

# The Small Business Guide to Marketing

Marketing is an essential part of growing a business. As a small business owner, you probably don't have a lot of time or treasure to spend on it.

Luckily, there are a few no- or low-cost things you can do that will provide you with a solid foundation to build your marketing program

We've put together this handy step-by-step guide to help you get set your marketing on the right course today!

## Everything you need to run a business

If you haven't signed up for Homebase yet, head over to [Joinhomebase.com](https://joinhomebase.com) to get started.

Just follow the prompts, answer a few simple questions, and you'll be on your way

### STEP 1:

## Define your audience and market

The first step in any marketing effort is to understand who you're trying to reach and sell your product or service to. This will require a little market research, but also a little brainstorming.

Here are a few steps to take to put your small business on the road to marketing success:

### Define your audiences

Define each audience by some basic demographics: Age, gender, education level, household income. If you're in B2B, include information such as the industry, company size, and organizational role.

### Conduct market research

Validate your assumptions about your audiences by conducting market research using:

- Current customer interviews
- Focus groups
- Surveys

### Create audience personas

Take all the information you have gathered and developed so far and distill it down into a single page profile of each audience type. This will come in handy and inform your future marketing efforts.

### Consider their pain points

- What obstacles do they face on a daily basis?
- What are they frustrated with?
- What keeps them up at night?
- What do they need to be successful?

### Gather additional details

- What social networks they use
- What websites they visit
- What TV shows, movies and podcasts do they consume?
- What do they do for fun?

### What to include in your audience personas:

- Age
- Gender
- Household income
- Education level
- Preferred social media platforms
- Pain points
- Company size (B2B)
- Company industry (B2B)
- Customer title or role (B2B)

## STEP 2:

# Establish a brand identity

Many people wrongly believe that a brand identity is just a logo. Sure, those are key parts of your brand identity, but really a brand identity is much more than that.

Here's what makes a strong brand identity:

- Logo and tag line (of course!)
- Company values and mission
- Brand voice (i.e. how you talk to your audiences)
- Brand promise
- A color scheme and typography
- Core brand messaging

## STEP 3:

# Leverage low-cost marketing channels

You don't have to spend a lot of money to have a successful marketing strategy. There are plenty of no- to low-cost approaches that can produce significant results.

## Key affordable marketing tactics

- Develop a user-friendly website
- Create SEO-friendly content
- Capture email addresses from website visitors
- Integrate website with social media and local listings
- Be active on social media
- Leverage social media influencers
- Encourage user-generated content

## Nurture those leads!

Use email marketing to nurture your leads using incentives and promotions. Once your list is big enough, consider segmenting your email list based on engagement, activity, and customer persona.

## STEP 4:

# Measure and optimize your marketing

The only way you can tell if your marketing is working is if you measure it. Setting clear, tangible marketing goals and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) is the first step towards succeeding in marketing.

## Decide what metrics to track

Some common metrics businesses track include:

- Website traffic
- Conversions
- Cost of acquisition
- Return on Investment (ROI)
- Social media engagement

## Listen to your metrics

Your metrics can tell you if your marketing efforts are effective and efficient, providing insights into customer behaviors, preferences, and trends.

## Adjust your approach

Something probably isn't working if your marketing metrics are flat (or non-existent). That likely indicates you need to change your approach.

Consider running experiments on new marketing tactics or channels. If it's still not working, you might need to start again from square one and rethink some of your assumptions.

## Don't be afraid of failure

Remember that customers are constantly evolving, and your marketing will need to evolve as they do.

Failure can provide valuable lessons that you can use to refine and optimize your approach.

Remember that marketing isn't like a light switch and can take time to develop.

# Stop waiting for customers to come. Take action today!

Customers won't suddenly arrive at your business. You need to take steps to drive them to it! The good news is that you don't have to spend a lot of money to achieve results. A well-planned and well-executed marketing strategy will attract and convert customers. Start a solid foundation of understanding your audiences, then build out from there. Throw in some experiments to see what sticks. Most importantly, be sure to track all your efforts.

While there's no magic wand that will suddenly make customers love your brand, marketing will pay for itself and then some over time. But the key is to be consistent and make adjustments as you go!

## What are the most cost-effective marketing channels for startups?

Social media marketing, content marketing, and email marketing are often the most cost-effective channels for startups.

However, the most effective channel can vary depending on your target audience.

## How do I create a brand identity on a tight budget?

There are a number of inexpensive options out there. Today, many generative AIs are available that can help you create a good logo. But don't forget that the core of your brand identity has to come from you!

## How can I measure the success of my marketing efforts?

Measurement is the cornerstone of effective marketing. Start by measuring some basic things like website traffic, social media engagement, and leads, and conversions.

## How often should I update my marketing strategy?

You should review your marketing strategy in full at least once per year. However, it's a good idea to review monthly marketing metrics to give you a sense of how your efforts are doing. If you're not seeing results, it's a good idea to reconsider your approach and shift tactics.

## Discover Homebase

Homebase has everything you need to run a successful business.

**Take your time looking around, but here are some features that we recommend testing out:**

- Download the Homebase mobile app to [communicate with your team](#) and view schedules on the go.
- Turn your timesheets into payroll in just a few clicks with [Homebase's full-service payroll](#).
- Grow your team by creating your first job posting and [start hiring](#) within the 'Team' section of your dashboard.
- Discover [integrations](#) that bring all your tools—from point of sale to banking—together with Homebase.