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Welcome To Our Magazine

Thanks for checking out our June 2016 issue of Dallas Media Magazine, your online marketing resource guide for small business. Each month we will be covering topics that resonate with local businesses just like yours.

Our goal is simple. We want to enable you to do big things online, and it all starts by breaking down the complexities of marketing your business online.

It doesn't matter if you're are just starting out, or an established business owner in your local community, you can always benefit from increasing your brand's visibility online.

To your Success,

Robert Corrotto
Editor

BROUGHT TO YOU BY

www.DallasmediaCorp.com the leading small business marketing service in the Dallas area. We help small businesses connect with more customers online.

If you want to build your business, you need to market, it's that simple. But you can lose thousands of dollars if you don't know what you are doing. So we urge you to take action with some of the strategies we recommend.

For a more "hands off" approach, we offer affordable solutions and can deliver results. We hope you enjoy this issue of Dallas Media Magazine. Feel free to reach out to us anytime.

3 SUREFIRE WAYS TO USE RETARGETING FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

How many of your customers do you think are ready to make a purchase the first time they encounter your brand or product? The answer might surprise you. A lot of local businesses do a good job of marketing. However, many of them drop the ball when it comes to following up on their initial marketing – and that can hurt them. Marketing isn't a one-time encounter with a customer. It's an ongoing effort, a way of building relationships and convincing customers that your product or service is the best option to help them solve their problems.

THE IMPORTANCE OF RETARGETING

Research shows that only a small percentage of customers convert (meaning that they make a purchase) on their first visit to a website or online store. That means that the overwhelming majority of the people who click through on an ad or social media post are not making a purchase.

How can you get those people to come back to your website? The answer is retargeting. Retargeting is a form of advertising that specifically targets people who have visited your website. For example, you might choose to target people who visited your opt-in page without signing up for your list, or people who put items in their shopping cart but didn't complete their purchase.

It takes most customers an average of eight encounters with a brand or product before they make a purchase, especially if they encounter a new brand. That means that retargeting is your best option to connect with leads and convert them into paying – and hopefully repeat – customers.

All you need to do to put retargeting to work for you is to install a Java code on your page. The code will install a cookie that will track customer actions and allow you to follow up as needed.

SUREFIRE RETARGETING OPTIONS

The good news is that you have several options when it comes to retargeting potential customers. Here are three methods you can use.

METHOD #1:
FACEBOOK RETARGETING

One of the most popular retargeting methods around is offered by social media giant Facebook. With well over a billion users, many of whom are highly engaged and visit the site every day, Facebook is a powerful marketing tool for local businesses.

Their retargeting tools are easy to use. All you need to do is install a Facebook pixel on the page you want to use to create your audience. The pixel will track the behavior of visitors to your site and allow you to create a Custom Audience using that information. As stated above, you might decide to target people who visited your site without making a purchase.

Once the cookies are installed and you create your ad campaign, Facebook will display your ad only to the people who have your cookie on their computer. What that means is that you will pay for the people you have targeted, but you do not have to pay for anybody else. That makes Facebook retargeting a cost-effective way to build your list or increase your sales.

One option to keep in mind when using Facebook is their "Call Now" feature. This is a feature specifically for mobile users that allows them to call your business with the touch of a button. If you decide to target your ad to mobile users, the "Call Now" feature is a powerful way to connect.

METHOD #2:
ADROLL RETARGETING

The second method you can use to retarget offers the possibility of reaching potential customers almost anywhere they go online. Adroll is an online advertising service that offers retargeting as one of their options. Because they have access to all of the largest internet ad services, they can display ads on any one of their partner sites, giving you multiple opportunities to reach your target audience.

The basic set-up is the same as Facebook. You install a bit of Java code on your home page and specify what information you want to collect. One of the nice things about Adroll is that you can segment your list. What that means is that you have the option to target customers who have viewed specific products. For example, a customer who looked at sweaters on your website could be targeted with ad that featured one of the sweaters they viewed. It's a more personalized way of retargeting and it can be very effective.

In addition to their general internet retargeting, Adroll also offers specific options such as retargeting on Facebook and Twitter, and retargeting mobile customers.
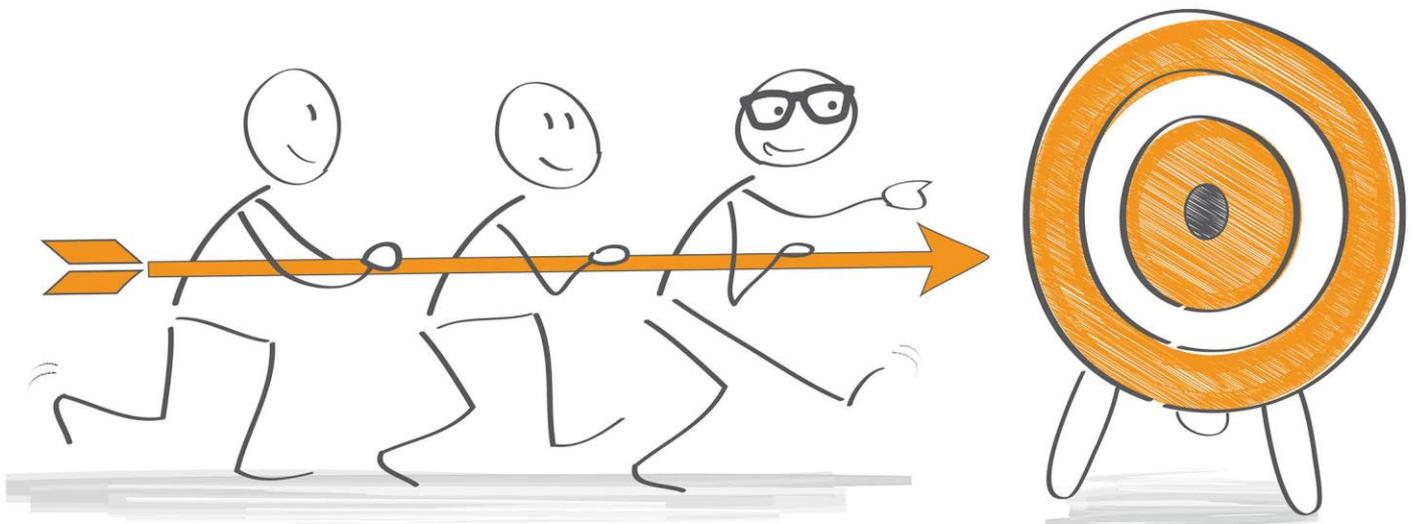
METHOD #3:
GOOGLE ADWORDS REMARKETING

There is no denying the importance of Google to local businesses. While the competition for top-tier keywords can be fierce, local keywords tend to be less expensive and less competitive than general keywords. Google is the largest search engine in the world and a likely first stop for any potential customers who might visit your website. It is also a likely destination for people who leave your website without making a purchase. Google offers several ways to retarget your customers.

» Standard retargeting targets customers as they browse websites and apps that are in Google's Display Network
» Dynamic retargeting targets customers with specific products or messages based on their browsing history with you
» Mobile retargeting targets people who have used your mobile app or website while they are using other mobile apps or websites in Google's network
» Search retargeting targets people who have visited your site when they search for related products on Google
» Video retargeting finds your customers on YouTube, which is owned by Google, and shows them video ads before they watch a video

The nice thing about all three of these methods is that they offer you a great deal of leeway when it comes to choosing who to target – and how to target them. Retargeting best practices suggest that it is best to target customers based on specific actions they take on your website rather than using general targeting. When you remind customers that they have items in their shopping cart or that they were interested in a specific product, you greatly increase the chances that they will return to your site – and make a purchase.

DIY
WEBSITE
AUDIT

HOW DOES YOUR SITE MEASURE UP?

Technology evolves quickly. The software that's new today is dated in a few months. What we see as cutting-edge web design this week may seem antiquated by this time next year.

HOW WEBSITES HAVE CHANGED

In the early days of the internet, the only connection option available was dial-up. That meant that every site out there had to be designed with speed in mind. Slow modems didn't allow for image-heavy sites or fancy design features. Most websites were all text, and the page structures were simple too.

Over time, web designers started to use table-based layouts that enabled them to split a single page into sections, making it slightly easier for users to find the information they wanted. These layouts had their drawbacks, but they were a definite improvement over the earlier designs.

The invention of Flash marked a huge breakthrough in web design, as did the gradual speeding up of internet connections. Things like graphics and videos became commonplace. Additional technological advances include the advent of CSS and

Web 2.0, both of which allowed for more sophisticated design techniques. Web sites grew, encompassing many pages and various types of content.

Today's websites are remarkably sophisticated compared to those early sites. They allow for elegant designs and seamless user experiences.

WHY WEBSITE AUDITS ARE IMPORTANT

What is a website audit, and why does it matter? An audit looks at every aspect of your website, from content and design to the user experience. It helps to determine whether your website is functioning properly. A thorough audit can enable you to find potential problems including slow load times, broken links, and other issues that may take away from your site's usability.

Every business needs to do a website audit periodically. Think of it as a check-up for your site – its annual physical examination. Regular audits will ensure that you catch problems early, before they turn into a real problem for you or your customers.

While there are certainly companies who will audit your website for a price, you can do an audit on your own if you prefer. All you need is a clear idea of how to do it.

HOW TO AUDIT YOUR WEBSITE

Auditing your website isn't difficult to do, but it is meticulous, detailed work. You need to be prepared to look at every aspect of your site, from the design and content to technical things like the user experience. Here are the things you need to check.

Load times are hugely important – in fact, research shows that most web users will navigate away from a page if it takes more than four seconds to load, or if it loads improperly. In order to properly check load times, you need to do it from a variety of devices and web browsers. You should check it from a computer and preferably several smartphones with different operating systems. You should also check from different browsers, including Internet Explorer, Google Chrome, and Firefox. Time your site on each, making note of how long it takes to load. If your site is not supporting traffic from a particular browser, make note of that too.

1. The next thing to check is navigability. In theory, any page on your site could be a landing page. You need to make sure that it is easy to navigate back to your home page from every page on your site. Many companies make their logo a link that will return users to the home page. Alternatively, you can have a "Home" button that appears on the menu at the top of the page, or on the right margin. Your menu placement is important too. Users will expect to see your menu at the top of the page, either permanently displayed or as a drop-down box, or on the right side of the page. Don't make people search for your menu. You need to check every link on your menu to make sure each one works.

2. Related to navigability is the issue of links. The links on your site, whether they lead to another area of your site or to an outside site, should be clear and easy to identify. Sometimes companies make the mistakes of having their links appear in the same color as the rest of the text, which means that users will not be able to recognize a link unless their mouse is placed over it. Your links should be a different color from your text, and you need to test each one to make sure it works. Make note of any broken links so you can fix them later.

3. The user experience is another important thing to test. How easy is it to opt in to your list or to make a purchase? The experience should be seamless and intuitive. For this part of the process, it may be helpful to ask a friend who isn't familiar with your site to walk through a subscription or purchase, especially if you have been over it many times. The best way to tell if your site is user friendly is to have someone who has not used it give it a try. Have them make note of anything that is confusing or counterintuitive.

4. A thorough review of your content. You should ask yourself the following questions:

- Is your content relevant and interesting?
- Does it offer value to your customers?
- Is any of your content outdated or inaccurate?
- Is your content free of spelling and grammatical errors?
- Is your content readable, with plenty of white space, images, and other things like bulleted lists?
- Are you using different kinds of content, including text, photos, infographics, and videos?
- Is each page of your website optimized for a single keyword? Keywords aren't as important as they used to be, but local

keywords that include your geographical location are still essential if you want to rank for local search.

- Are you using your tags in a smart way? Your title tag, page name, H1 tag, and image tags all represent opportunities to use your keywords and make it easy for people to find your site.

Make a note of any content that needs to be rewritten, updated, or removed.

5. Finally, the design elements of your site. Here are some of the things to keep in mind:

- Is your color scheme relevant to your brand and pleasing to the eye? A lot of web designers use garish colors thinking that they will attract attention. However, if your site is painful to view, people are not going to stay on the page. You need to think about how a first-time visitor will experience your site.
- Are your font choices appropriate for your business and easy to read? Readability should always be your first concern when it comes to font choice. It's perfectly acceptable to use a fancy or unusual font selectively, but the majority of your content should be in a clear, sans serif font. Most

experts recommend a font size of at least 14 points for maximum readability.

- Are your images relevant and striking? You may use stock photos if you prefer, but it's also worth considering hiring a pro to take some photos of you and your business. Most web users are pretty sophisticated and know a stock photo when they see one. Make sure that whatever pictures you choose include some human faces to personalize your company.
- How many pages do you have? Ideally, you want to have a home page, an "About Us" page, and a "Contact Us" page at the bare minimum. You should also consider adding a blog, and individual pages talking about your products or services.
- Have you included social following and sharing buttons in easy-to-find places?

As you can see, a website audit may end up taking several days to complete. You will have to be meticulous and keep track of the things you have reviewed. If you don't have the technical know-how to fix the problems you find, remember that you can always hire a designer to correct them for you. However, platforms like WordPress make it very easy for non-designers to put together a website that will meet all of their needs.

KEEP YOUR LIST ENGAGED AFTER THEY SUBSCRIBE WITH THESE
5 STRATEGIES

t is a must for every small business to have an email list or newsletter. Email marketing is still one of the most effective ways to increase brand awareness and engage with your customers. However, it is not enough simply to have an email list and send out an occasional message. In order to take full advantage of the power of email marketing, you need to find ways to engage the people on your list. You need to keep them interested in you and your product or service if you want to convert them into paying customers.

Fortunately, there are plenty of easy ways to do that. Here are five foolproof ideas to try.

PUT VALUE FIRST

The first thing you can do to increase subscriber engagement is to forget about trying to sell them anything – for the most part. What do I mean by that? The fact is that very few people subscribe to a list in the hopes of being subjected to a series of hardcore sales pitches. They subscribe because they want to be informed and entertained.

Think of the way you feel when you walk into a store. Do you want a salesperson who immediately pounces on you and starts trying to convince you to buy everything in sight? Or would you prefer a low-key approach from a salesperson who might give you some information, but on the whole, lets you look around the store and come to them when you're ready to buy? If you're like most people, you would greatly prefer the latter experience – and so would the people who subscribe to your list.

With that in mind, keep your focus on providing value to your subscribers. Share some insights about your industry, provide them with helpful hints or tools to solve a problem they have, or make a short video demonstrating some innovative ways to use your product. It's perfectly acceptable to include a call to action at the end, but the bulk of your message should be focused on your customer – not on you.

DRAW THEM IN WITH YOUR SUBJECT LINE

One mistake a lot of companies make is not giving any thought to the subject line they use for their email list. The words you choose are important. You want to make it clear that your email is a newsletter if it is one, or give some indication of what readers can expect to find when they open it. Research shows that vague subject lines do not get the same open rates as specific ones, so you need to be clear.

Another thing to keep in mind is the length of your subject line. One study showed that short subject lines had the highest open rate. Your best bet is to use a short declarative sentence or a provocative question to entice people to open your email. Aim for no more than 50 characters for your subject line, including spaces – 30 characters if your primary target is mobile customers.

The final thing to remember about subject lines is that your subject line must be an accurate reflection of what readers will find in your email. Stay away from so-called clickbait headlines – your subscribers will not thank you if you promise something in your subject line and then fail to deliver on it in the email itself.

USE IMAGES CAREFULLY

MAKE CAREFUL USE OF IMAGES

What do your emails look like? Are they big blocks of impenetrable text, or are you doing what you can to make them easy to read? One of the best ways to make your newsletter readable is to use a few compelling images to break up the text. A good guideline to use is to have 70% text and 30% images. That ratio will ensure that your email will make it through most spam filters.

If you do use images, make sure that they are relevant to your content. They should be large enough for people to see clearly, but not so large that they make the email difficult to open or slow to load. Internet users are notoriously impatient and if the images take a long time to appear they may just delete your email instead of reading it.

Finally, don't forget to use your alt image tags to good effect. If your pictures are a manageable size then the majority of your subscribers should be able to see them. However, the alt image tag will describe what is in the picture in the event that the pictures don't load properly.

USE SMART DESIGN ELEMENTS

The design of your email can be just as important as the content. Don't expect that a plain text email with no formatting is going to draw people in. Instead, make sure to do the following:

1. Put your company logo at the top right of the email. That way, people who open your email will know immediately who it came from.
2. Make sure that the colors in your email reflect your branding. People tend to notice and respond to colors. If your website is in shades of blue and green, then use the same colors in your email.
3. The width of your email should be no more than 650 pixels. If you decide to go with a two-column layout, make sure that your sidebar is on the right.
4. Use a readable sans serif font. Sometimes marketers are tempted to use fancy fonts. However, keep in mind that your primary concern should be readability.

If you keep these four design tips in mind, you'll have a highly readable and compelling newsletter.
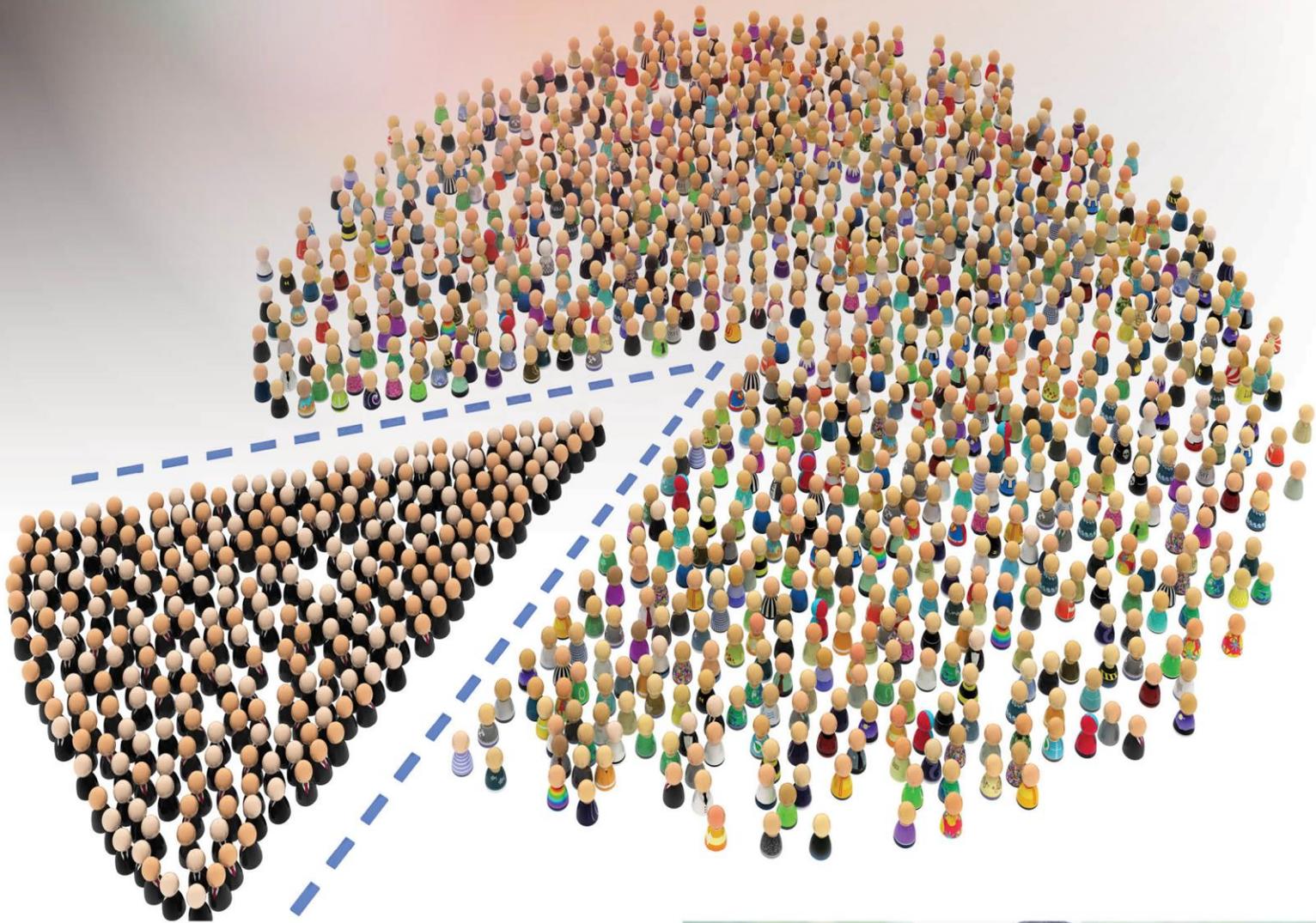
SEGMENT YOUR LIST

Finally, do what you can to segment your list so that the people who receive each email are those who have a genuine interest in its contents. Some companies have multiple newsletters – for example, an apparel store might send out separate newsletters for women's and men's clothing, or for accessories.

You can offer people the opportunity to opt-in to email for particular topics when they first sign up for your list. Alternatively, you might send them a welcome email that gives them the option to do it. Either way, you will increase engagement and your email open rate when you give subscribers some choice in terms of what they see from you.
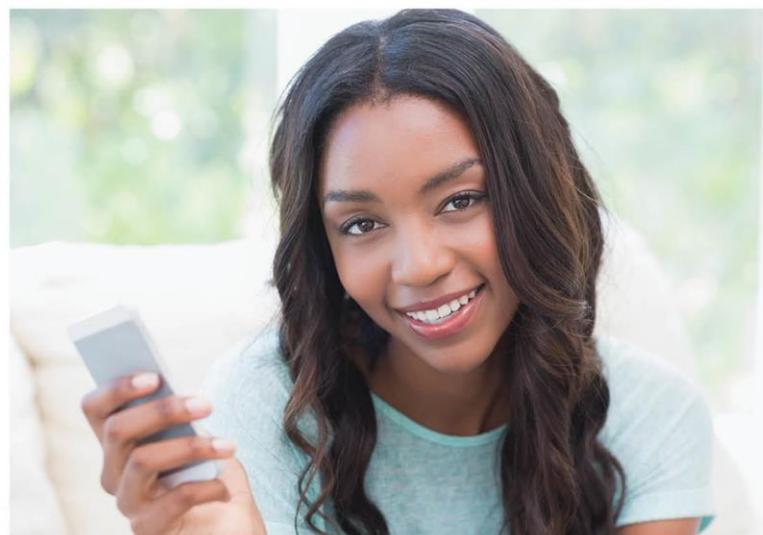
Having an email list is important, but the key to using it successfully is to find ways to actively engage your readers. As long as you stay away from being overly promotional and give them an email that's relevant and compelling to read you will be able to keep your customers interested and engaged in your business.

THE 7 DEADLY SINS OF LOCAL MARKETING

When it comes to marketing, are you a sinner or a saint? Many local business owners handle their own marketing in an effort to save money. While the internet certainly makes it easy for people without a ton of experience to market their companies, a lack of knowledge can lead to mistakes that can have a significant impact on the return you get on your marketing investment.

With that in mind, let's take a look at the seven deadly sins of local marketing, and what you can do to avoid them.

SIN #1:

### YOUR WEBSITE DOESN'T LIST YOUR PHONE NUMBER AND EMAIL ADDRESS ON YOUR HOME PAGE

This first sin might seem like a no-brainer, but you'd be amazed by how many companies make this mistake. You need to make it easy for people to contact you. They shouldn't have to search your website for your contact information. Put it front and center, and you will greatly increase the chances that the people who land on your site will reach out to you for more information if they need it. If you skip this step, you may end up losing visitors as a result.

SIN #2:

YOU'RE PUTTING ALL YOUR MARKETING EGGS IN ONE BASKET

Marketing can be a lot of work, especially if you have to keep up with multiple ads and services. However, a lot of small business owners make the mistake of sticking to one, relatively easy marketing technique and using it exclusively. For example, they may build up a following on Facebook and think they can get away with not using any other marketing methods.

Why is this a sin? Well, what happens if your audience leaves Facebook? It might seem unlikely that such a thing would happen, but it's possible. Trends come and go. Websites that were popular yesterday are non-existent today. You need to be thinking ahead and doing what you can to get the word out in more than one way. That doesn't mean you have to spend all your time marketing, but does mean that you need to diversify. In the example, I just gave, the person who's using Facebook might decide to start a blog, build an email list, or even try to get an ad up on Google by bidding on a local keyword.

it
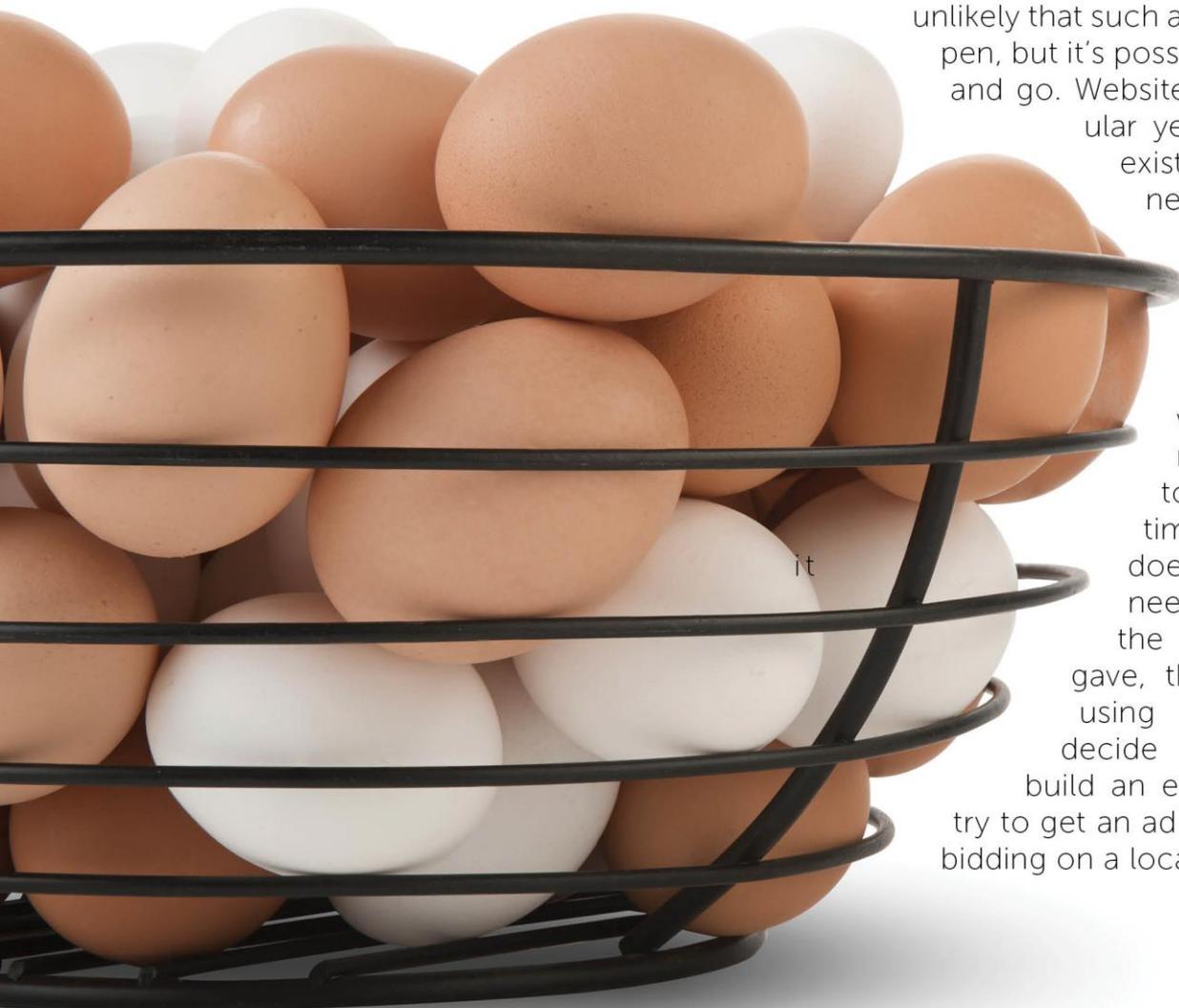
SIN #3:

YOU HAVEN'T CLAIMED YOUR SOCIAL MEDIA PAGES

You don't have to be active on every social media site out there – in fact, we'll talk about that in a minute. What you do need to do, though, is to take a few minutes to claim your business name on all relevant sites and put up some basic information about your business. If a potential customer looks for you on Instagram, you want them to find accurate information including your address, telephone number, email contact information, and business hours. If you don't claim your business, your leads could be looking at a page run by a stranger, someone who doesn't have your best interests in mind.

SIN #4:

YOU ARE OVERUSING – OR UNDERUSING – SOCIAL MEDIA

There is no denying that social media is an important marketing tool for every local business. However, there's a right way and a wrong way to use it. Sometimes business owners tell themselves that they don't need social media. That's a mistake because even your most loyal customers may like to have the opportunity to follow you on Facebook or Twitter.

On the flip side, some companies make the mistake of thinking that they need to be active on every social media site. The problem with this approach is that some social media sites are going to be more relevant to your business than others. For example, a company whose products cater almost exclusively to young men can probably afford not to be active on a site like Pinterest, whose users are mostly women.

A good rule of thumb is to find out where your customers are, either by creating a customer profile or polling your customers, and be active on the sites where they are most likely to spend their time. On the other sites, you can simply claim your page as mentioned above.

SIN #5:

YOU'RE NOT MANAGING YOUR REVIEWS

Online reviews are hugely important for local businesses. Sites like Yelp, Angie's List, and Google make it easy for people who frequent your business to post reviews of it. Research shows that over 80% of all consumers rely on online reviews prior to making a purchase,

yet many local business owners don't do everything they can to ensure that their reviews are helping them.

The first thing you need to do is claim your business listing on all local review sites. Customers can leave reviews even if a business hasn't created a listing, so if you haven't checked, you may be surprised to see how many reviews you have. You should check your existing profile to make sure all relevant information, including your contact information, hours, and prices, are correct.

The second thing to do is come up with a system for responding to reviews. It's a good idea to monitor your accounts. You can reply to positive reviews with a simple thank you, but negative reviews require a bit more finesse. The most successful responses are those that remain positive. Try to take the conversation offline if you can, and do whatever you need to do to resolve the situation.

SIN #6:

YOU'RE NOT MONITORING YOUR COMPANY NAME

Your online reputation consists of more than the things that you post for your company. You also have to keep in mind things like reviews, social media mentions, and more. Many local business owners think that if they control the content they release, they're doing everything they can to maintain a stellar reputation. That's simply not true.

An easy fix for this solution is to use monitoring software like Trackur to keep an eye on what people are saying about your company. Positive statements and comments may not require much response, although it's not a bad idea to chime in when you can. Negative statements and comments give you an opportunity to set the record straight. The bigger effort you make to track mentions of your company, the more likely it is that your reputation will be an accurate reflection of you and your brand.

SIN #7:

YOU'RE NOT STAYING TRUE TO YOUR BRAND

Everything you do online reflects on your brand. If you have more than one person posting on your behalf, whether it's on your blog, website, or social media, you need to have a clearly-defined strategy that ensures that everything related to your company reflects your brand. That means that your colors and fonts should reflect your logo. However, it also means that the tone of what you post needs to be true to your brand's personality.

Creating a customer profile can help identify your core customers, and you can tailor your brand to them. Look at some big companies such as Red Bull and Rolls Royce to get an idea of what I mean by tone. Red Bull uses brash, hip language that reflects their brand and audience; while Rolls Royce uses elevated language that speaks to their core customers.
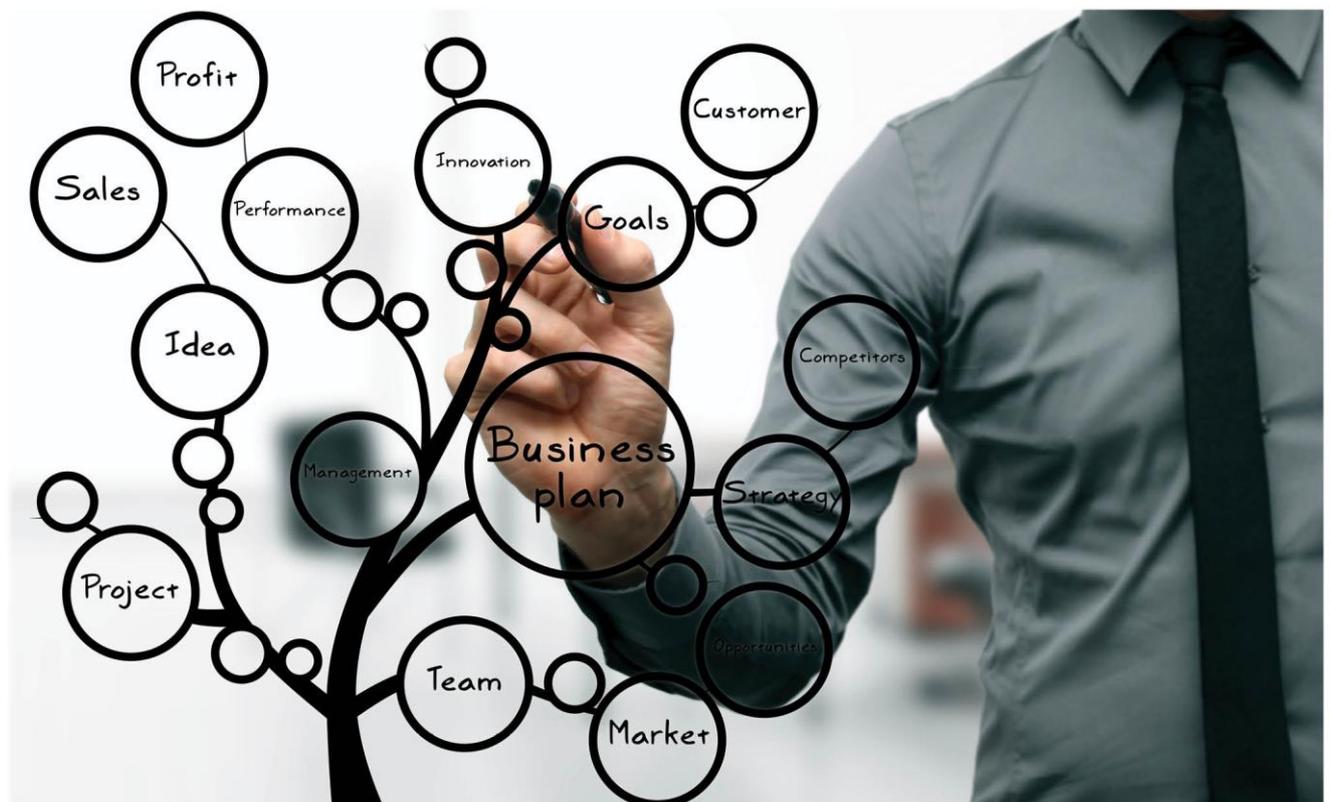
These seven sins are not the only mistakes made by local companies when it comes to marketing, but they are potentially the most harmful. Fortunately, they are all easy to rectify. If you recognize any of these mistakes from your own marketing efforts, take the simple steps necessary to fix them – and be a marketing saint, not a sinner.

YOU HAVE AN INCREDIBLE BUSINESS.

LET US HELP YOU TELL THE WORLD ABOUT IT.

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