



KEYS TO IMPROVING YOUR  
**SMALL BUSINESS  
MARKETING STRATEGY**

WHITEPAPER

## INTRODUCTION

A well-thought-out marketing strategy can make a big difference in the success of your business. If your current approach isn't getting the results you want, it's time to take some steps toward improving your small business marketing strategy. So, how do you get started?

The best way to start is by asking smart marketing questions. Here are 10 questions to ask yourself if you want to improve your small business marketing strategy.

### 1. How Well Do You Know Your Audience?

To reach the right people, you need to know who your ideal customer is. How do you know the audience that is interested in what you have to offer? You should have a clear picture of who you're trying to target.

If there's room for improvement in this area, try the following:

- Create a buyer persona – This is a composite of the people most likely to be interested in your product or service. What's their age range, gender, or income bracket? Where are they located? Success isn't likely to come if you try to be all things to all people. Look at campaigns that have worked in the past. Who were the people that responded?
- Engage with your audience – Get to know your audience by interacting



on social media or responding to blog comments. Consider doing a survey of your email subscribers to gain clarity on what they're looking for.

Pay attention to clues about the people you are reaching. Clues are being left all the time, but to catch them, you have to pay attention. The better you know your audience, the better chance you have of delivering exactly what they're looking for.

### 2. What's Special About Your Brand?

To get better results from your small business marketing strategy, you need to pinpoint what's special about your brand. What makes you stand out? What problems are members of your target audience trying to solve and what solutions do you provide? While you and your competitors may be offering a similar product or service, focus on identifying what makes you unique and what you're doing better than your

competitors.

It's easy to get lost in the constant noise online, but if you want to improve your marketing strategy, you need to find something that clarifies what makes your company unique. Be authentic in your messages and work on building trust and credibility. Building better and more loyal relationships can give you a competitive advantage.

### **3. Who Are Your Competitors and What Are They Doing Better Than You Are?**

As you work to create a unique and memorable message for your brand, take a look at what your competitors are doing. Your competitors may be national businesses or local businesses similar to yours or a combination of both. Get an idea of what their message is and what strategies they're using to grow brand awareness.

Spend some time figuring out what strategies they're using to promote awareness of their brand and what they are charging. How well are they engaging with prospects? What are people saying in their reviews, social media engagement, or blog comments? Try to identify which of their strategies are working and which aren't. Can you pinpoint something they're doing better than you are?

### **4. What's Your Current Strategy?**

Before moving forward, think about what you've been doing up until now. What

tactics have you tried so far? Consider what you've been doing to improve brand awareness, visibility, and user experience. What are you doing to gain new customers as well as retain existing customers? How well are your tactics working?

Awareness is often the first step toward making better progress. You may be using tactics that are outdated or ineffective. You may have to recognize that you simply haven't been putting enough focused effort into your marketing. It's also possible you've been trying too hard, which might have led to an inauthentic voice and message. Stay true to who you are and what you want your brand to stand for.

### **5. What's Your Business Objective?**

Once you've reviewed what strategies and tactics you've been using up until now and how well they've been working, you can gain a clearer picture of where you want to go next. Do you find people aren't staying on your website very long once they arrive? Have you noticed they aren't clicking onto other pages?

Every business has its own unique goals, and the objectives of your business look nothing like the objectives of an enormous company. As a small business, identify some realistic goals and set target dates for attaining them.

There are many different things you may choose to focus on. Your website may need a complete overhaul, or you may need improved website navigation. You may find you're not getting much

traffic in the first place and need to examine methods of improving website traffic. You may need a better landing page or offer better benefits to get people to sign up for your email list.

Once you have more people on an email list, what are you going to do with it? Do you need to work on your email marketing? You need to have an idea of exactly where you're trying to go if you're going to have hope of getting there.

## 6. How Much Should You Spend?

At this point, you have a decision to make. To improve your marketing strategy, you need to invest either time or money. The good news is that there are both free and paid options for improving your small business marketing strategy. While you can choose to focus on mainly free or low-cost options, keep in mind that if your budget is limited, you'll have to invest time instead of money, maybe more time than you've been investing up until now.

When considering your budget, think about what it costs to acquire a new customer. What paid marketing can you do to get better results? You may find that acquiring new customers is costly and that it may be better to focus on keeping the customers you already have. This comes back to building relationships with current customers based on providing solutions to their problems.

Whatever you do, don't get caught up in analysis paralysis. It's possible to overthink the question of how much to spend. You may end up continually re-

searching but never getting started, or you might end up spending too much without a plan. Consider what internal resources you have for creating content or for social media posting. Think about how much of your revenue you want to reinvest into your business.

## 7. What are Your Target Keywords?

**Search engine optimization (SEO)** is a great way to bring in more business as long as you have a good grasp of how it works. As a small business, you might think there's no point in using SEO in your strategy since it would be difficult to compete with mega-corporations like Walmart, but Google's latest algorithms favor local businesses in their effort to deliver highly relevant results.



You can be sure that your prospects are searching online for what they're looking for and it's important that you strategically plan how you're going to be found. What keywords do you think people would input into a search engine if they're looking for what you have to offer? If you haven't identified your target keywords, that needs to go on the top of your To-Do list.

SEO goes beyond just knowing the keywords that you want to target. Remember that you're creating your content for humans, so keyword stuffing that sounds unnatural will have the opposite effect you're looking for.

## **8. How Compelling is Your Content?**

Getting prospects to land on your website is only going to work if they don't immediately click away. Take a good hard look at the content on your website and determine whether your content is interesting enough and captivating enough to make people want to hang around and get to know your brand. Headlines, word choice, and visuals are all factors in creating compelling content.

Keep in mind that your website visitors are being bombarded with messages all day every day. They don't have time to read boring content, not when there are so many other demands for their attention. You may have to spend some time studying what makes content compelling and think about what changes you can make to improve yours.

## **9. How Are You Tracking Results?**

Tracking results is a crucial part of an effective marketing strategy. The last thing you want to do is throw money into marketing haphazardly hoping something works. Tracking helps you to measure the satisfaction of your customers and the response of prospects to new products. Web analytics can show you who's visiting your website, where they're coming from, and how long they're sticking around.

Collect and analyze data to find out what's working and what's not. In Google Analytics, you can define conversion goals. What are the desired actions you want people to take? Examples of conversion goals include downloading a report, signing up for your email list, and completing a check-out from your online store.

## **10. How Will You Recognize Success?**

To know for sure if you've successfully improved your small business marketing strategy, you need to define what success looks like for you. Does it mean a certain additional number of prospects signing up for your email list? Does it mean attaining a better position on the search engine results page? Does it mean a better return on investment of funds you put into pay-per-click marketing?

Knowing exactly where you're trying to go is the best way of attaining success. Set short-term and long-term goals. You'll find that as you begin to improve your small business marketing strategy, you'll begin to see other areas you can work on for even greater improvement.

## Marketing Help Outside Your Organization

If you don't have a marketing team on staff and don't want to hire new employees, one more question to ask yourself is where you can get expert help outside your organization. The world of marketing is constantly changing, and the best thing you can do for the success of your business may be to get help from expert marketers.

At Softline Solutions, we make it our business to stay on top of current trends. Whether you need help with paid search, social media, SEO, or inbound marketing, we can help you realize your online potential. Get in touch with us today and let's talk.



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