

15 Marketing Secrets for Any Successful Small Business

You've read a bunch of marketing guides and they all say the same thing...

So, how do you know what marketing tactics will actually help you get more customers?

Your business is important, and when you launch it, you need to make sure that you have the right tactics in place for proper business growth.

Generic, boring marketing strategies just won't cut it here. Instead, you'll need a powerful marketing strategy that really helps you stand out from the competition and drive more sales.

Introducing the 15 most valuable marketing secrets and tactics you should be using!

If your business is new, then using these marketing hacks will help you reach a lot more customers with a lot less effort - regardless of what you sell or who you're trying to reach.

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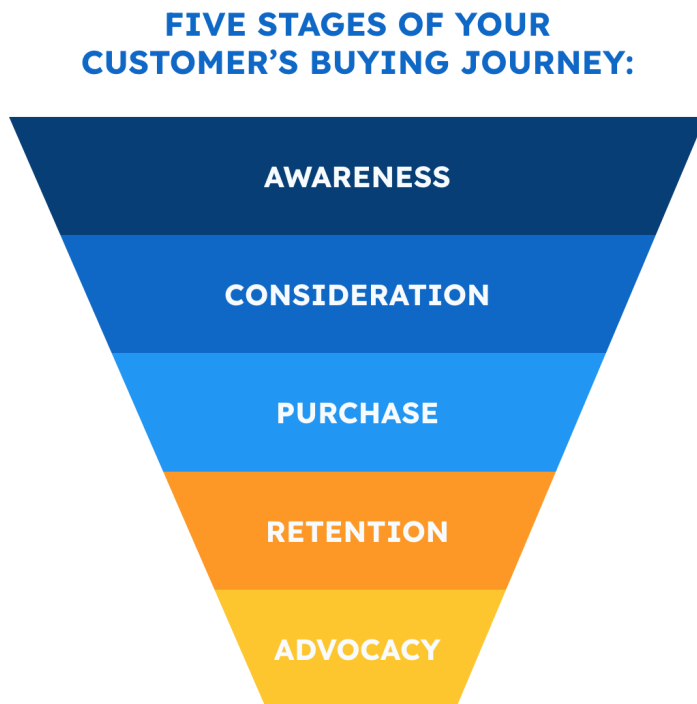
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1. Understand the Customer Journey

Understanding and making the most of the customer journey is essential for small business marketing success.

The customer journey typically involves five stages, as represented in the image below:



When you develop a marketing plan, you need to understand the customer's interests at each stage of this journey and offer relevant content and messaging to match these interests. This will help people move through each stage of the customer journey faster, ultimately generating more sales at the end.

Beyond the initial sale, recognizing that the customer journey continues post-purchase can help you generate more revenue from each customer. Focus on building customer loyalty, maintaining customer relationships, and encouraging repeat purchases. This will help you improve customer satisfaction and maximize [customer lifetime value](#) to drive sustainable business growth.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

1. Map out the customer journey:

- **Identify touchpoints:** List all the interactions a customer can have with your business, both online and offline. These may include website visits, social media engagement, email communication, and in-store visits.
- **Define stages:** Break down the customer journey into stages, such as awareness, consideration, decision-making, and post-purchase.
- **Outline customer actions:** Determine the specific actions a customer takes at each stage, such as researching, comparing products, requesting quotes, making a purchase, or leaving reviews.

2. Identify gaps and optimize the customer journey:

- **Pinpoint pain points:** Identify areas where customers may face challenges or friction in their journey, such as slow website load times, confusing navigation, or lack of customer support.
- **Optimize touchpoints:** Improve the user experience across all touchpoints by implementing changes based on customer feedback. This could involve enhancing website design, streamlining checkout processes, or providing personalized recommendations.

3. Tailor marketing strategies to the customer journey:

- **Develop targeted campaigns:** Create marketing campaigns that align with each stage of the customer journey. For example, awareness-stage campaigns could focus on brand visibility and education, while decision-making-stage campaigns could provide incentives or testimonials to encourage conversions.

- **Personalize your communication:** Use customer data to personalize messaging and offers based on their preferences and past interactions with your business.
- **Measure and improve:** Continuously monitor the effectiveness of your marketing strategies by tracking key performance indicators (KPIs) such as conversion rates, customer satisfaction, and retention. Make adjustments and iterate your marketing efforts based on data-driven insights.

2. Create a Compelling Brand Story

Creating a captivating brand story is a powerful marketing tactic for small businesses.

When crafting your story, focus on your company's values, mission, and what makes you unique. Customers are drawn to stories that connect with them emotionally, so tap into their desires, challenges, and dreams.

Be authentic and show the real people behind your business.

In a world of mass-produced goods, customers crave authenticity. By sharing your journey, values, and purpose, you can build a genuine connection with your customers.

Remember to maintain consistency across all touchpoints, including your website, social media, and packaging. This will reinforce your brand and create a lasting impression.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

One unique and effective strategy for creating a compelling brand story is to follow [the hero's journey](#) structure.

Start with a relatable protagonist (your business or customers), facing a challenge or problem. Show how your business overcomes obstacles, learns, and grows. Highlight your unique selling point and values. End with a successful resolution that benefits customers. Craft a story that engages emotions, resonates with your target audience, and builds trust. Remember to be authentic and consistent across all touchpoints.

Your brand story should inspire, connect, and leave a lasting impression on customers.



3. Truly Understand Your Target Audience

Understanding your target audience's pain points is crucial for small business marketing success. Without this, none of your marketing messages will effectively attract and engage your target customers.

Understanding your target audience goes beyond knowing basic demographics. By diving into your customers' challenges, desires, and frustrations, you can create messages and content that truly resonate with them.

Pain points are universal and cut across demographics. So, when you understand the emotions and motivations behind your audience, you can address their needs more effectively. This is far more useful than simply understanding the age or job title of your target customers.

Here's an example of how understanding target audience pain points can make such a difference to your marketing strategy:

Person 1



King Charles

- Born 1948; grew up in England
- Married the second time
- 2 children
- Successful in business
- Wealthy
- Spend their winter holidays in the Alps
- Likes dogs

[Source](#)

Person 2



Ozzy Osbourne

- Born 1948; grew up in England
- Married the second time
- 2 children
- Successful in business
- Wealthy
- Spend their winter holidays in the Alps
- Likes dogs

As you can see, each profile shares the same demographics but is a very different customer profile. Understanding their pain points is what will help you truly understand your target customers.

Taking an empathetic approach to your target audience builds a genuine connection, positioning your business as the solution to their problems. It also enables you to speak their language by using the words, phrases, and expressions they use to describe their challenges.

This strengthens the connection and establishes your credibility as a business that truly understands its audience's struggles.

For example, Truedark.com understands that its audience struggles with sleep, fatigue, and migraines. They focus on how their glasses can improve sleep and reduce fatigue, addressing the specific pain points of their audience. This is more relevant than simply trying to target a demographic.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

1. Conduct thorough market research:

- Utilize online surveys or tools to gather information about your target audience's demographics, preferences, and pain points.

- Analyze industry reports, competitor analysis, and customer feedback to identify trends and understand customer needs.

2. Create detailed buyer personas:

- Develop profiles of your ideal customers, including their age, gender, occupation, interests, and purchasing behavior.
- Use the collected data to create fictional characters that represent different segments of your target audience.

3. Identify customer touchpoints:

- List all the interactions a customer can have with your business, such as website visits, social media engagement, email communication, and in-store visits.
- Understand where and how your target audience interacts with your brand at each touchpoint.

4. Tailor your marketing strategies based on insights:

- Develop targeted campaigns that align with each stage of the customer journey.
- Personalize messaging and offers based on customer preferences and past interactions.
- Continuously measure the effectiveness of your marketing strategies using KPIs and make data-driven adjustments.

4. Understand the Power of Your Website (And Use it Wisely)

You know your business needs a website, but do you understand just how important your website actually is?

The difference between a good and bad website makes an enormous impact on your business's success.

Your website is more than just a presence; it's a powerful tool for driving traffic, generating leads, and converting customers. A great website is user-centric and intuitive, designed with your target audience's needs and preferences in mind.

Ensure your website has a modern look and includes all the necessary features to attract and engage visitors. It's important to be able to update your website and landing pages easily.

If you're not a web designer, using the right website builder is essential.

Invest time and resources into creating an outstanding website that helps your business thrive.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

With a platform like [Propel IQ](#), you get an [AI-powered website builder](#) that allows you to build a powerful website even if you have no web design knowledge or experience.

The website builder is equipped with features like online forms, an appointment booking calendar, and integration with your email marketing. This means your website doesn't only look professional, but it has all the functions you need to attract more visitors and turn them into customers.

With a tool like this, anyone can create websites using straightforward templates. The results will always be impressive.

5. Run Referral Marketing Campaigns

Running referral marketing campaigns is an incredibly powerful tactic for small businesses.

Why?

Because 92% of consumers trust recommendations from friends and family more than any other type of advertising. Referral marketing can generate brand awareness and acquire customers without a big budget or effort.

To leverage this, create a well-designed referral campaign. Offer incentives, rewards, or exclusive benefits for referrals. This motivates customers to actively promote your business to their connections, spreading positive word-of-mouth like wildfire.

As customers refer people they know, your campaign's reach grows exponentially. This organic growth boosts brand awareness and brings in highly qualified leads. When people receive referrals from trusted sources, they're more likely to become paying customers.

The best part?

Your customers do the promotion for you.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

1. Define your referral program goals:

- Determine the objectives of your referral program, such as increasing customer acquisition, boosting sales, or improving customer loyalty.
- Set specific targets and metrics to measure the success of your referral program.

2. Design an enticing referral offer:

- Create a compelling incentive for both the referrer and the referee to participate in the referral program. This could be a discount, free product, exclusive access, or reward points.
- Ensure the offer aligns with your target audience's interests and motivates them to refer your business.

3. Implement a referral tracking system:

- Choose a referral marketing software solution like Viral Loops, which provides tracking and management tools for referral programs.
- Set up the software and customize it according to your program requirements, including referral links, unique referral codes, and automated reward systems.

4. Promote your referral program:

- Utilize multiple channels to reach your existing customers and encourage them to refer others. This can include email marketing, social media campaigns, website banners, and in-store signage.
- Clearly communicate the benefits of participating in the referral program and provide easy-to-follow instructions on how to refer others.

5. Monitor, optimize, and reward:

- Regularly track and analyze the performance of your referral program using the software solution.

- Identify the most successful referral sources and adjust your marketing efforts accordingly.
- Reward referrers and referees as per your program's terms to maintain motivation and engagement.

By following these steps and utilizing referral marketing software like [Viral Loops](#), small business owners can easily create an effective referral program to boost business growth.

6. Invest in Organic Growth

Investing in organic growth is a smart (and highly necessary!) marketing tactic for small businesses.

While running ads may bring quick results, it's not always sustainable or cost-effective in the long run. Instead, focus on organic channels like content marketing, SEO, social media engagement, and customer referrals.

These methods don't require continuous investment and can yield sustainable growth for free.

They build valuable assets that attract and engage customers over time, resulting in a higher return on investment. Organic strategies also foster authentic connections, trust, and loyalty from your target audience.

By nurturing relationships and providing value, businesses cultivate a community of loyal customers who become advocates, spreading positive word of mouth. Avoid relying solely on paid advertising, especially when starting out, to prevent budget strain and inconsistent results.

Of course, this should tie into the customer journey we mentioned above.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

1. **Conduct keyword research and topic ideation:**
 - Use tools like AnswerThePublic to discover popular search queries and topics related to your industry.
 - Generate a list of relevant keywords and topics that align with your target audience's interests and pain points.

2. Create high-quality content:

- Develop valuable and engaging content that addresses your audience's needs and provides solutions.
- Use various formats such as blog posts, videos, infographics, or podcasts to cater to different preferences.
- Optimize your content for search engines by incorporating relevant keywords naturally.

3. Promote and distribute your content:

- Share your content across multiple channels, including your website, social media platforms, email newsletters, and industry forums.
- Collaborate with influencers or industry partners to expand your content's reach.
- Utilize SEO techniques to improve your content's visibility in search engine results.

4. Measure, analyze, and refine:

- Track the performance of your content using analytics tools to measure key metrics such as website traffic, engagement, and conversions.
- Analyze the data to understand what content resonates most with your audience and adjust your content strategy accordingly.
- Continuously optimize your content by identifying gaps, improving readability, and addressing customer feedback.

7. Embrace Influencers

Influencer marketing may not be a secret, but you probably don't realize the potential it actually has to grow your business.

Research shows that 49% of consumers trust influencer recommendations when making purchase decisions. By partnering with influencers who align with your brand and target audience, you can tap into their established trust and credibility with their followers.

What's even better is the rise of micro-influencers.

They have a smaller but highly engaged audience, making them more affordable for small businesses. Collaborating with micro-influencers who have niche expertise and authenticity can resonate better with your audience, leading to higher engagement and conversions.

Influencers are now present in practically every industry, from fashion and beauty to fitness, parenting, and niche hobbies. This means there are opportunities for all small businesses to find influencers specialized in their industry and effectively reach their target audience.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

Identify influencers in your niche or industry through social media research, hashtags, and industry-specific directories. Assess the influencer's audience, engagement, and authenticity to make sure they align with your brand values.

If you decide to work with an influencer, make sure that their audience is highly engaged - this is more valuable than their audience being incredibly large. Of course, the influencer's audience needs to be located in the same area that your business serves.

8. Use SMS Marketing to Connect With Your Customers

Unlocking the potential of SMS marketing is one of the best secrets to small business marketing success.

With an open rate of around 98%, compared to email's 20%, SMS messages capture immediate attention. They're read within minutes of receipt, driving quick action.

SMS marketing is versatile and flexible. It can be used for promotions, personalized offers, combating abandoned carts, order updates, surveys, and collecting feedback. Despite its effectiveness, it's underutilized by small businesses, presenting an opportunity for early adopters to stand out.

By leveraging SMS marketing, small businesses can directly reach their audience with concise and timely messages. This leads to higher engagement, conversions, and customer satisfaction.

Here's one example of the power of SMS marketing: The Slay Brand (an eCommerce store) used [Winback](#) to launch abandoned cart SMS campaigns. By effectively targeting these "lost" customers with SMS, the brand doubled its total sales.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

Use an SMS marketing solution (like the one integrated into Propel IQ) to set up and automate SMS marketing campaigns. You can use templates to easily create your campaign based on your goals.

You can send SMS messages for things like:

- Reminding customers about abandoned carts
- Offering strategic discounts
- Promoting new products and offers
- Sending transactional messages
- And more

9. Focus On the Right Social Media Channels

Social media marketing is no secret. But what if we told you that spending hours on Instagram might not be worthwhile for your business?

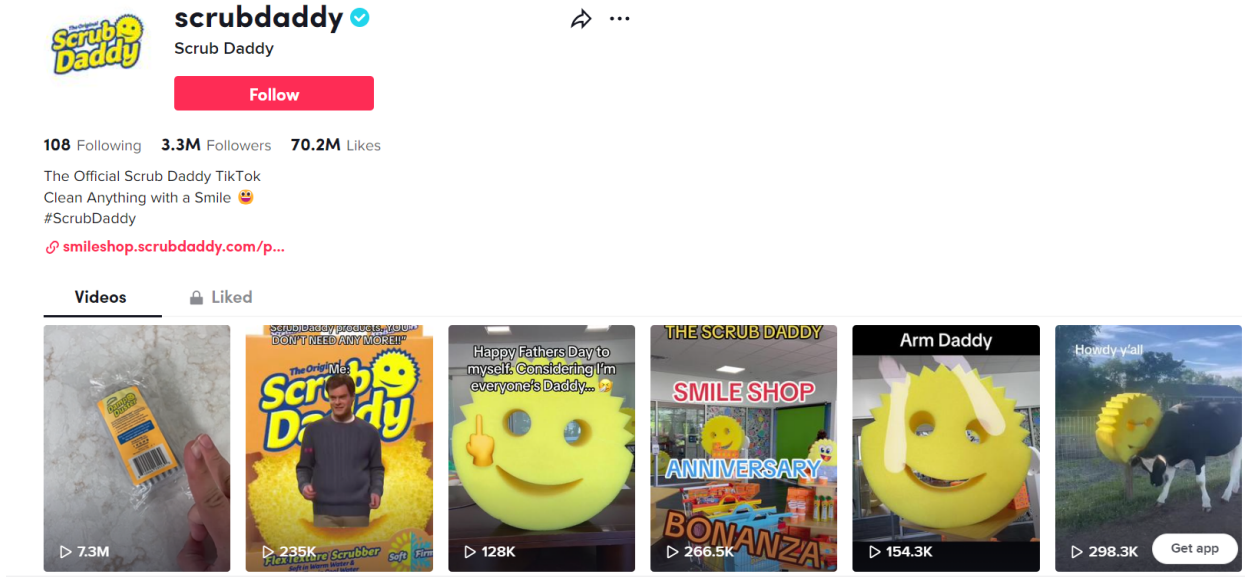
Instead of being everywhere, focus on the platforms where your target audience is active. Quality matters more than quantity.

Identify the platforms that align with your audience's demographics, interests, and behaviors. Prioritize those channels for maximum impact.

Remember, each platform has unique strengths and content formats. For example, Instagram is great for visual storytelling, while Twitter excels in real-time updates. Tailor your content to each platform's strengths to optimize engagement and reach.

By focusing on the most relevant social media channels, you can deliver targeted content and build meaningful connections with your audience. Quality and relevance will drive your social media success.

Here's an example of a brand that has done this well. Scrub Daddy (a business that makes unique sponges and cleaning products) developed a quirky and unique TikTok presence. By focusing on TikTok to showcase their products, the brand has gone viral with literally millions of followers. Not bad for a sponge brand.



While most other direct-to-consumer brands would try to put all their effort into Facebook and Instagram too, this brand found one channel that really resonated with their audience and focused on it. So, they capitalized on it and saw great results.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

To find the most impactful and relevant social media channels, conduct market research to identify which platforms your target audience is most active on, analyze competitors' social media presence, and test different platforms to measure engagement and conversion rates.

This will help you can make informed decisions on which channels to prioritize and invest your resources in for a more effective marketing strategy. Of course, also focus on the social media channels that you can create the best content on.

This guide explores [how to find the right social media channels](#) in more detail.

10. Automate Your Email Marketing Campaigns

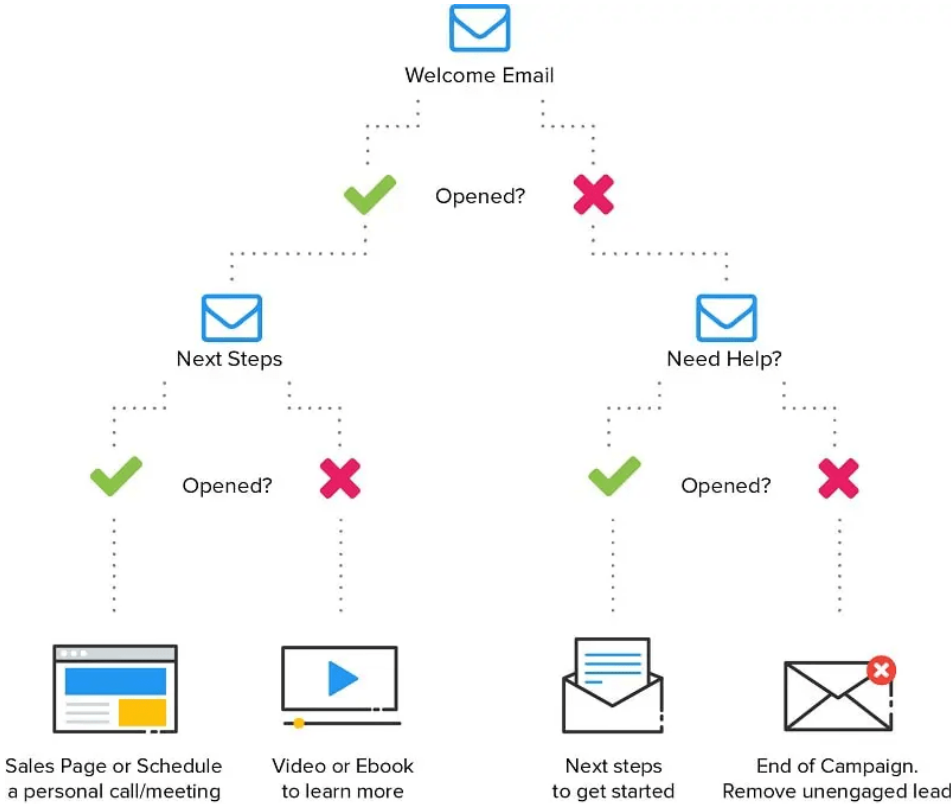
Automating your email marketing campaigns is a powerful tactic for small businesses. It streamlines communication, nurtures leads, and drives conversions very efficiently.

With automated email marketing, you can send personalized messages based on customer behavior, preferences, and the buyer's journey stage - as we outlined above.

By segmenting your audience and tailoring content, you deliver targeted messages that boost engagement and conversion rates.

Automation helps nurture leads at scale. Set up automated sequences to send timely follow-ups, educational content, and guide prospects through the sales funnel. This consistent and personalized communication keeps your brand top of mind, increasing the chances of conversion.

Automation also saves time and resources. Once set up, emails run on autopilot, letting you focus on other business tasks. Here's an example of what an automated email workflow could look like:



Sending campaigns like this ensures your audience gets the most relevant messages, without having to manually send each message.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

You can't apply marketing automation without the right software.

Propel IQ includes a complete email marketing solution with automation options. This is all integrated with your leads database and lead generation tools, making it easy to set up email campaigns and let them run in the background as your business grows.

11. Personalize the Customer Journey

Personalizing the customer journey is a powerful marketing tactic for small businesses. By tailoring each step to match individual needs and preferences, you can generate more sales.

Use customer data to understand their preferences, purchase history, and behavior. This helps you create targeted and relevant marketing messages.

Personalize your marketing content, recommendations, and offers based on this data to enhance the customer experience. Doing so increases engagement, and builds loyalty.

As with the other marketing hacks above, anticipating customer needs, addressing pain points, and providing personalized support shows that you care.

This builds long-lasting relationships and fosters customer loyalty. Take advantage of customer data to create a tailored journey that delights your customers at every touchpoint.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

To apply personalization, segment your audience based on demographics, preferences, and behavior, and deliver targeted content, offers, and recommendations that align with each segment's needs.

You can also leverage customer data to personalize communication, automate personalized email campaigns, and use dynamic content on your website to create a more engaging customer experience.

Using a leads database integrated with your website and marketing channels is essential. You should also use a CRM to easily access information on each customer and lead. As always, this is all integrated into Propel IQ.

12. Provide Exceptional Customer Service

Instead of only focusing on attracting new customers, make sure that you put just as much effort into your existing customers. Although it may seem like wasted time, focusing

on your existing customers can make an enormous difference in how many new customers are drawn to your business.

Providing exceptional customer service is a powerful marketing tactic for small businesses. It goes beyond meeting expectations and can leave a lasting impression. This is incredibly important for growing your business.

To stand out, anticipate and address customer needs before they arise. Understand each customer's preferences and purchase history to offer tailored recommendations and support.

Be responsive to customer feedback and concerns, showing a genuine commitment to their satisfaction. This sets your business apart and generates positive word-of-mouth referrals.

Remember, exceptional customer service creates loyal customers who become advocates for your brand. Invest time and effort in delivering a remarkable experience, and watch your business thrive.

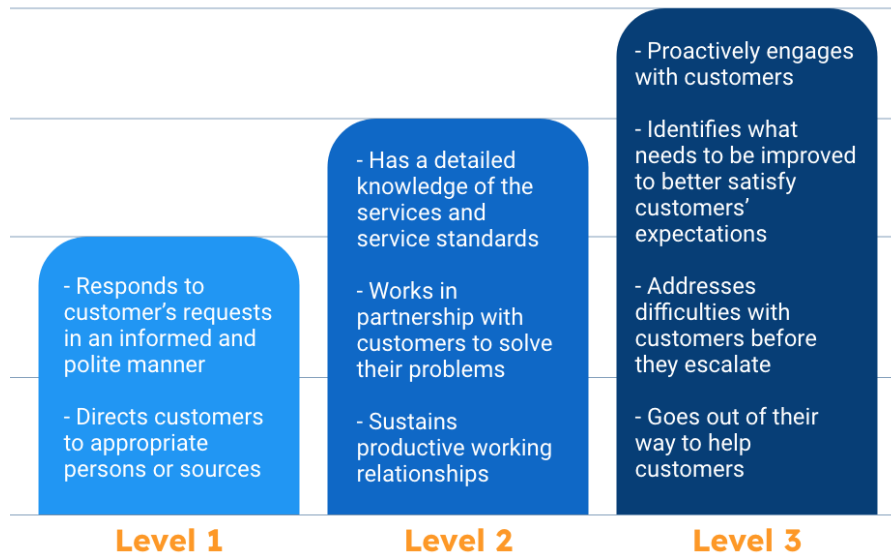
How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

To provide amazing customer service, quickly address any customer inquiries, concerns, and feedback through various channels.

You can also focus on personalization by tailoring interactions, showing empathy, and going the extra mile to exceed customer expectations. Doing so builds loyalty, generates positive word-of-mouth referrals, and enhances their overall marketing strategy.

Having a detailed CRM that displays all of your customer information and history is important for offering the best possible customer experiences.

Customer service orientation levels



13. Emphasize Customer Reviews and Testimonials

Customer reviews and testimonials are a game-changer for small businesses. They hold immense marketing power.

Encourage happy customers to leave reviews on platforms like Google or Yelp. These reviews build your company's reputation and attract new customers.

It's crucial to monitor and respond to reviews, showing that you care about customer satisfaction.

Reviews are a cost-effective way to acquire new customers. So, make the most of every opportunity and actively generate and showcase reviews.

Remember, a positive review can sway potential customers and boost your business. Harness the power of customer feedback to thrive and grow.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

To emphasize customer reviews and testimonials, actively collect and showcase positive feedback from satisfied customers on your website, social media profiles, and other marketing materials.

You should also encourage customers to leave reviews and provide testimonials through incentives, personalized follow-ups, and dedicated review platforms. This helps establish social proof, build trust, and attract new customers.

Using a tool like [Braxy Hub](#) makes it a lot easier to manage all of the local online listings for your business - which is essential for making the most out of your online reviews.

14. Build Strategic Partnerships

Did you know that other businesses can help promote your business for free?

Collaborating with complementary businesses through strategic partnerships is a great way to reach new audiences.

By cross-promoting each other's products or services, businesses can expand their reach and attract customers who may not have been previously aware of their offerings.

Strategic partnerships can take the form of joint marketing campaigns, co-hosted events, or affiliate programs.

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

To build strategic partnerships, identify complementary businesses in your industry or related fields, and establish collaborations that mutually benefit both parties. Co-hosted giveaways are a great strategy. Here's an example:



By leveraging each other's resources, networks, and customer bases, you can amplify your marketing efforts, reach new audiences, and create valuable cross-promotional opportunities. This goes a long way in driving business growth.

15. Cultivate a Growth Mindset

Last but not least, cultivating a growth mindset is essential for the long-term success of startups and small businesses.

It's important to embrace a continuous learning mentality, be open to feedback, and adapt to changes in the market.

By fostering a culture of innovation and experimentation, businesses can adapt their marketing strategies and seize new opportunities for growth.

So, always try new things, be proactive in your promotions, and never limit your business growth!

How to Apply This to Your Marketing Strategy

Embrace a mindset of continuous learning, experimentation, and adaptation to stay ahead in the ever-changing marketing landscape.

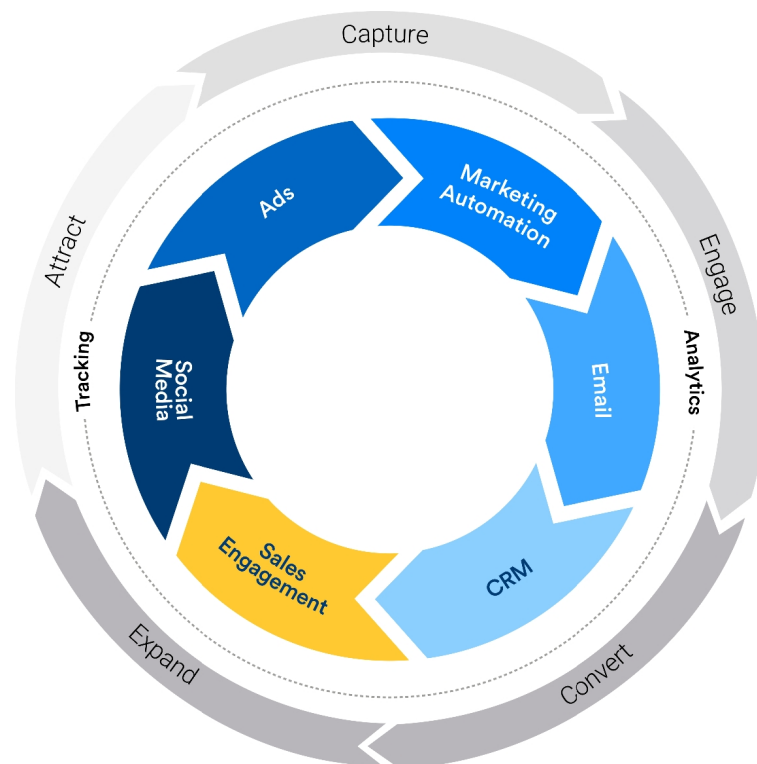
Seek feedback, analyze data, and actively explore new marketing strategies and techniques to optimize your campaigns, drive innovation, and achieve long-term marketing success.

Most importantly, stay up to date with your industry and continuously think of new ways to innovate, reach more customers, and outsell the competition.

Bonus: Use the Right Software

Clearly, there's a lot that can (and should) go into your marketing strategy. To achieve all of this, you need to have a robust marketing platform in place.

[Propel IQ](#) is the most comprehensive solution, offering all the tools you need to attract and engage customers and generate more sales. The platform includes everything you need to manage the entire customer lifecycle in one platform. This makes it an affordable, convenient, and powerful solution for small businesses.



[Book a demo](#) to see how Propel IQ can change the game for your small business growth.

Conclusion

When it comes to your marketing strategy, it's not about doing as much as you can to reach new customers. Instead, it's about using the most effective strategies to make an impact.

The marketing secrets and hacks above can be used by any kind of business in any kind of industry. Implement them, and see just how much they will propel your business growth!