



LOCAL MARKETING 20 Ideas PLUS!

THE MANSFIELD AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE



Here's how we can help you at the Chamber...

Whether owning your own business or you're running a business it is downright hard especially as fast as our world continues to change. You deserve to be supported. To have the resources you need to lead a successful and growing business.

We have many marketing venues including our website, social media and email marketing. We likely have a larger following than your business so any exposure the chamber gives to your business can be greatly beneficial.

Bottom line it's all about connecting with your audience to build your brand, drive website traffic and **increase sales**.

Our new members with the Enhanced Membership Package receive an initial announcement on our website with your own page, an email blast announcement, a video posted on our YouTube channel and a posting on our social media.

You will also receive the opportunity to attend a workshop "Marketing Your Message" an introduction to our Marketing Package and program for our members. This is offered three times a year.

Local Marketing Benefits

01

46% of all Google searches are looking for local information.
(GoGulf)

02

72% of consumers that did a local search visited a store within five miles.
(HubSpot)

03

88% of searches for local businesses on a mobile device either call or visit the business within 24 hours.
(Nectafy)

05

Search result information will send 70% of consumers to a physical store.
(Joel House Search Media)

04

18% of local smartphone searches led to a purchase within a day, whereas only 7% of non-local searches led to a sale.
(Think with Google)

Local marketing is all about connecting with the right customers in your specific area. We've got so many different options when it comes to running marketing campaigns. The thing is, they don't always apply to local businesses.

With the right tactics, reaching your customers doesn't have to be difficult. Follow this complete guide on local marketing to learn the most effective ideas and strategies for marketing local businesses. Powerful local marketing is easy if you know where to focus.

Let's get started!

What is Local Marketing?

Marketing local businesses is very different from marketing any other kind of business. Local marketing is focused on reaching a very specific community. The goal of local marketing is to attract customers within a dedicated local area. This is the physical location that the business covers.

When you look for marketing advice, most of the guides you find will be focused on global marketing. This applies to businesses that have a bigger reach and can target a broader market. However, local marketing is very different. It needs to be far more specific and focused.

Local marketing is generally focused on brick-and-mortar stores. This is because these businesses have a limited reach of target customers. If your business has a physical location, then it will need to pay attention to local marketing, which is also known as neighborhood marketing.

Location-based marketing ensures your business reaches the right target customers. Yes, it would be amazing if your local bakery has millions of Instagram followers, but this doesn't mean that any of these followers will actually become customers. Instead, local marketing focuses on the small local community that will be able to realistically end up in your business location.

In order to survive and grow, your business needs customers. In order to get customers, you need to promote your business. In the good old days, this was a matter of deciding between a flyer, a brochure, a postcard, or an ad in the local newspaper.

Let me start by saying there is "no magic silver bullet" except, persistent effort. And for a local community - you must get "in" the community. Volunteer, where can you help others?

You can't promote and advertise your business effectively until you take these two steps:

- **Plan your marketing.** To market your business successfully you need a planned, organized approach. Hit or miss marketing wastes time and money. Start by defining your marketing strategy and setting a budget.
- **Identify your best prospects,** and then determine the best promotional strategies to reach them. Be as specific as possible. Is the decision-maker the CTO of the company, the director of human resources, the paralegal filing new business LLC's or a 37-year-old working mom? Will you find them on Twitter, Pinterest, Facebook, YouTube, or Instagram? What about in-person networking at local business meetings or community organizations? What about advertising? Will customers be searching for your type of product on Google or Bing? Do they look for coupons in newspapers? Do you want to start promoting your business to them at the start of their buying cycle, or when they're about ready to pull out their credit card and make the purchase? Write your answers down and refer to them before you start any new marketing tactic. Use this marketing plan worksheet to gather your information.

Learn How To Promote Your Business Online

Digital marketing isn't an option—it's a necessity. Whether you sell turquoise jewelry, empanadas, or asbestos removal services, you need to promote and advertise where your customers are searching for what you sell. And that's online. Here are ways to accomplish that affordably.

If you don't have a website, get one set up. A working website is critical for marketing your business and for making your brand known even if your business has a big social media following. You're going to need to get a business domain because depending on what you sell, your website serves as a lead generation tool, online brochure, catalog, and information source for your potential customers. You have complete control over how you promote your products and services on your website and how long promotions and other content is visible. You don't have that control with social media. If you can't afford to have someone custom-design your website, set up your site using one of the builders like Wix, Squarespace, or Godaddy that provide templates and tools that make it easy to create a basic website. Whether you choose a ready-to-use template or have someone build a site for you, be sure the design is responsive. (In other words, that it looks good and is easy to read on mobile devices as well as on desktop and laptop computers.)



MARKETING

1. Engage with the Community

It may sound obvious, but getting involved with the local community is crucial to local marketing. Another great thing: community engagement costs little. Examples of this strategy include participating in community festivals, contests and seasonal events. Or your business could sponsor local events like high school music and drama performances, or sponsor sports teams. Another example involves small business owners volunteering time with charity and causes locally. You'll meet plenty of people, establish goodwill by doing something good, and build brand awareness.

2. Maximize Your Local Business Listings

More than half of small businesses still haven't claimed their Google My Business listing according to one study. They are missing out on a valuable local marketing strategy. On your profile you can include your business name, phone number, address including zip code, directions, hours of operation, and a link to your website. Savvy small businesses also add content such as enticing photos. It's free visibility in the world's most powerful search engine.

The first step is to claim your Google My Business listing and then actively manage it. This also gets your location listed in Google maps. There are also other places online to get listed, including Bing Places and yellow page directories. Get started these top three:

- [Google My Business](#)
- [Bing Places](#)
- [Apple Maps](#)

3. Focus on Local SEO

Some of the most technically-advanced local marketing campaigns involve leveraging the web to get foot traffic to go to your store or physical location. You can also leverage the web for carryout or ecommerce orders. Potential customers are searching on the internet and on mobile devices for services and products in your local area. You want them to find your company easily.

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Google My Business is a good start, but local search engine optimization (SEO) encompasses much more. Local search engine optimization also involves optimizing your website pages to appear prominently in search results. Go for search engine rankings for a keyword or keywords that consumers search on to find businesses like yours. Create good content and you may attract links and traffic to your website from local newspaper websites, blogs and even social media sites like Twitter.

If you are not sure how to improve search engine visibility or don't have time, hire a local search professional. Local search is a specialty area. So when you screen SEO agencies and consultants, ask about their local search experience and results helping small local companies.

4. Make Local Business Contacts

Partnering with other businesses in complementary but noncompetitive industries is a great local marketing strategy to expand your network. Join the chamber of commerce or another local business association to make contacts and network with your peers. Other small businesses in your town or city may need your products or services. For example, if you run a local web design firm, you may find new clients needing website help. Or if you are starting a local bake shop, perhaps there are local cafes or restaurants interested in carrying your tasty confections.

You can also cooperate on referrals to bring in more customers than you could on your own. Perhaps you could combine marketing efforts with other small local businesses on media advertising buys. Or produce local events featuring food from local restaurants, bakeries and wineries where each participant promotes the event.

5. Create a Loyalty Program

Customers love to feel valued! A customer loyalty program rewards people who buy or take other actions. An old school method is to print loyalty cards and hand them out to customers. Then use a unique-shaped hole punch to record the number of purchases. For example, a customer who buys 10 coffees at your cafe gets the 11th coffee free. Or someone visiting your barber shop a certain number of times gets a free trim. You can also go high tech and deploy a loyalty app for mobile devices for your store marketing. Customers gain rewards for activity through the app.

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6. Increase Customer Referrals

If you need a boost in word-of-mouth marketing, why not encourage your customers to do it for you with an irresistible referral program? It's simple to start. All you need to do is offer a tempting freebie or special discount for the original customer and the person they refer. Referral programs can prove to be a very effective local marketing idea because it's a force multiplier. It gets others helping you.

7. Make Your Staff Your Emissaries

Make your employees the centerpiece of local marketing by involving them in your referral program. Offer a bonus to non-sales staff for referring new customers.

Encourage staff to be part of your content marketing tactics by creating a fun behind-the-scenes video of a day at work to post to the company YouTube channel or embed in blog posts. Ask employees if they would like to be featured in TV advertisements.

8. Put Marketing Collateral in Public Places

Reach people in your community with marketing messages in public areas. Here again it can help to reach out to other businesses and organizations in the city or town where you operate. Will local restaurants, cafes and supermarkets let you put flyers or business cards in the entrance or tack them onto a community bulletin board? This works best if your business complements the other company. For example, if you own a graphic design or photography studio, perhaps a local art gallery or non-profit arts organization would let you leave marketing material in their establishment. Make sure to get permission.

9. Engage with a Local Audience on Social Media

Social media marketing can work well for local business visibility — if you do it right. The trick is to target your local audience. With hundreds of millions of active monthly users, Instagram provides plenty of opportunities for brand awareness. Include your location in social media profiles. Make sure to tag your location in posts to get more engagement from local users. Be sure to focus on the kind of social media site that attracts your target audience. For example, LinkedIn attracts business users, and could be good if you sell to other businesses. Working with influencers on influencer marketing could help you reach more social media users, too.

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10. Use Targeting Tools for Online Marketing

Social media platforms such as Facebook offer many ways to target customers locally. You can use social media advertising features to 'boost' posts, setting parameters to target customers within a certain number of miles. Also use Facebook's "Create the Location" feature. Hit "Check In" when creating a new post and enter information including location. You can also post location stickers in your Instagram stories and location hashtags in Instagram posts.

Google Ads can also be targeted to your local market. Start a Google ads campaign where advertising appears in search engines and on content sites across the web. Use a targeted local marketing landing page and remarketing to remind past customers to return.

11. Tell Your Story

Tell the story of your business or your personal story as the founder. Telling a story generates human interest and makes your brand name memorable. Telling your story helps prospects relate to your business making them more likely to buy from you. An interesting story of how your business got started also cements the bond that existing customers have, making them less likely to abandon you for the shiny new chain down the street.

Tell your story in TV ads, online videos, blog posts or your About Us page. Another example: a local family restaurant might tell their business history in autographed photographs hung on the wall. For founder stories, remember:

- If you're from the area, emphasize your ties to the community. Talk about growing up locally, what you love most about the area, and what the residents mean to you.
- Entrepreneurs new to an area can talk about why they chose to move there.

12. Hold an Event

There are at least two ways to use community events for local marketing. One is to produce the event yourself. Throw a party or a launch event for a new product and invite local community members to come have a look. Offer free food, drinks and entertainment. Another local marketing technique is to team up with other businesses and create a larger event promoting all of your products or services. For example, maybe area restaurants, bakeries and wineries could set up a community festival to market regional food and beverages. It's great marketing for local business visibility.

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13. Get Reviews and Testimonials

Local customers want to use a business they feel they can trust, which you can demonstrate with positive reviews and testimonials. Never pay for reviews — it will backfire. Also, be careful about directly soliciting reviews from customers. This is frowned on by Yelp and other communities. Instead, you might suggest people generally let others know what they think of your products or services. This encourages customers to leave a review without directly asking for one on a particular site. Become aware of the rules so you don't step over the line.

Monitor social media and review sites to see what people are saying about your business. Reach out to customers who have had a bad customer service experience and see what you can do to make it right. Others will see and appreciate your effort. And you just may turn a poor review into a positive one if your customer knows you are making an attempt to address their concerns.

14. Send Out Targeted Email Campaigns

Email can prove one of the simplest and most cost effective local marketing steps. It reminds past shoppers to return to your store and encourages social media followers to make the trip to your door. 75% of marketers find that targeted personalization increases customer engagement. So as part of your local marketing strategies, make sure you are tailoring campaigns locally. Start a local email list by asking everyone coming to your store for their email address, and request permission to send them communications. Instead of a general email newsletter, send discounts designed to lure people into your store to buy.

15. Launch a Coupon Campaign

Choose a site like Groupon or a local coupon paper mailer like ValPak for local marketing with coupons. Coupons bring in a host of new customers and help with brand awareness. But be careful! The customers these campaigns bring in are sometimes just looking for a bargain and won't ever become regulars. Set up offers that encourage repeat buying or bulk buys, if you can.

16. Offer a Free Consultation or Advice

This is a great way to demonstrate your expertise in your field, while getting potential new customers interested in what you do. They may come for free advice now, but they'll likely come back to make a purchase later. A free consultation or advice such as on a blog or YouTube channel provides a glimpse of your service or product at no cost. For example, if you own an accounting service, ask the local library if you can spend one evening offer a free tax workshop.

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17. Get in the Newspaper

A prime local marketing opportunity is the local newspaper. Obviously you can buy advertising and send press releases to editors. But get more creative. Call or send an email pitch offering yourself as a source to local journalists as an industry expert. For example, if you own a physical therapy practice or a local gym, you might be a good person to interview about healthy ways to exercise.

Follow important trends in your industry so that you can pitch topics to the local press. Help them localize big stories by offering a local perspective. For example, the owner of a local garden center might prove a great source for a story on a drought or invasive insect. Be sure to provide your phone number as reporters on deadline need a fast response within a few hours. Or sign up to be a source for journalists through Help a Reporter Out (HARO). Go to HARO source to get started. Or try Qwoted, another place to list yourself as a source.

18. Win Over Local Bloggers and Online Journalists

Every community has local blogs and news websites. Reach out to the people who write for these sites. Why? Well, first of all the articles they write about your business can drive traffic to your website or foot traffic to your store. Local readers will see your business mentioned. Beyond that, appearing in local website publications and blogs also helps your local SEO. Remember search engines typically index local websites and blogs. Showing up in local websites and blogs ensures your business will show up in other searches online with a relevant local connection.

19. Get Yourself on Local TV

Local marketing through television appearances may be easier than you think. The key? Offer expertise. If you run a local accounting firm, offer to appear on a news segment where you explain the latest changes to the tax code. If you run a restaurant, offer to demonstrate a signature recipe on a local cooking segment. Pitch the idea to your local station as a way to benefit their viewers. Don't make the pitch about promoting your business.

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It's a reality, however, that local media may be more receptive to businesses that already advertise. Depending on your marketing budget, consider buying local air time or ad space on the station's website to get on their radar. At the very least, you'll get advertising out of it.

20. Partner with Another Business

Try a joint venture or joint local marketing arrangement with other businesses. Beyond casual referrals, this involves developing a deeper ongoing relationship with other local businesses to drive sales. Local farmers and other food producers do this when they unite to create a local farmer's market. If you own a hair salon, you might invite a nail technician to share your space increasing the number of people both businesses draw in. Or local healthcare providers like physical therapists, occupational therapists, dietitians or chiropractors might operate under one roof offering more opportunities for referrals (subject to professional and ethical rules, of course).

Get Started

Marketing local businesses is an important subset of marketing overall. But don't be intimidated and don't overthink things. It's better to experiment and try new local marketing techniques than to wait for the perfect technique. Get out there and take action.

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One of the best ways to build rapport with local communities and potential customers is to develop a strategy to get noticed in your area's markets. Getting your name out in nearby business circles can go a long way toward building rapport and opening up new opportunities. Yet, not all strategies are created equal, especially when talking about smaller markets.

Be Everywhere Online

Create, claim and update all the local business listings and profiles. In addition to your website, be sure you maintain an updated and active Google local business listing, a Facebook page and any other site that offers local profiles for your industry. When a user searches for "my town" + "your service," ensure that they see you everywhere. This builds trust and authenticity search results.

Put a Face to the Company

In a small local market, your company can stand out by putting a face to the company or product. People have an easier time trusting a company when they know who's behind the curtain. The more they trust you, the more likely they'll be to buy. So, make sure to get out in the community, introduce yourself and interact with others. If you put up local ads, consider adding a photo of yourself as well

Give Away Samples

In a small local market, I find that giving away free samples of your product (if that's possible) can do wonders. There's a local chocolate maker that we worked with that used this strategy effectively. They hired two students at minimum wage to give away chocolate samples along with a brochure in some of the busiest intersections of the city at rush hour. Rinse and repeat.

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Volunteer for the Long Haul

The best way to be noticed in a small community is to be a great community member. Be present, support causes that matter and make an impact over the long haul. It's one thing to sponsor jerseys for a softball team, it's another to spend time every week helping a local organization. When you make an impact, people will notice you, and in the process learn about your business

Encourage Reviews From Existing Customers

What steps are you taking to gather feedback from your existing audience? If you aren't leveraging them as part of your solution, then you're missing out on an opportunity to be seen and heard in your local community. People love to search for reviews before trying out new products, services, businesses, you name it. If you don't have many reviews to your name, it's time to start encouraging them more

Focus on Voice Search SEO

Voice search SEO is important when it comes to getting your small, local business noticed. Start thinking about the types of requests your customers might make when searching for your product or service with their smart home device or smartphone and shift your SEO strategy to focus on those new keywords. It's also important that you add your business to places like Google My Business and Yelp.

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Send out Newsletters

The best way I have found here in my local market is to be placed in a newsletter that is available to consumers in restaurants, vendors, coffee shops, etc. This professional ad will allow you some good credibility and visibility in the market.

Use Direct Mail

Millennials love direct mail and it works on a local level to target those specific customers and prospects. It does so in a way that covers a significant territory for relatively little money and high return.

Attend Local Events

Local events like conferences, trade fairs and markets provide a good way for a small business to get noticed in their community. They can personally interact with locals and start building trust.

Distribute Flyers and Buy Local Ad Space

It's a good idea to make yourself known to the community. Using traditional marketing materials will allow you to accelerate the growth of your business and bring in the local traffic. Often these ad spaces are easy to work with and will give you a good boost. Google ads also help you cover the search intent traffic that is already looking for you.

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Create Helpful Videos

Through Facebook Ads, you can easily target people in a local community. Instead of creating a traditional ad that tries to make a sale, try creating helpful videos for your community that position you as someone of value. At the end of the video tell them what you do and where they can find you. Put these videos out weekly and spend \$1 to \$5 per day advertising them, and you will be a local celebrity.

Embrace Branding

In many cases, small local businesses are more likely to be relaxed and not focus as heavily on brand identity. If you want to stand out from everyone else, then you need to identify your brand identity and stick with it as your company evolves. Once you become known locally, it's only a matter of time until you have a recognizable brand on your hands.

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