

THE ONLINE MANIFESTO FOR BIZ



21 Steps to Quickly and
Easily Take Your Offline
Business Online

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Intro	4
Web Basics	5
Step 1 – Web Hosting	5
Step 2 – Domain	8
Step 3 – Web Platform	10
Blogging	12
Step 4 – Why Blog?	12
Step 5 – Blogging Best Practices	15
Social Media	18
Step 6 – Setting Up Twitter	18
Step 7 – Using Twitter Properly	21
Step 8 – Facebook Profile & Fan Page	26
Step 9 – Facebook Places	30
Local SEO	32
Step 10 – What & Why	32
Step 11 – Keyword Research (Localized)	34
Step 12 – SEO Basics	36
Step 13 – Setting up Google Places	42
Step 14 – Google Places Best Practices	44
Mobile Marketing	46
Step 15 – The Power of Mobile	46

Step 16 – Making Your Site Mobile Friendly	49
Step 17 – Mobile Marketing Options	52
Lead Capture	55
Step 18 – Lead Capture in a Nutshell	55
Step 19 – Lead Capture Best Practices	57
Media Buys	61
Google and Facebook Ads	61
Step 21 – Cross Promotion	65
Conclusion	67

INTRO

Hello Business Owner or Professional,

I just wanted to use this intro to let you know what this guide is all about. While internet usage continues to spike, and print media continues to dwindle savvy businesses are making sure their online presence is taken care of.

If you don't have a website, you can be sure that your competitor does. They are the ones getting all of the leads the internet can produce en masse. Even if you have a website, unless you are web savvy there are probably competitors out there using the internet more effectively.

This guide, will lay out 21 steps that will take a business with NO online presence, to the point where you could potentially dominate your local internet market.

Follow the steps and launch your business into the current era while preparing for the future.

I wish you the best of luck.

WEB BASICS

STEP 1 – WEB HOSTING

One of the first things a company should consider when they want an online presence is web hosting. If you already have a website up, this might be old news to you. Feel free to skip this step, but I encourage you to read on because you will still learn something. Like any major purchase, when you are shopping for web hosting you want to have as much knowledge as possible.

Web hosting is a service that allows people or businesses to make their website accessible to the World Wide Web. If you want to build a website, you will need to purchase hosting.

You can get decent hosting for cheap, but be wary of free hosting. Building sites on free hosting is like building your site on a house of cards. You never know when the bottom will give out and everything will come crashing down. You don't have to go out and get the best hosting money will buy, many companies offer cheap packages that are good enough to start with.

The first thing you want to consider is the type of hosting you want. You will be choosing from 3 general categories...

Shared – Shared hosting is offered by many companies. It is by far the cheapest choice. Hosting on a shared network can be as cheap as \$9 per month. It is also an easy solution since the hosting will come ready to

go. You will usually get more than enough resources (bandwidth, storage etc...) for a new website as well. Many people run multiple websites off one of these accounts before. The downside is it usually isn't as fast loading as the other options and is also less secure and reliable.

VPS (Virtual Private Server) – You are leasing rights to a virtual machine that runs on a cluster of computers. This hosting will be more reliable and faster than shared. It is also easier to upgrade your hosting instantly by paying for a higher level package. VPS is a good solution because it can easily grow along with your website and business. It is more expensive than shared though, and you may need to pay even more if you need them to manage the hosting.

Dedicated – This is the granddaddy of hosting options. It is the most secure, fast and reliable of the above options. With this account you will have your own dedicated computer server. You will be able to run multiple sites easily. The downside is it is the most expensive option by far, and if you do manage to max out the server's capabilities, you will have to move to another machine to upgrade.

Once you have chosen one of the three hosting methods, do some online research and figure out a solution you are comfortable with. Some of the things you want to consider:

- Disk Space
- Bandwidth
- Backups
- cPanel (this makes it easy to control your hosting)
- Price

Above all of the technical details though – the number one concern a business should have when choosing hosting is: **Support**. If you are reading reviews of hosting sites, make sure to find the ones where support is mentioned as being great. One way you can do this is by chatting with a live help agent. Many sites offer this and it is a good way to see how fast they respond and how helpful they are.

Web hosting may not be the "sexiest" subject, but it is still important. At the end of the day your website will only be as fast and reliable as the web-host.

STEP 2 – DOMAIN

Your domain name is your web address. The part that comes after the www. is your domain name. Your domain name includes, the extension after the . as well. Google.com and Google.ca are two separate domain names.

If you want a website you have to register a domain. Luckily, this is a fairly cheap process. At a place like Godaddy.com you can get a domain name for around \$10 a year!

1. Be Unique – You want a good unique domain name. You don't want to confuse people between your brand and someone else's in most cases.

2. Stick to .Com – This isn't a must, but if you care at all about people being able to memorize your website address, then consider .com. Most of the population still thinks of .com as the standard for websites so it is much more easily remembered.

3. Short As Possible – You don't want a super long domain name due to the same reasons you use .com. You want the URL to be easily remembered and typed.

4. Avoid Hyphens – Hyphens are mainly a problem when it comes to verbally sharing your website. It makes it a bit tougher and less easy to remember when you have to say "dash".

5. Think Local – If you are a business that does most of your work in a certain geographical area think of adding some local terms to your

domain. If you are a dentist in Glasgow, then glasgowdentist.com could be a good domain name. Your web address (domain) is one determining factor of where you will rank in Google searches. If you have “glasgowdentist” in your domain name, your site is more likely to show up on the first page of google searches for “Glasgow Dentist”.

The domain name of your website won't make or break you, but it can have a couple subtle benefits that will make the going easier. In general, keep it short, simple, easy to remember and go for a .com address.

STEP 3 – WEB PLATFORM

Once you have a domain and hosting, your next step is the website (if you don't already have one). You need to figure out how you will either build your own site, or how your designer will build the site. While there are many ways to design a site, they all fall into two general categories: Static vs Dynamic.

Static: This is your traditional website, usually created using code like HTML and/or Flash. These sites are probably the most common type of site on the internet. They are quick to develop, and many designers, especially old school ones prefer to design in this fashion. The downside is it makes it hard to update your site unless you are familiar with things like coding and FTP (file transfer protocol). Many web developers will charge you extra, if you want to update your static site, and don't know how to do it yourself. The current trend is that static sites are becoming less popular, and even adopting more dynamic aspects.

Dynamic: Dynamic sites are the current trend, they are the choice for most web savvy businesses and professionals. A dynamic site, is a site that is easy to update. The most common form of dynamic site is a blog. A blog makes it easy to add content to your site. All the major companies online, have either added a blog to their static site, or built their site with a dynamic platform that allows for easy blog incorporation.

One of the most popular dynamic platforms is WordPress, which was initially a blogging platform. The main benefit of going dynamic with a platform like WordPress is that you can easily add content to your site yourself. All you need is an internet connection, and you can access the

back-end of your site through a web browser. Adding content with WordPress is as simple as using a word processing program.

These dynamic websites also usually make broad sweeping site changes much easier, and potentially easy enough for anyone to do it. Most of these platforms will have many free themes as well as paid themes available. These themes will allow you to change the entire look of your site with the click of a button (maybe a couple of clicks).

Lastly, Google ranks dynamic sites higher than static ones generally speaking. The higher your site in the search engines then the more traffic you will get.

The choice of web platform is up to you, but for maximum effect I strongly suggest a dynamic platform. It is more current and user friendly in general. If you have a static site and do not want to switch, then consider developing something like a dynamic blog to offset the negatives associated with static sites.

BLOGGING

STEP 4 – WHY BLOG?

In the last step we talked about the value of dynamic sites. One of the most important things about a dynamic platform is that it allows you to easily blog on your website. I also mentioned that if you have a static site you should look at adding a dynamic aspect to it. This essentially meant that you should add a blog.

Adding a blog to your website is a crucial step in your online efforts. All of the major brands online have company blogs now. It is one of the key proponents to any inbound marketing efforts. Inbound marketing means that eager and willing customers find you, rather than you trying to find them.

A blog will make your website, offer or service easier to find. It will engage potential leads and act as a hub for all of your other online activities.

Why You Should Blog...

- **Websites Need Fresh Content** – If you want your website to rank high in search engines like Google then you need fresh content. The more often you update your website, the more fresh it is in Google's opinion. A blog allows you to easily update your content.

Besides the google boost, people visiting your site will be more

likely to comeback if they see that the content is updated regularly.

- **Build An Audience** – A blog will allow you to engage your web audience. You can keep them abreast of organizational changes, sales and etc... They can also send you feedback in the form of comments, or a contact form that can be easily added to most dynamic websites. It creates an open dialogue between you and your potential/current customers.
- **Brand Yourself an Expert** – How would you like to deal with customers who are already convinced you are an expert? A helpful blog, can help do just that. Whatever your product or service is, you should use a blog to share your expertise. If you own a garden supplies store, then blog about gardening. Give tips on soil mixtures, when to plant, how to plant etc... Any tips you would use in store to close a customer, you can use online as a blog post. If someone has to choose between two garden stores in town, and one of the choices has taught them a ton of tips online, who do you think they will choose? They will choose the expert blogger!
- **More Chances To Find Your Site** – When you have a static website, it will usually be about 5 pages on average. That is 5 pages that can rank in Google. If you have a blog, each blog post you make is actually a “webpage”. This means that if you make 3 posts a week for a year, you will have more than 150 different chances to rank in Google.
- **Keep People Informed** – A blog can also be used for company news, it is a great way to keep people informed of industry news, sales, and other timely information.

Any business or person looking to build an effective online presence, needs to have some sort of blogging aspect to their site. It provides fresh content, brands you as an expert and engages potential leads.

If you don't believe me, just check out your favorite brands online. There is a very good chance, they all have a company blog of some sort. What was once a nice addition to a website is now a must have.

If you have a website built on something like WordPress, blogging is easy. It is already built into your website. If you don't want to give up your static site, create a blog on a free network like WordPress.com and make sure to interlink the blog and website.

STEP 5 – BLOGGING BEST PRACTICES

Whether you have an onsite or offsite blog, you can't just throw it up and let it sit there doing nothing. The purpose of a blog is to make adding fresh content easy, so you have to commit to creating content. You want to keep in a mind a few tips when blogging:

1. **Consistently Create Content** – You want to be adding content as much as possible to your blog. Once a day is absolutely ideal, but not everyone can commit to that. You want to at least post regularly, every couple of days works, and even once a week is helpful. To get the maximum benefits of a blog add posts as often as you can. Try to avoid any long dry spells as well.
2. **Keyword Rich Titles** – If you are having trouble thinking of blog posts, just brainstorm a list of everything you think people would search on Google to find your business. Once you have this list, create a list of blog post titles that use the keywords AND are web visitor friendly. What I mean, is that the titles are still catchy, or intriguing.
3. **Link To Your Website** – If you are using an off site blog, make sure to have a couple links on your blog to your main site. This will help your main site in the search engines, as well as direct your blog traffic towards it.
4. **Get Visual** – When you write a blog post, try to include some sort of visual addition as well. A simple picture, or a related youtube video is a great start. This visual stimulation will catch more eyes.
5. **Write in Short Paragraphs** – When you are writing your blog posts, use small paragraphs for your information. This is more visually appealing than a large wall of text. The large wall will certainly scare some people off.

6. **Look at Related Blogs for Inspiration** – Sometimes the hardest part is thinking of ideas to write about. No matter what business you are, there is a good chance people are already blogging about it. Using the Google Blog Search, you can look for blogs related to your business and find out the topics they are blogging about. Never plagiarize an entire blog post, but using other blogs to find out topics is a great idea.
7. **You don't Have to do it Yourself** – You might be saying to yourself “I am a busy person, I do not have time to blog!”. Fair enough. Even though I would argue that the time invested in blogging is worth it, let's agree; You are too busy to blog. The thing is, you don't have to do it yourself. This is a great task to get some of your younger employees to take over. In many cases they might enjoy more web savvy tasks like this.

You don't have to just rely on your staff though, you can outsource a lot of the content creation (aka blog posts). Sites like elance.com, writeswap.com and fiverr.com offer affordable article writing services. You could get a bulk order of articles and then just pre-load your blog to release them every couple of days. On the last site mentioned (fiverr) you can get a couple of articles written for \$5. Anytime you do outsource work though, make sure it meets your quality guidelines. Anything you post on your blog will reflect upon you, not the hired worker.

8. **Respond to Comments, and Encourage Feedback** – One of the best ways to engage potential customers online is with the blogging comment system. If possible, try to respond to all comments made on your blog. This will encourage people to come back to your site over and over again. If you are conversing with them, they will feel invested

in your blog. Some of the most popular blogs, have commenting followings that make up there own online communities.

You will also want to include some kind of feedback form. A blogging platform like WordPress will allow you to do this fairly easily. The feedback form is key, because people may want to ask you a direct question about your product or offer. A timely response is key to a potential sale.

If you keep these 8 best practices in mind, you will be sure to have a solid blog for your business. If I had to stress any of the points most, it would be constant content creation. That is the single most important step when it comes to blogging.

SOCIAL MEDIA

One major part of being online these days is engaging your customers through social media. When your goal is to attract leads through the internet, then placing yourself where your potential customers are is key. When sites like Twitter and Facebook have a combined 700 million users and growing, there is a good chance that is where your customers are!

Once you have a website and blog presence, you should connect with social media.

STEP 6 – SETTING UP TWITTER

Twitter is a social media site that allows users to send and read short (140 character limit) messages (Tweets) in real time. It is a very popular site and boasts over 65 million Tweets per day, as well as 800 000 search queries. So you can see why it is potentially a valuable asset. The next step will look at some ways to use it, but for this one we will just get to the basics: Signing Up.

1. Visit [Twitter.com](https://twitter.com)
2. On the left hand side of page is a large yellow “Sign Up” button. Click it.
3. You will be taken to a form to fill out. Fill it out. I would personally use all your real information because after all you are the face behind your business.
4. You will have to choose a username. Try to choose something easy to remember. I just used my real name, but the name of your business is also a good choice.

5. Make sure you read the Terms of Service and agree to it. Click “Create My Account”.
6. Once you do that you will be taken to a new page, with “Interests” at the top. You are also sent a confirmation email that you will have to click to confirm your mail address, but you can wait until later if you want.
7. On The interests page, you can search for some of your interests and then follow your first Twitter friends based on those interests. If you stick to business related interests you might be able to find some people interested in your offers in the future. Once you have found a couple people to follow, click on “Next Step: Friends”.
8. This step will let you search your email or other services to see if you have any existing contacts on Twitter already. When you are done or if you want to skip this step, there will be a button on the bottom to move on. since I didn’t add any contacts,my button says “Skip Import”. If you did add someone the button will say “Finish”. Click it.
9. You will be taken to your Twitter homepage. On the left hand side of the page will be your Twitter feed, and on the right hand side will be some starting steps you can follow. On the right hand side, the first thing I would do is click “Upload Profile Picture”. Once you click that, you can fill out your whole bio.
10. I suggest fully filling out your bio and including a real picture of yourself. A business logo can work as well, but I have had better luck with a real picture.
11. Make SURE you add your website to the website field.
12. Since you are limited to 160 characters in the Bio section, I like to use it to include a bunch of keywords or interests related to my business. This way if people search for those interests my profile may pop up for them to follow.

13. Once you have added picture, website and filled out rest of Bio click on save and you are done! That is basic twitter set up, and it is simple and fast.

As you can see Twitter is not something to be scared or shy about. It is simple to set up and next step we will look at some of the the best ways to use it.

STEP 7 – USING TWITTER PROPERLY

Many people think all they have to do is set up a Twitter account and they are done. Unfortunately, it isn't this simple. If you want to get the most out of Twitter for your business you will have to actually use Twitter – the more regular the better. Twitter includes a very web savvy user base so there are some best practices to consider when working with Twitter:

1. Get a Twitter Client – The Twitter interface is fine for casual use but it just isn't flexible enough for business use. A Twitter client is a program that will make using Twitter much simpler and more intuitive. While there are a couple to choose from the two free options I suggest are:

[TweetDeck](#) – This Twitter client will run on your desktop. You will need the internet to access it of course.

[HootSuite](#) – This Twitter client runs right in your web browser. This way you can access it from any computer, and it doesn't take up as many system resources as TweetDeck.

These clients will allow you to organize your Twitter into columns. These columns will display different like feeds of "Tweets". Some of the columns you can set up include:

- **A Home Feed** – This will display all of the tweets you, people you follow or your followers make. This is a good column to have because it allows you to engage and respond to your followers.
- **Mentions** – Anytime someone mentions you in a Tweet it will show up here. This is a great way to make sure you see everyone

that tweets you with a question, or mentions you in general. You can keep an eye on what people think of you, or what Tweets you make that people “Re-Tweet”. A Re-tweet is when someone sends your message to their followers(more on that later).

- **Direct Messages** – On Twitter people can privately direct message you as well. If you have this column set up, you will see all of your direct messages as they come in.
- **Sent Tweets** – Setting up a column for sent Tweets is a good idea, just for your own personal use. You can easily see what Tweets you have sent out all in one convenient column.
- **Search Columns** – This is where the power of a Twitter client shines. These clients will let you set up columns based on search terms. That doesn’t seem that exciting right? Well it is! This is the best way to engage people on Twitter. Just think you can set up a column so that you see a list of Tweets in essentially real time, based on your chosen search terms.

If you are a small town business, you can set up a feed that shows you every tweet mentioning your town. You can engage with these people, answer their questions, follow them etc... You can build a following of local people who may need your services this way.

You can also set up search terms for keywords related to your offer or services. If you are a Garden Supplies store, then you can set up columns for terms like “gardening” “planting flowers” “gardening in *your town*” etc... This way you can find lot’s of like minded people to engage with.

A good Twitter client is a key first step to using Twitter effectively. Choose one of the above clients today, and then you can really begin to harness the power of Twitter.

2. Learn The Jargon – There are a number of specific Twitter-related terms out there. Learning these is a big step to take in understanding how to best use Twitter. Here are some of the more popularly used terms:

Tweet – The 140 character messages that Twitter users send out.

Re-Tweet – With the click of a button you can resend someone's Tweet out. A re-tweet will usually include the Twitter ID of the person who originally tweeted the message.

Replies/Mentions – You can also reply to a tweet. When you click on the reply button your message will start with @ *the Twitter ID of who you are replying too*. The @ sign signifies a reply in Twitter. The @ symbol is also used if you want to mention a follower or tweeter in your Tweets.

Follow/Follower – Following people in Twitter is how you network. When you find someone who's Tweets you enjoy you can follow them. Then their tweets will show up in your home feed. If someone enjoys your Tweets they will follow you and become your "follower"

– The # symbol is a "hashtag" in Twitter. It is used to mark keywords or topics in a Tweet. It was actually created by twitter

users. It makes the keywords following it to show up in searches easier. You can also click a hashtag to see all Tweets that use it. A popular hashtag is #FF or #FollowFriday which people use on Friday's to suggest people for their followers to follow.

Messages (formerly called Direct Message) – Twitter also lets you send private messages to a person directly. This is a good place to take any conversations that the general Twitter population won't care about. You can only send a message to someone you follow. The aforementioned Twitter clients have one button direct messaging, but you can also send a message by adding a d before a Twitter name of one of the people you follow.

Getting used to this jargon, and really understanding how to use it – is a major step in building your web presence.

3. General Twitter Use – One of the most important Twitter tips is to remember you are part of a community. The Twitter user base is very web savvy and you can't go in there just spamming links to your website. You have to engage people, chat, ask questions and answer them!

This is an arena where you can prove your expertise. Don't just spam links, While you can promote yourself, make sure that your @ replies and regular Tweets HIGHLY outweigh your promotional Tweets.

Reply to anyone who responds to you. Treat Twitter like you would a networking party or event. You wouldn't walk into a party and start shouting the business address would you? You have to "work the room".

Also make sure that you are monitoring your Twitter regularly. If you are too busy for it – then outsource it to other staff. Younger staff are more than likely used to Twitter already, and would really take to the added responsibility. You want a regular consistent Twitter presence, that is the best way to build followers. It is also the best way to monitor your business on Twitter. If you have your younger staff checking Twitter often, they can respond to any claims made about your business. They can also engage with people who might not be happy with your competitor! If you have a big staff, i would suggest getting 2 or 3 people to monitor Twitter so if one leaves, you won't have any down time.

Properly using Twitter is a great way to position yourself online. You will meet like minded business owners, will generate leads and you will be able to monitor your and your competitors brand.

STEP 8 – FACEBOOK PROFILE & FAN PAGE

Another website that you should consider tapping into is Facebook. Facebook has over half a BILLION subscribers, and HALF of those people are online at any given moment. Has there ever been a business that would turn down a direct line to half a billion people? Do you want to be one of those businesses? I don't think so. That is why a Facebook presence is important. We have mentioned it before, but you want to be where your customers are.

There are two major aspects to consider with Facebook – your personal profile and your business fan page. While you can create a fan page without a personal profile it will be a bit limited, and in general isn't suggested. You are the face behind your business when it comes down to deal time, so your own personal profile should be the face of your online presence.

Creating a Facebook personal profile:

1. Visit [Facebook.com](https://www.facebook.com)
2. Fill in the form on the Right of the page and click "Sign Up". There is a small "Create a Page" link that you can use to create a Fan Page without a profile, but I suggest against that.
3. Fill in the security code. You can click on "Try Another Text" if the image is too hard to read. Once you have filled it in, click sign up.
4. Follow The Facebook Guided Steps. Google will lay out your first three steps. You can search your email account for existing friends, Fill in your basic profile info and add a photo. I suggest you do all steps.
5. Click Save & Continue

6. You will now have a functioning Facebook Profile. You can now follow some additional steps that Facebook lays out. They explain it better than I can, so work your way through the steps and you will have a good feel for how the Facebook profile works. You will also have to confirm your email, Facebook makes it easy linking to your email at the top of the page.

Congrats, you now are one of the half of a billion Facebook users.

Time for a Facebook Fan Page for your business:

We will assume that you have created a Facebook Profile and are logged in. If you aren't, go ahead and do that now.

1. Visit <http://www.facebook.com/pages/create.php>
2. Click on Local Business or Place.
3. Choose a category from the drop down menu. Be sure to pick the right category of business.
4. Complete the other fields, read and check the terms then click "Get Started".
5. Fill out another security code, and click "Submit".
6. You will now be brought to the fan page. Much like your profile, Facebook will lay out your opening steps. Follow each step they suggest.
7. Now you have a Facebook Fan Page for your business.

Facebook Best Practices and General Use:

Like most of the things we will discuss in the guide, if you go to the effort of creating a Facebook fan page then you need to actually use it.

Whether you do it yourself, or get a staff member too, consistency is the key.

1. **Pick A Good Name** – A lot of times you will just use your business name, which is perfectly acceptable. Make sure you spell it right though, because this can be next to impossible to change. Make the name short and easy to remember as well. If you are a franchise you may want to localize your fan page name by adding your city after/ before your business name.
2. **Use A Fan Page For Business** – Even though we went through the basic steps to set up BOTH a profile and a fan page, this point is worth stressing. You want your business to have a fan page! I see way too many businesses who still insist on using a Facebook profile. Profile's are for people, fan pages for business. Stick to that.
3. **Engage** – Engage with your fan base. It is just like Twitter and blogging, you want to consistently be posting messages to the group. Answer questions they may have, make comments, and ask questions. People like to feel involved, so listen and respond to their suggestions.
4. **Promote In Store** – Add the link to your Facebook page on all of your promotional materials. If you have an email signature, add a link to your Facebook page there as well. Anywhere you promote your business you can promote your fan page. You can even include a sign in your store, urging your customers to join your Facebook page.
5. **Integrate Blog** – When you make a blog post, mention it on your Facebook fan page as well. This is a great way to drive that Facebook

traffic to your blog. If you use a WordPress powered blog, there are plugins that will do this automatically for you.

6. **Be Creative** – Use your Facebook fan page creatively. You can promote your store by offering special Facebook fan page only deals. You can have code word sales where you share the word on Facebook each Wednesday. You can have contests and rewards for active Facebook fan page members etc... Your Facebook fan page is a direct link to your customers, if you can think of creative ways to engage them you will make more money.
7. **Media Buy** – Facebook makes it pretty easy to promote your page on their network. When you are learning the ins and outs of the Fan Page you will see links that offer you a chance to promote your page. You promote it by purchasing Pay-Per-Click (PPC) ads on the Facebook network. The benefits to this type of advertising, is you only pay when someone clicks your add and you can target the ads to your demographic. You can actually make sure the ads only appear to a certain geographic location, gender, age, or people who have certain interests.
8. **Outsource** – Just like Twitter get your staff to take over the day to day operations of Facebook. They might show you some creativity you hadn't seen before! Facebook makes it easy to add page admins.

A Facebook fan page is another vital step in building a REAL web presence. Now that you have one, remember that using and promoting it consistently is the key.

STEP 9 – FACEBOOK PLACES

Places is a Facebook application that lets you see where your Facebook friends are as well as share your own location.

Places allows you to check in at local business, venues and other places of interest. You can tag your friends in your location update, comment on the location and/or just let people know where you are.

For some people this sounds invasive and uninteresting, but with the mobile revolution – this kind of service has become very popular. Even if this does sound invasive to you, don't worry – you don't have to actually use the service BUT you should “claim” your business on Facebook.

Claiming your business on Facebook Places is important for a couple of reasons. You can:

- Manage your Places address
- Merge your Places and Fan Page together
- Manage Business Details like: Hours of Operation & Contact Information
- Use “Facebook Deals” to offer special deals to people who check in.

When you are logged into Facebook, do a search for your business using the search function at top of page. Your fan page will probably show up, but hopefully your business will also show up under the heading “Places”.

Facebook Places has automatically added a large amount of businesses, obviously not every business, but a large amount. If your business does

show up under the places heading, you can click on it and then on the left hand side of the page you should see a “Claim This Business” link. Click that link and follow the instructions.

If your business doesn't show up, then you can add it but you will have to access it through a Facebook Places app on a mobile device. You just access Facebook Places on your mobile FROM the physical address of the business, and then you will be able to follow their instructions and add your business.

Facebook Places is important because it is basically free advertising. If you have your Facebook Places profile full of information, people will see that every time some one checks in.

Facebook has also rolled out “[Facebook Deals](#)”. You can now set it up so that when someone comes to your business and “Checks in” on Facebook Places they get offered special deals. This will encourage people to check in, and every time they check in their friends are notified what business they are at.

You can also encourage repeat visits by offering deals to people who check in a certain amount of times. This is a great way to build repeat business and brand loyalty.

LOCAL SEO

STEP 10 – WHAT & WHY

SEO means Search Engine Optimization. In basic terms SEO is the process of making your website more relevant to the major search engines. Increasing your relevancy will mean that your site shows up higher in their search rankings. Due to its overwhelming market share Google is usually the search engine you will optimize for.

Local SEO is optimizing your website to rank highly for local based search terms (keywords). Instead of just ranking for a general keyword like “Gardening” you would try to rank for “Orangeville Ontario Gardening”.

It is becoming an increasingly popular technique, especially by businesses in mid sized and small cities. There are certain advantages when optimizing for localized search terms:

- **Easier To Rank** – It is generally easier to rank for a local search term because it is less competitive. You can rank near or at the top of Google for these terms with much less work. For a real life example; I worked with a business in a town of ~30 000 and was able to get them to the top of Google for a number of localized search terms in a matter of days.
- **More Targeted** – When people are searching locally they are more often to be ready to buy. It also makes sure that the people finding your site are local and can actually use your services. If you rank for “gardening” people all over the world will find your

site, but if you localize that search term you will be targeting people who are searching from your area.

With the explosions of mobile internet, finding businesses through search engines will only get more popular. At one time every business wanted to be in Yellow Pages, well the day of the search engine is here and you want to rank for these local terms. With less competition you can rank quicker and with less effort. You will be tapping into a perpetual funnel of local based web searchers.

When you have a website you want it to rank near the top of the search rankings for localized searches.

STEP 11 – KEYWORD RESEARCH (LOCALIZED)

In this step we will walk through some keyword research. Keywords are the words or terms that people use to search in Google. If you do a search for “Cheap Flights” then the keyword is: cheap flight.

Keyword brainstorming and research is an important first step in any Local SEO plan. These general steps will get you off to a good start.

1. **Brainstorm** – Sit down and make a list of every keyword term that someone would search for to find your business. Don’t worry about local terms right now, just think of what people would search in any part of the world to find a service like yours.

Write down as many terms as possible. Think of a wide variety of terms. All the way from one word terms (short-tail) to 3+ word terms (long-tail). I would also ask friends and family their input. This will give you an outside perspective from an everyday person.

If you get stuck thinking about terms you can get some help from Google themselves. Just take one of your keyword terms you thought of and enter it into the [Google Keyword Tool](#). This will give you a list of related terms and their estimated search numbers. Keep in mind we will localize these terms so the amount of searches will not be applicable, but it still gives you an idea of what keywords are searched more often.

Spend a good chunk of time on this, and try to get a list of 30–50 keyword terms.

2. **Consolidate** – Go through this list and take out your 5 most desired keywords. You can use personal preference, a hunch, the search amounts from Google Keyword Tool and common sense. Until, you actually test your terms you won't know much about them. So take these five terms and write them down on their own. Keep your other keywords handy though! These 5 you will start with but, eventually through the power of blogging, you will be ranking for all of the terms.
3. **Localize** – Now that you have your list of five terms simply localize them. Add your location (town or city, maybe the state/province if you are in a city with common name). If you are a company that services a number of towns, then add the other towns in front of the keyword as well. For example...

City One + Keyword One

City One + Keyword Two

...

City Two + Keyword One

City Two + Keyword Two

Etc...

So each new town you use will be another 5 local keyword terms. Once you have localized your keywords you will now have a list of local keyword terms that you can begin ranking for. While this is a basic form of keyword research it is leagues ahead of most of the online marketing that local businesses do.

STEP 12 – SEO BASICS

While breaking down SEO completely would be a book on it's own (I actually purchased a 330 pg eBook once!), I will go over some basics. If you have built your website using WordPress you could do some of the on page steps yourself. If you went with an HTML design, you might have to get your web designer to make a couple changes. The changes will be quick though so it shouldn't take too much time.

Search Engine Optimization can be broken into two main categories: On-page and Off-page.

On-Page: On-Page means exactly what it says. These are the steps you take on your actual site or blog to make it more friendly to the search engines. While there are many things to consider, some great first steps include:

- **Title Tags:** You might have to get your web designer to fix these for you if you use a traditional HTML website. These are simply the titles of each page and are the first thing Google sees when it finds a new page. The "title" in this case is what is displayed ABOVE the address bar in your internet browser. It is at the very top of the browser. On Google.com, "Google" is the title of the page.

If you are familiar with HTML code, this is usually accomplished with the `<title></title>` tags near the top of the code. If you are savvy enough you can change them yourself, just remove what is in between them and paste one of your keywords. In WordPress

you can handle this even easier through uses of plugins like All-in-One SEO.

Each page of your site should have a different title tag, make it one of the keywords that you created in the previous step. In some smaller towns, this is all you will need to do to get to the first page of Google for localized terms.

If you use WordPress you can access Permalinks through the Settings and create a custom structure like: `/%postname%/`. This will make the title tag of every post you create to be the same as the Post Title. So just name your blog posts with keywords and you will automatically have keyword rich title tags. Another point for WordPress :)

- **Content** – You want to mention your keywords in your content, but not too much. You don't want your content to seem low quality and unnaturally stuffed with keywords. Remember your web content should be written for your visitors, not the search engines. Good quality content that naturally mentions your keywords will engage people, make them more likely to share your site and will seem more natural to Google.
- **Navigation** – You should have proper navigation on your site. You want it to be both logical and working. Broken links on your site are a big no-no in fact. A broken link in your navigation is especially glaring. You want Google to be to easily find your whole site with no broken links. This includes linking to other parts of your own site.
- **Sitemap** – This step is more important for WordPress based websites, because a sitemap is needed more for a dynamic site. A

sitemap is basically a list of your website pages. Search engines like Google will use it to discover your entire site. It is more important for websites that are updated with new pages often (i.e. wordpress blog). In WordPress you can easily add a sitemap to your site with a plugin like “Google XML Sitemaps”.

- **Privacy Policy** – This is a tip that came from the Canadian headquarters of Google itself. The complex algorithm that Google uses to rank websites, does give a bonus to sites that have a privacy policy. Just get your web designer to add a link in your footer titled Privacy Policy, that links to a basic privacy policy for your website. If you use WordPress just use a plugin like “Easy Privacy Policy”.

SEO is a major area of study online, and there are a lot of other steps you can take, but the above ones are a great on-page start to any campaign. Since ranking for localized keywords is easier in general, these steps should suffice for most businesses.

Off-Page – In many people’s eyes off-page optimization is where you should spend most of your time. I personally disagree though. I think consistent high quality on-page content (aka blog posts) is the most important step. That said, off-page optimization is still very important and probably more important than every on-page step besides content creation.

When it comes down to a basic level, off-page optimization is really about one thing – getting backlinks. Backlinks are simply links on other sites that point towards your site. Google values these highly, and it is one of the major ranking factors.

When you are starting a backlinking campaign, there are a couple of terms you need to know:

Anchor Text: The anchor text is the actual text that makes up the link. When you see a link that says “Click Here” then click here is the anchor text. Links that have your keywords as the anchor text are more valuable.

Page Rank: Google gives pages a rank from 0–10. This rank isn’t quite as important as some people make it out to be, but it is still a good guide. The higher the page rank of a website, the more valuable the link on it is.

NoFollow/Dofollow: Two different kind of links. If a link is nofollow it means that Google doesn’t pass on the power of the link to your site. There is some argument on this though. I don’t think someone should ignore a potential backlink because it is nofollow. It contributes to a natural backlinking profile, and can still drive traffic.

These are some of the basic terms you will come across when you are looking for backlinks or learning more about them. There are a lot of blog posts out there about backlinking, as well as free guides etc...

When you are searching for backlinks there might be times when you need to use code to build your links. Don’t panic. The code is pretty simple. In general, you will need HTML code or BBCode. The BBCode will usually be found if you re building links on forums, and the HTML code will be used on your own sites, or other places that aren’t forum based.

HTML Code:

```
<a href="your full website link">Your Keyword</a>
```

BBC Code:

```
[url="your full website link"]Your Keyword[/url]
```

You can easily write that down and reference it until you memorize it. Your full website link includes "http://" by the way.

Where Can You Start Getting Links?

There are a few steps you can do to get your first backlinks. While these might not be enough to get you to #1 on Google (it might be for some terms), it is still a very solid start.

1. Dmoz.org – Dmoz is a great backlink. It is free, easy and powerful. Just visit the site and follow their instructions closely. Make sure you choose the proper category. When they ask you for your Site Title – use a Keyword because this will be the anchor text of the link. It takes a notoriously long time to get your site in DMOZ, but don't reapply too often. Check every 3–6 months and reapply at that point.
2. Yahoo Biz Directory – This is the only directory I would ever consider paying for. It is another high value backlink.
3. [Free Directories](#) – While free directories are not that valuable anymore, there is still a little bit of value there and you can find lots of free options. Never exchange links with a directory though. If a directory wants you to link to them before you can submit – then move along. Never pay for a directory spot. Do not pay for mass directory submissions either.

- 4. Your Existing Websites/Blogs** – If you have other websites, or have built a blog off site – then link between all of them. This is a pretty simple step but i have seen people miss it time and time again.
- 5. Your Personal Network** – If you are a business owner you probably have a bit of a local network. Contact your fellow business owners, or any friends/family with website and ask them for a backlink. I have added links to a number of friends who have asked for it.
- 6. Social Media** – Make sure you drop your website link in any of your social media profiles (i.e. Facebook/Twitter). Even if these links are nofollow and not keyword rich, they can still drive traffic and could have some effect on Google ranking. Other social networks like [LinkedIn](#) and [Digg](#) will let you add keyword rich, dofollow links in your profile.

You will find a lot of information on backlinks if you just look for it. These basic steps are a great start for your off–page optimization, and might be enough to get you to #1 for your localized terms.

Local SEO is one of the best online activities a business owner can invest time or money into. These SEO steps are a basic primer that should help the average business owner begin to see the benefits of local Google domination.

STEP 13 – SETTING UP GOOGLE PLACES

Another step towards dominating Google locally is making sure you are represented on Google Places and have claimed your business.

Google Places is NOT Facebook Places – it isn't the same thing at all. Have you ever done a search on Google and a map pops up with businesses plotted on it? This is Google Places in action. Many people don't realize that you can claim your business and control the information Google shares in this manner.

In this step we will look at how to sign up and add/claim your business.

First you have to visit [Google Places](#).

1. **Sign in with your Google Account** – If you don't have a Google account sign up for one now. Google has a number of free tools that are must haves for online marketers. Google Places is just one of these.
2. **Check Out Some Information** – Once you have entered your Google ID, you will be taken to a new page. On the left hand side is an “Add a Business” button but before you click that, you can learn a little more about Google Places from some of the links and videos on right side of page. When you feel comfortable moving on...
3. **Click Add a New Business** – You will be taken to a page where it will ask for your country and business's main phone number. This is to find out if a listing already exists. If it does you will be taken to a page where you can click “edit” and you can fill out more information. If it

doesn't you will be taken to a form to fill out to add your business. Fill out as much info as possible in either scenario and click "Submit".

4. **Verify** – Once you click submit you will have to verify your Google Places listing. You can do this three different ways; via a phone call to your listed business number, a text to your listed cell phone number or a post card to your listed business address. The phone call and text will be instant, but you will have to wait 2–3 weeks for the postcard. Sometimes the phone verification wont work with some phone systems so you will be forced to go with text or postcard. Either way you do it, you will receive a code, and once you enter that and your listing will be live.

Now, you have either claimed or created your business profile on Google Places. You have taken another step towards building a great online presence. The next step will share some best practices to keep in mind when using Google Places.

STEP 14 – GOOGLE PLACES BEST PRACTICES

Since you now have your business claimed and verified on Google Places, we can look at some techniques to make sure you use your listing properly. First off, Google Places isn't really a service you "use" per se. It isn't like Facebook Places in that regard. When I say "use" I really mean how you should set it up to get the most advantage from the search engines. Essentially these best practices are steps to take to ensure your listing shows up above other businesses.

Google Places ranking depends on a number of items, including (but not limited to):

- 1. Claiming Your Business** – I will assume you did this last step, but if you didn't here is a good incentive to do it. Claiming your business is one way to raise it in the Google rankings. Generally speaking, claimed businesses show up before unclaimed ones.
- 2. Choose City Center Locations** – If you have multiple locations, list the one that is closest to the heart of the city. While it might be impossible for you to control, Google does lend weight to a business's proximity to the city center.
- 3. Categorize Properly** – You can choose a number of categories for your business, and I suggest using as many categories as possible. The catch is they have to be legitimate categories. Don't reach too far for categories because if they aren't related to your business Google could penalize you by ranking your site lower in Places.
- 4. Fill Out Profile** – Fill out as much info in the profile as you can. Include payment types, hours and other information like parking for

example. Google definitely prefers profiles to be more filled out, because it means more value for their users.

5. **Add Images** – Google gives you ten spots for images, and I suggest using every spot. This will not only make your business listing look better, it will contribute to the “fullness” of your profile.
6. **Reviews** – People can review your business right on Google Places, so encourage some of your favorite customers to write you a review. It will look great on your profile, and help your listing show up at the top. Google Places also looks at review sites on the web. If applicable, make sure your business is reviewed on sites like Restaurantica and Yelp.

Google places is only gaining in popularity. Tapping into it today and optimizing your listing with the tips above, will ensure your business has a prominent place on it.

MOBILE MARKETING

STEP 15 – THE POWER OF MOBILE

Mobile marketing is one of the fastest growing advertising channels in the business world today. The number of people carrying hand held wireless devices is increasing daily and so are the marketing opportunities that go along with it.

The **real** power of mobile marketing comes from the fact that people take their mobile phones and devices with them everywhere they go. They may not always read a newspaper, they may not check their email every day but they DEFINITELY check their phone and they usually do so in real time. If you have a cell phone or smart phone, you probably noticed the same kind of behavior in yourself.

Knowing this information about mobile phone users, let's take a look at some of the key benefits that make mobile marketing a uniquely powerful option:

1. **Real Time Access** – Unlike print ads or even traditional web advertisements, mobile marketing can help business owners reach potential buyers in real time. If a consumer receives an offer for a half-priced lunch from a restaurant at 11am, they are far more likely to act on that deal than if they got an email broadcast saying that there are half-priced lunches next week on a certain day of the week. If a deal can be acted upon quickly, consumers LOVE this kind of flexibility.

2. **Location Aware** – Through a variety of services, mobile phones have the ability to broadcast the location of the user. For consumers who actively share their location and give permission for others to know their location, businesses have the ability to advertise offers to these mobile users based on their location. For example, a mobile user might broadcast that they are having lunch at Restaurant Q which happens to be next door to Zed’s Coffee House. Zed’s can issue a mobile advertisement to the consumer offering a special on an after-lunch beverage.
3. **More Accurate Delivery** – When you compare mobile marketing to something like email marketing, you are going to see a drastic difference in the accuracy of message delivery. Many people have 5 or even 10 different email addresses and they may use any of these to opt in to an email list. With mobile marketing, you are dealing with a very unique contact point, a phone number, which rarely gets shared and is seen as a very personal piece of identity. When you issue broadcasts to mobile users, you can be almost certain that your message will be delivered AND viewed by the proper person.
4. **Measurable** – When it comes to mobile marketing initiatives like SMS text (to be discussed in more detail later), campaigns can be tracked in real time. Marketers can observe how their marketing messages are being reacted to and adapt the strategy on-the-fly if need be. There is really no other form of marketing that allows for such flexible and dynamic client interaction.
5. **Cost Effective** – Depending on the type of mobile campaign that is chosen, mobile marketing can be a very inexpensive way for businesses to share their message and attract new clientele. In a future chapter we will cover all of the different forms of mobile marketing.

Some more expensive than others but ALL worth considering from a business growth perspective.

STEP 16 – MAKING YOUR SITE MOBILE FRIENDLY

Not too long ago, many business owners believed that a website was more of a “nice to have” and not really a requirement for running a successful business. If you were to poll 100 business owners nowadays, I’d venture to say that 99 or even all 100 of them would agree that a website is a MUST.

In this day and age, we have graduated to a new website model. The mobile website. Just like we saw a few years ago with traditional websites, many people do not believe it is important to have a mobile website. Nothing could be further from the truth. When you consider what we have talked about in this section of the guide regarding the mass of people who are literally “attached” to their phones 24/7, a mobile website is pretty much at the point of also being a MUST.

Let’s go over some of the primary concepts you need to take into consideration when preparing a mobile version of your site:

1. **Your Mobile Address** – Just like when you decided on the standard “.com” domain name for your website, you will need to make a similar decision for your mobile site. This is traditionally done as a folder on your existing domain (i.e. domain.com/mobile) or as a subdomain (i.e. mobile.domain.com). A mobile site will contain an automatic redirect (done with a script) that recognizes the web visitor as a mobile user and sends them to the mobile version of your website.
2. **Mobile Page Structure** – Again, similar to the design of your traditional website, a number of decisions need to be made with regards to the layout and design of your mobile site. If you do a google

search for “mobile website layout” or “mobile website template” you will find a huge variety of choices and styles. Unless you have a very high level of technical expertise in house, your best bet when it comes to mobile design is to hire a design firm. This leads us to point number 3.

3. **What To Look For In a Mobile Designer** – Hiring a mobile designer is really no different than hiring a professional from any trade. You want to check their qualifications, references, get samples of past work and find out exactly HOW they structure their fees. You might want to ask them a few questions about their mobile expertise to make sure you are comfortable. Here are a few questions that they should be able to answer with ease:
 - a. **Do you use Flash or Javascript?** Ideally their answer here is “no” since many mobile devices do not support the latest versions of these environments.
 - b. **How do you test your work?** Mobile developers should be checking that your mobile site is compatible on a wide range of mobile browsers and screen resolutions. NOT testing the most commonly used environments could mean that certain visitors see a distorted site which ultimately reflects negatively on your company.
 - c. **Do you use separate mobile themes?** Using a separate theme specifically designed for mobile means that you can develop the mobile site exclusively for those kind of visitors. You do not have to alter your traditional site in any way and you can be sure for a more robust solution.

STEP 17 – MOBILE MARKETING OPTIONS

Now that you have learned about mobile marketing basics and what it takes to tap into the mobile craze, let's take a look at the various methods of mobile marketing that you can leverage as a business owner looking to grow:

1. **SMS (Short Message Service)/Text** – Text messaging is one of the most powerful forms of marketing that exists today. SMS marketing requires an opt in system. For example, an advertiser might say “Text ‘pizza’ to 34567 for a free slice”. The consumer is essentially opting in at this point and the company can send them a coupon in return. The advertiser now has the ability to send promotional material to that mobile user in the future. The number 34567 in our example is a “short code” and can be an expensive number to obtain. Many small business owners will share short codes with other businesses to cut costs.
2. **MMS (Multimedia Message Service)** – Similar to SMS marketing, MMS messages can be more advanced and include photos, video or music. This can be extremely effective if your multi media content converts into sales. Some mobile customers may be charged additional fees to view this kind of content so you have to weigh the pros and cons before deciding on this option.
3. **Mobile Applications** – People with smart phones use applications (or “apps”) for a huge variety of reasons. There are apps that can do almost anything and the app users LOVE the functionality. Creating a mobile app centered around your business AND of extreme value to a customer can be a phenomenal marketing initiative. Imagine an auto mechanic offering you an app for your phone that helps you diagnose

an issue while you are stalled on the side of the freeway? Chances are you would see that mechanic in a much more positive light after that experience. How can your business leverage that?

- 4. Mobile Game Advertising** – Similar to apps, games are another huge craze with mobile users. Sitting on the subway, waiting for an appointment or even killing some time before bed, mobile users are always looking for new and unique games that will pique their interest. Marketers and business owners can creatively tap into this by creating games that their clients (or prospective customers) can play. While they play the game, they can be advertised to in a number of subtle (or not so subtle) ways.
- 5. QR (Quick Response) Codes:** You might have seen QR Codes on products or advertisements already. They are little white square boxes with a unique stamped pattern (usually black in color). Advertisers inscribe various messages into these codes and when a mobile user snaps a photo of the code, they are subsequently sent the embedded message. Many consumers find a sense of curiosity and mystery when it comes to QR Codes. They want to scan the code so they can see what is “on the other side”. In some cases it could be a special discount or coupon. In other cases it may be additional information about the product they are investigating. Either way, QR Codes are a very powerful of extending your mobile marketing efforts.
- 6. Mobile Search** – When mobile users access a search engine like Google, they are actually routed to Google Mobile to perform their search. Just like it is important to have proper SEO strategies in place for your website, it is equally important to do so for your mobile site. Having a mobile-specific website definitely helps and your keywords should be properly used in your mobile site (just like it is on your traditional site). You must also take into consideration that mobile

users are not only using Google. Real-time Twitter searches are very popular and other search engines like Taptu and Bing Mobile are growing rapidly.

7. Mobile Banner Ads – Similar to buying banner ads on websites, blogs or search engines, mobile ads can be purchased and targeted towards select audiences. In general, mobile banner ads will stand out more than typical online banners and statistically mobile banner ads will receive a higher click through ratio. You can buy banner ads using pay per click or pay per exposure. Each campaign is different and you have to choose based on the needs of the market and the advertiser.

LEAD CAPTURE

STEP 18 – LEAD CAPTURE IN A NUTSHELL

It is estimated that people visit a website 3 or more times before they make a purchase or take an action. Just like in real face to face sales, it helps to have a relationship with your potential customer. Lead capture is a great way to build relationships with prospective buyers. What is lead capture you ask?

Lead Capture: Getting a web visitor to subscribe to your site using their email address. For maximum impact, websites usually offer some sort of incentive to encourage people to “opt-in”. This can be a free product, eBook or subscription to a newsletter.

When you capture these emails they will become what internet marketers like to call “their list”. Now you have a list of people you can correspond with through email. Better yet, you know these people are interested in your business because they signed up on your website.

The easiest and most “newbie” friendly way to capture leads is by using some sort of autoresponder or email marketing service. These services are all in one solutions for businesses who want to capture and market to leads.

These services will help you create forms to add to your website to collect the emails. They will store all of your leads. You can email all of your leads at once using these services as well. You can also set up an entire autorepsonder series of emails. Then when someone joins your list, they

automatically get a welcome email as well as other emails scheduled to follow. This way you keep the flow of communication open with each lead, and you only need one series of email for everyone. This way getting 10 leads is just as easy as getting 100.

Some of the more popular autoresponder choices include:

- [Aweber](#)
- [Get Response](#)
- [Constant Contact](#)
- [Mail Chimp](#)

There is a monthly fee for these services, but it is fairly reasonable. Mail Chimp has a **free** starting offer, that allows you to collect 250 subscribers. This is a good model to start with because there is no cost. The hope is that by the time you get to 250 subscribers, you will be generating enough money from the list to justify paying to increase your subscriber limit.

All of the companies listed above have great support to walk you through the process. If you have WordPress it will be simple for you to add an email form to your site. If you have an html based site you may need an extra hand.

With a free service like mail chimp, you can get your lead capture added to your webpage today! Start building **the list**.

STEP 19 – LEAD CAPTURE BEST PRACTICES

While how you build and interact with them is up to you, there are some best practices to consider when capturing leads. Email marketing is no new phenomenon; many techniques, tones and methods have been proven to work. This step will take a look at some of them.

1. **Offer Value** – I see a lot of websites that just have a “Please Subscribe To Our Blog” link. While this will attract some people, it isn’t as effective as having some sort of offer in exchange for the email address. Many more people will sign up if your offer is something like “Sign up to our FREE Newsletter now and get instant access to...”. The offer could be a eBook you wrote, an eBook you bought (with resell rights) or even a coupon based on your product or service.
2. **More Info = Less Subscribers** – The more info you ask for, then the less subscribers you will get. I personally only ask for first name and email address. I know some marketers who only ask for the email address, but then they lose out on the benefits of personalization (more on that later).
3. **Don’t Spam** – When you have people on your list, you shouldn’t treat them poorly. Don’t make everyone one of your emails to the list be some sort of offer. Don’t hit your list up 5 times a day with offers. Some marketers claim that they get best results with daily mailers, while other marketers only mail once a week.
4. **Free Content Builds Trust** – When you are mailing your list, you don’t have to sell every time. Sometimes you can just offer a freebie, a tip or a how to guide. When people receive free bonuses like this it makes them feel more trusting of your future mailings.

5. **Build Relationships** – Treat your list well! The goal here isn't to build a list as much as it is to build relationships. Respond to people who email you, ask questions to keep the flow of communication open as well. Treat your list as if you were emailing friends, this will help you treat your list properly.
6. **Quality vs. Quantity** – Of course a bigger list is better, but there is something to be said for quality. If you have a list of 500 people, in your own area who are very interested in your services, that is better than 2500 people overseas who never act. Don't be worried if your list isn't as big as others – if it converts better then who cares?
7. **Be Consistent** – Whatever frequency you decide to email at, I would stay consistent. This is a personal preference, but I believe it is an important step. You won't leave people wondering where your latest email was, and it can build anticipation.
8. **Remind People to Whitelist** – SPAM filters on email do a decent job deflecting SPAM, but they can also deflect quality emails, including yours! I like to add a line to the top of my emails (or bottom) that says something like: "Please add *your email* to your address book to ensure you receive our emails".
9. **Include Plain Text** – If you are creating HTML newsletters or emails (the autoresponder companies from last step make it simple) make sure you also include a plain text version. If you don't then people who can't handle HTML emails, or choose not to accept them will never see your emails.
10. **Use a Catchy Subject** – Make your subject something that would entice you to click on it. "Hello" just isn't good enough. You want to make sure people open your emails, so get creative. Do not go overboard though, if you use too much punctuation (!!!!) or all caps, you will be flagged by email SPAM filters.

11. **Don't Take Unsubscribes Personally** – This might seem like a weird addition, but it is true. You will get unsubscribes from your list, and sometimes people will be jerks about it. Don't worry about it at all – that is the nature of the beast. Just keep providing value, and capturing leads and you will be fine.
12. **Personalization Helps** – Opening your emails with your leads first name is more effective than something like “Hey Subscriber”. If your goal is to build relationships then you need to personalize. You might be saying to yourself, that there is no way you have time to personally email everyone, but you don't have to. The autoresponder company that you use, will make it easy. They will have some kind of short code that automatically adds the subscribers first name wherever you call it.
13. **Use Your Own List** – I think the best way to properly market yourself via email is with a fresh mailing list you created. You can buy lists but the success/conversion rate on those is horrible. Plus, since you are marketing your business locally – you won't be able to count on those purchased leads being able to even use your services.
14. **Joint Ventures** – Don't be afraid of some joint ventures. A joint venture is when you work with another local business who also has a list and you do some cross promotion. I worked with a restaurant who quickly built 500 local leads by offering a free dessert coupon. Now they offer to send out coupons from other local restaurants and are paid nicely for it. You could also work out a barter deal with other local businesses with email lists. You could pitch each others services in an email.

Email marketing and lead capture is one of the best ways you can tap into internet marketing for your business. Keep the above best practices in mind and you will be far ahead of your competitors.

MEDIA BUYS

GOOGLE AND FACEBOOK ADS

While most of the previous steps can be accomplished free, there are also some good marketing investment opportunities available online.

Online advertising is a massive massive industry, and it is only getting more popular. There are also advantages to online marketing. Getting started with online ads is much cheaper than print or radio. You can also target your ads much better. Online advertising is all about highly targeted, high converting advertising. For the purposes of this guide we will look at two of the more popular ad platforms: Google Search Ads and Facebook Ads. Without further ado..

Google Search Ads

[Google AdWords](#) is Google's ad platform. It is very popular and has been used successfully by both offline and online businesses for ages.

Do you remember we talked about SEO earlier? Well the whole goal of SEO was to get your site to the top of Google rankings. Google search ads, make this simple – you just have to pay. When you do a Google search, do you notice the “ads” areas that sometimes show up at the top and to the left of the normal search results? These are Google search ads.

You can learn all about them on the Adwords page – Google has a great help section. In general though, you choose the search terms you want

to appear for and you pay ONLY when the ads are clicked. The price for clicks varies based on competition, but if you are in a mid or small sized town there won't be too many competitors.

The general idea, is you have to give Google a list of search terms you would like to appear for. The good news is you should have such a list you created earlier. Just make sure to localize each term by adding the geographic areas before (and for this step AFTER) your keyword terms. This way you will ensure only people looking for services or products in your geographical area will click the ads.

You can direct the ads to your business website, blog, Facebook fan page or even right to some sort of lead capture offer.

Facebook Ads

[Facebook Ads](#) are another type of online advertising that is very popular. Much like the Google ads, you can choose Pay Per Click advertising (PPC). So once again you only get charged if your ad gets clicked.

The system is similar to Google in some ways (Like the PPC) but much different in how you target your ads. This is where Facebook really shines. It allows you to really laser focus on who sees your ads.

Since Facebook collects so much information, it allows advertisers to tap into it this info and use it to target their ads. I think the best way to explain it is to list some of the ways you can target your ads.

Ways You Can Target Ads in Facebook

- By Location – Country/State/City
- Age
- Gender
- Interests (!)
- Facebook Pages They Are Connected To
- Sexual Preference
- Relationship Status
- Language
- Education
- Workplace

You can ensure that only people who meet your requirements ever get a chance to click on an ad. That is where PPC is so effective financially. While you have to hope your ideal demographic sees your print ads, you know for sure that they will on Facebook.

Targeting by interest is a very interesting method. If you run a gardening shop you can make sure your ad only shows up to people interested in gardening. This advanced targeting is what makes Facebook ads a unique proposition. I know that the old-school marketing savvy business owners are licking their chops right now!

Much like Google ads you can promote your business site, blog or very easily target your Facebook fan page. Facebook makes it simple to do so, and it makes building a Facebook following simple.

Online advertising isn't free, and it might take awhile to learn the ropes, but once you do it can really boost your bottom line.

STEP 21 – CROSS PROMOTION

Since you have built this online presence, you want to make sure that you are promoting all aspects together. You want to create a sort of self contained lead funnel. Any of the sites, blogs, pages, accounts you build should be used to promote each other as well as your business website.

Some ways to cross promote...

- Use Twitter to promote more than just your business site. Mention your blog posts and include links to your Facebook fan page occasionally.
- When doing SEO, you can also build backlinks to your Facebook fan page to make it show up higher in Google rankings.
- When you have a list of captured leads include links to your Facebook and Twitter in emails
- Your main website should have links to Twitter and Facebook as well. Plus your Twitter and Facebook profiles should link back to your website.
- If you are running Facebook or Google ads, try directing some of them towards your Twitter and Facebook accounts as well as your business site. This way you can test which way is more effective.
- Include links to Twitter, Facebook and your website in your email signature. Also add them to any promotional materials. Lastly, have an in store poster or display that encourages people to follow your on Facebook and Twitter.

In general, just keep in mind that any content you produce on the net, should somehow link to your other efforts.

Cross promoting your own stuff, may seem obvious, but many businesses make crucial mistakes (like not linking their own Website on a Facebook fan page) in regards to this.

If you are doing something related to online marketing, always think of how you can link to your other efforts.

CONCLUSION

The not-so-gradual shift away from traditional marketing, is fully underway. Major corporations have already realized the power in the internet, and are taking advantage. Now that you have worked through this guide, you too, will be able to reap the rewards of a proper online presence.

For many businesses, the steps in this guide are enough to dominate your local region. This means more leads coming in your door, and there aren't many businesses who would turn that away.

This guide doesn't have to be completed over night, but if you follow as many steps as possible, you will be giving your business the best possible chance of generating long term success with the internet as a main source of marketing.

Good luck with all of your efforts.