1928: Sir Alexander Fleming discovered penicillin, which would become one of the world’s first antibiotics and revolutionize medicine.

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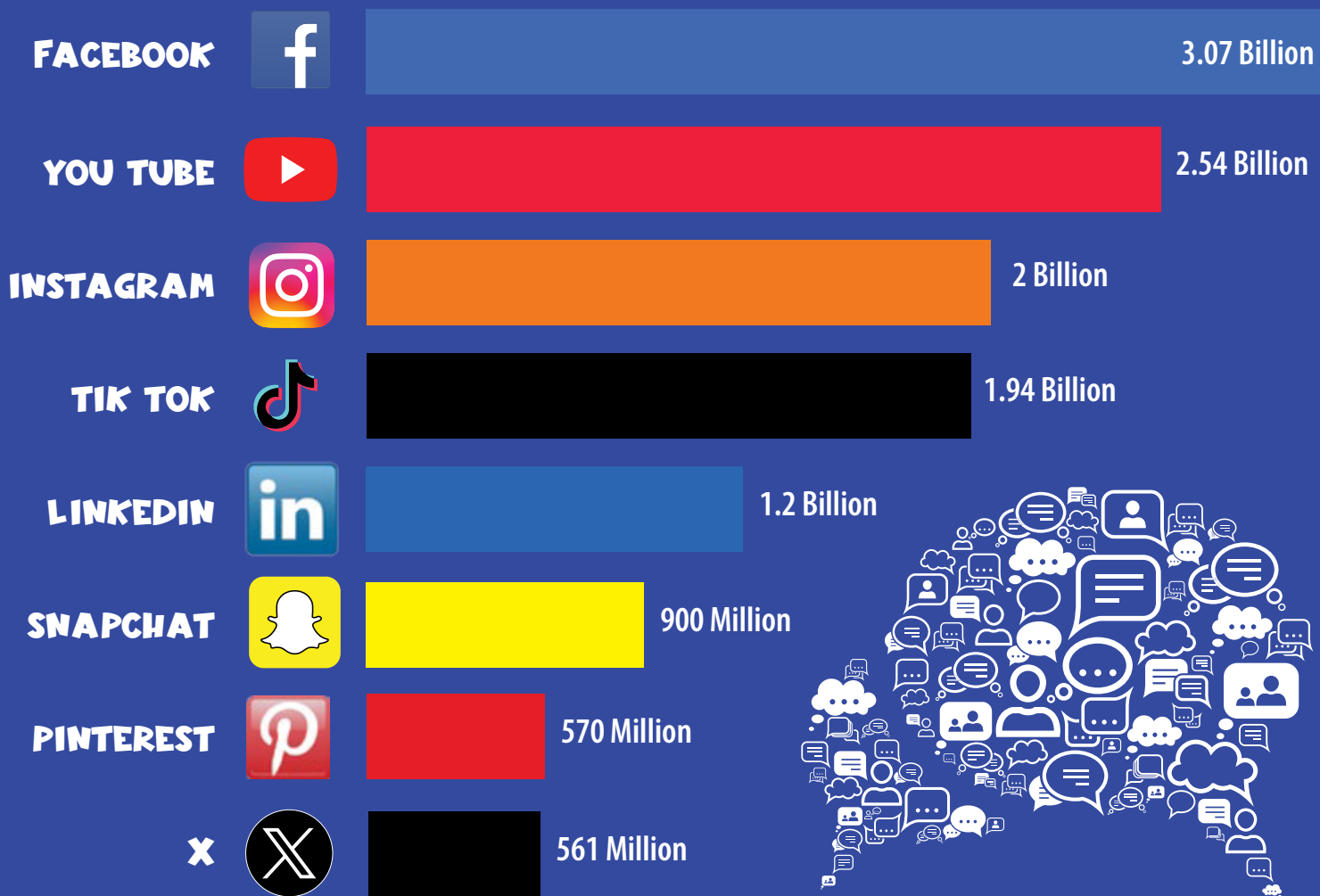
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SOCIAL MEDIA USAGE

GLOBAL REACH OF SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS (2025)



PRIMARY REASONS WHY SOCIAL MEDIA USERS USE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

KEEPING IN TOUCH WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY

50.5%

FILLING SPARE TIME

39.3%

READING NEWS STORIES

35.9%

FINDING PRODUCTS TO PURCHASE

27.1%

FINDING CONTENT (ARTICLES, VIDEOS)

30.5%

A man with glasses and a beard, wearing a dark blue shirt, and a woman with dark hair, wearing a red shirt and a white apron, are sitting behind a wooden counter in a cafe. On the counter, there is a tablet computer, a white coffee cup, and a tray with several pastries. In the background, there are shelves with various items like mugs and containers.

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