

# Clicks

The Online Marketing Guide for Small Business

WHY BUILDING  
**AUTHORITY**  
**IS THE SECRET**  
TO ONLINE SUCCESS

YOUR WEBSITE  
**CONTENT**  
**SUCKS**  
AND HERE'S WHY

This content  
doesn't suck



HOW TO  
**RANK FOR**  
LOCAL BUSINESSES  
**"NEAR ME"**  
SEARCHES

**6 REASONS**  
WHY YOU SHOULD  
**OUTSOURCE**  
YOUR MARKETING  
TO AN AGENCY

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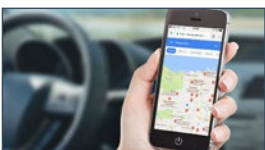


Your website content sucks. Ouch. That's painful to hear, but it's also probably true. But you're not alone. Most small business website content sucks. The good news is, you can make

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## Welcome To Clicks Magazine

Thanks for checking out our 43rd issue of Clicks, 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 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,

Your Name Here  
Your Title Here

### CLICKS IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY

(Your Business Name) is the leading small business marketing service in the (insert area) for over (insert years). 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 Clicks and feel free to reach out to us anytime.



# WHY **BUILDING AUTHORITY** IS THE **SECRET** TO ONLINE SUCCESS

Who are you and why should anybody care what you think?

If you can't answer that question in a compelling manner, then you're probably not an authority figure in your niche.

Maybe you're just starting out. Or, maybe you've been in the game a while, but you're having a hard time getting people to pay attention to you.

Either way, the solution is to make yourself

into an authority.

Here's the secret that a lot of entrepreneurs don't know:

Authority is not something other people bestow on you. It's something you can build.

That might surprise you. It shouldn't. The people you view as authorities created their authority by their actions. And you can too.





## WHY AUTHORITY MATTERS

Why is authority important? It's very simple. When you have authority, people listen to what you say.

They value your opinion – and when you tell them to buy something, they'll do it.

That's why authority is one of Robert Cialdini's principles of influence. Psychologically speaking, people are inclined to do what an authority figure tells them to do – even if they wouldn't do it on their own.

A simple example of this principle in action comes from television advertising. Maybe you remember those commercials featuring well-known actors.

They always started with something like this:

*I'm not a doctor, but I play one on TV.*

You might think of that as a disclaimer, but it's a statement of authority. People were accustomed to thinking of those actors as doctors.

So, when they recommended a cough syrup or headache medication, people trusted those recommendations.

Another way of looking at it is that authority is based on trust. If you do a good job building authority, people will trust you and your products.





# BRAND



## BRANDING AND AUTHORITY

You'll build authority more quickly if you define your brand and present it in a consistent way in all your online marketing.

Why? Because authority is easier to build if you have a narrowly defined area of expertise. Nobody is equally knowledgeable about everything, right?

Of course, there are exceptions. Someone like Oprah is so well known that people might take her word for just about anything. She can present herself as an authority on self-help, alternative medicine, clothing, and books because she has achieved a level of authority that allows it.

Most of us can't do that. We need to define our niches and stick to them.

Here are some ways you can create a consistent and authoritative brand:

- 1.. Understand how you want people to think

of you and your brand and create your brand personality and voice around those things.

2. Create a customer persona and use it to create your online content that will appeal to your target audience.

3. Use the same colors, language, and voice everywhere your brand is represented online. That includes your website, social media accounts, email marketing, and in your comments on review sites and forums.

4. Don't let yourself get distracted by things that aren't related to your brand. You shouldn't be sharing the latest viral video on your Facebook page unless it's relevant to your followers. Save those things for your personal page.

Think of your brand as the cornerstone of your authority.



## AUTHORITATIVE CONTENT

Every piece of content you create for your brand must be authoritative. That means that everything on your website, online profiles, social media accounts, ads, and marketing videos must be conceptualized and executed with authority in mind.

It all starts with your website. You need a professional site that uses clear and authoritative language designed to appeal directly to your target audience. It should be easy to use and provide immediate value to the people who visit it.

The same is true of your social media content. Every status update, Tweet, or photo you post

must be relevant to your brand and presented with authority.

You may also want to consider creating long-form authoritative content to build authority. Examples include:

- > Exclusive content
- > White papers
- > Case studies
- > How-to guides

Any of these can help you demonstrate your authority.



# Become the Expert!



## AUTHORITATIVE OPINIONS

If you watch cable news, you know that one of the ways they fill the 24-hour news cycle is by booking authority figures to offer opinions about current events.

Think about it. Every political consultant, pollster, or retired general is there for one reason. They have experience and knowledge that is applicable to a story, and because of that, they are viewed as authorities whose opinion is worth hearing.

You can build the same kind of authority online by being opinionated. That doesn't mean you should spout about politics (unless that's related to your brand, of course.) What it does mean is that you shouldn't be afraid to say what you think.

One very effective way to do that is to curate content for your social media pages. Curated content is content that somebody else created. You can find it by following:

- General news outlets and publications
- Industry-specific publications
- Popular bloggers in your niche
- Popular brands in your niche

It's not enough to share curated content without

commenting on it. That won't help you build authority. Instead, read or watch everything you share and then offer an opinion about it.

For example, say you find an article that lists ten essential things about your industry. You might feel that the writer left out something important. You should point that out when you post the article.

Taking a controversial stance can be a good thing, too. When you contradict or rebut something that an established authority says, you're putting yourself on their level.

The key here is to sound confident when you offer an opinion. If you seem uncertain, people will dismiss your opinion.

## THERE'S ONE MORE THING...

The final step to building authority is to put these things together and use them to create marketing campaigns that convert. If you do it right, you'll set yourself apart from other brands in your niche.

In other words, you won't just be one option for people seeking products or services in your niche. You'll be the only option – and all because they view you as an authority figure.



**YOUR WEBSITE CONTENT**

**SUCKS**

**AND HERE'S WHY**

Your website content sucks.

Ouch.

That's painful to hear, but it's also probably true. But you're not alone. Most small business website content sucks (from a marketing perspective).

It's badly conceived, poorly written, boring, and – worst of all – ineffective.

Double Ouch.

The good news is, you can make it not suck. It's not even that hard. The most difficult part is evaluating your content with a critical eye and acknowledging that it's not working.

Once you've done that, it's within your reach to create compelling and persuasive content that will get results.



## #1:

### IT'S STALE AND OLD

The first sign that your content isn't up to snuff is if it hasn't been updated in a while. Look at your website. Is your content:

- > Out of date?
- > Stagnant?
- > Been the same for more than a year, or years?

These are all signs that your content is staler than last week's loaf of bread. Google prioritizes fresh content, and so do web users. Your content must be updated regularly to stay relevant.

## #2:

### IT'S NOT AS GOOD AS YOUR COMPETITORS' CONTENT

The second sign that your content needs refining is if it's not measuring up to your competitors' content. You should be looking at your competitors' sites and social media pages regularly, so you know what they're doing.

If they're blogging and you're not – or if they've recently revamped their website – your stale site isn't going to be able to compete. It's time for considering an update.

## #3:

### IT DOESN'T CLEARLY DEFINE YOUR UNIQUE SALES PROPOSITION

What's so special about your business and what it has to offer? If your content isn't doing a great job of identifying your USP so that prospects know why they should choose your product, your content is letting you down.

One of the key jobs of online content is to differentiate one brand from another. You can't expect people to buy your products unless your content gives them a reason to do so.

## #4:

### YOU'RE NOT USING YOUR CONTENT TO GENERATE LEADS

Is your content helping you attract new site visitors and get them to opt-in to your list? If it isn't, that's a sure-fire sign that your content sucks.

It's rare for a prospect to visit a site and make a purchase the first time. It requires repeated contact with a brand to convert a lead into a paying customer. Your content should be compelling enough to get people to give you their email addresses to get it – so you can follow up and nurture them.







## #5: YOUR CONTENT IS A SNOOZE

You might know a lot about your niche. You might even be the most knowledgeable person around – but it won't matter if your content is boring.

A lot of entrepreneurs post regular blog posts

that are effective only if readers are looking for a cure for their insomnia. Your blog posts (and all your other content) must be highly compelling, entertaining, and useful if you want people to buy your products.

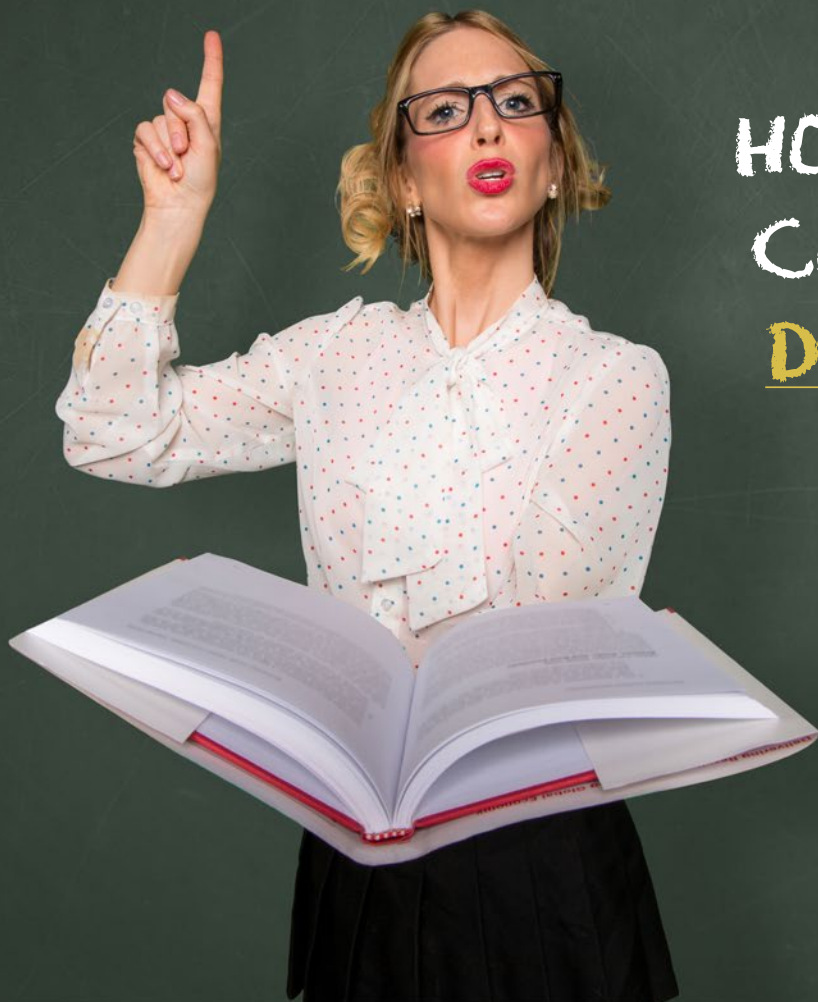
## #3: YOU'VE OMITTED A CALL TO ACTION

What do you want people to do when they visit your page or view your social media content? If it's not obvious, then the chances are good that they're not doing it.

You'd think by now that every entrepreneur

would know the importance of including a call to action in their content – and yet, a lot of them don't do it. Every page (and every post) must have a compelling CTA that tells the reader or viewer what to do next.





# HOW TO CREATE CONTENT THAT DOESN'T SUCK

1.

**Audit your website** and identify stale content. The first step is to review every page of your site and identify content that's old, out-of-date, irrelevant, or stale. It may be that every page needs an update.

2.

**Make a list of your top competitors** and review their websites and social media pages. What are they doing that you're not? Which content is getting the most engagement? Take notes and don't be afraid to use their content as an inspiration for your own.

3.

**Evaluate your branding** and make sure you know your USP. It should be your guiding light as you revamp your content. Every piece of content you create must speak to that USP and make it clear to new and repeat visitors.

4.

**Create a content plan** for your website. What do you need? Can you create it yourself or do you need to hire a pro? Web design is easier than ever before, but that doesn't mean you shouldn't hire a professional designer. You should also consider hiring a professional writer.

5.

**If you're not already blogging, start a blog** – and come up with compelling, relevant topics that will appeal to your target audience. Remember, you can look at your competitors' blogs for ideas.





6.

**Create a lead magnet to generate leads.**

A lead magnet is usually a piece of long-form content that you give away to get people to complete your opt-in form. It might be a whitepaper, eBook, or case study. The key is to make sure that it's valuable to your target audience.

7.

**Make sure every page of your site has a CTA.**

The same goes for your social media posts. Nothing you post should be without a CTA – and the more directly relevant it is to your content, the better off you'll be.

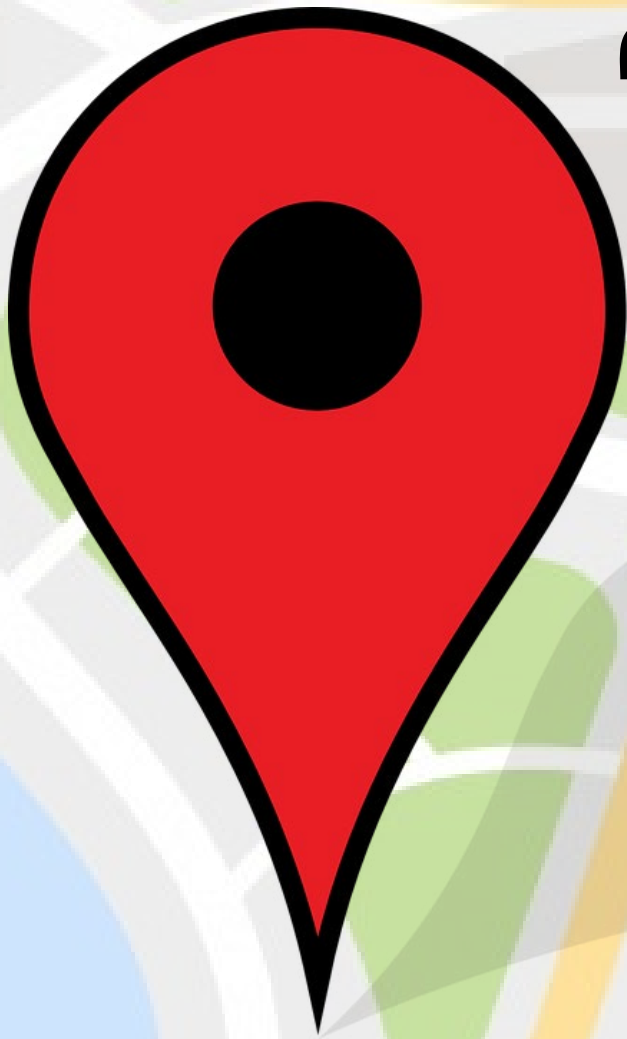
These seven tips can help you upgrade your content and give your target audience something that's relevant, valuable, and entertaining. You'll be able to collect leads – and convert them – if you follow these steps.

## One more thing...

The final key to creating content that doesn't suck is testing. Very few of us can create perfect content on our first try. Testing your content will help you fine-tune it until it's generating leads for you every day – and that's one thing you can't do if your content sucks.

# HOW TO RANK FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

## “NEAR ME” SEARCHES



Search has changed in the last four years. Anybody who's paying attention knows that.

Since 2014, mobile searches have overtaken desktop searches. At the same time, Google has prioritized local searches to the point where finding non-local results has become almost impossible. In fact:

*These two factors, combined with a concurrent rise in voice search, have changed the ballgame when it comes to ranking for local searches on Google.*

They explain why searches for “businesses near me” have skyrocketed. After all, if someone's out looking for a place to eat or a store to visit, they're probably not looking for something 100 miles away. They want to know what they can find nearby.

Fortunately, there are some simple things you can do to improve your “near me” search results.

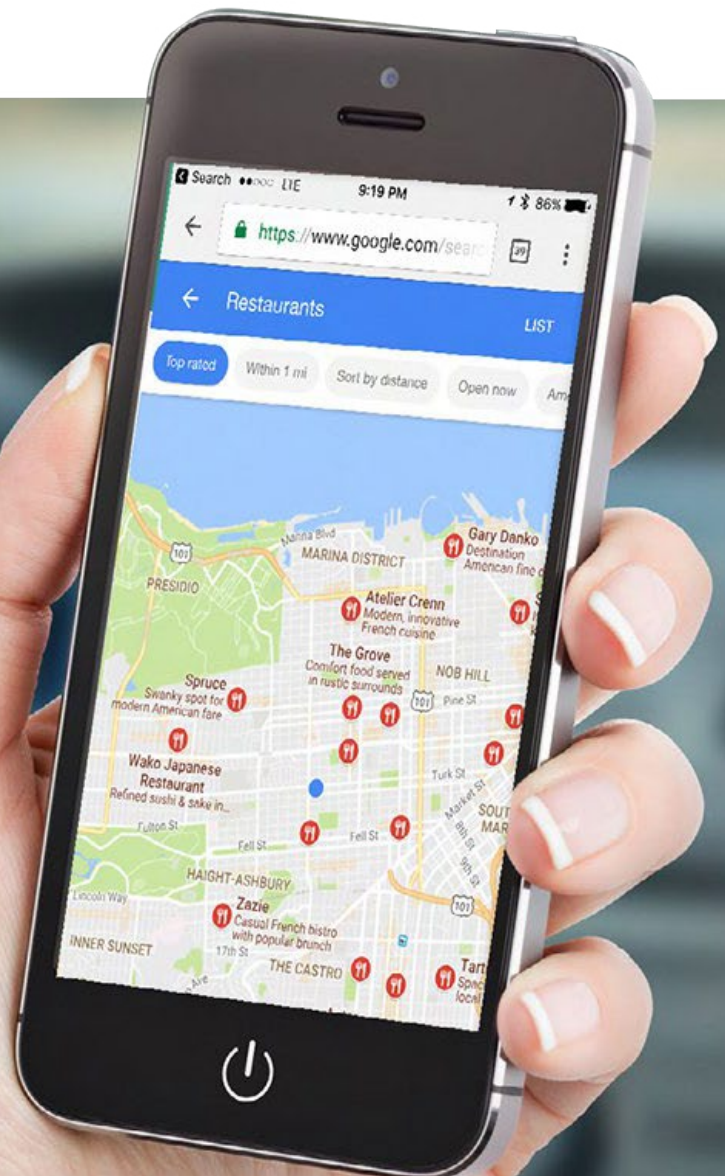


# Understand What Factors Influence “Near Me” Searches

It’s important to understand which factors make the biggest difference in “near me” searches. The solution is not stuffing your site with “near me” keywords. Instead, keep these three things in mind.

- 1.** The relevance of your business to the search being conducted. Google wants to return only relevant results. That means if someone searches for a shoe store, your clothing store may not rank even if you sell shoes, too. Likewise, a sushi restaurant won’t rank as highly if someone searches “Asian restaurants near me” as it would if they searched “sushi restaurants near me.”
- 2.** How close your business is to the searcher’s location. People who are conducting “near me” searches want businesses that are close by. Even if your business is relevant, a distance of 100 miles will mean you rank lower than a business that’s just five miles from the searcher’s location.
- 3.** How prominent your business is online. A business with a top-ranking website, multiple listings in directories, and a strong social media presence is likely going to earn a higher rank than one with a weak online presence.

The key here, then, is to make it clear what your business does and where it’s located and to combine those with the strongest possible online presence.







## Amplify Your Search Signals

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To improve your rank, you need to let Google and other search engines know where you are. One way to do that is to plant virtual flags by getting your business included in online directories and review sites.

You should start by searching the most relevant “near me” terms to see where you rank in the results. You’ll also want to note the sites that appear near the top. They will likely include:



You may also see local directories that are specific to your area or niche. Make a note of these. Then, go and claim your listings on each site. If you’re not listed, create a profile.

It’s also important to make sure your NAP listings are consistent. It should be clear that the company listed on Yelp is the same as the one on Foursquare and the one linked to your Facebook page.

## Differentiate Your Company from Others in the Area

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What sets your business apart from the others that rank in “near me” searches? One way to find out is to vary your search terms and focus on the things you offer that others don’t.

For example, let’s say you own a sushi restaurant. You should search “sushi restaurants near me,” but you might also vary it and search these terms, too:

- > Sushi restaurants near me open 24 hours
- > Sushi restaurants near me that deliver
- > Top sushi restaurants near me
- > Affordable sushi restaurants near me

You get the idea, I hope. If you’re the only sushi restaurant in the area that delivers, highlighting your delivery service can help you attract new customers.



# Name **Local Landmarks** and Other Identifying Features

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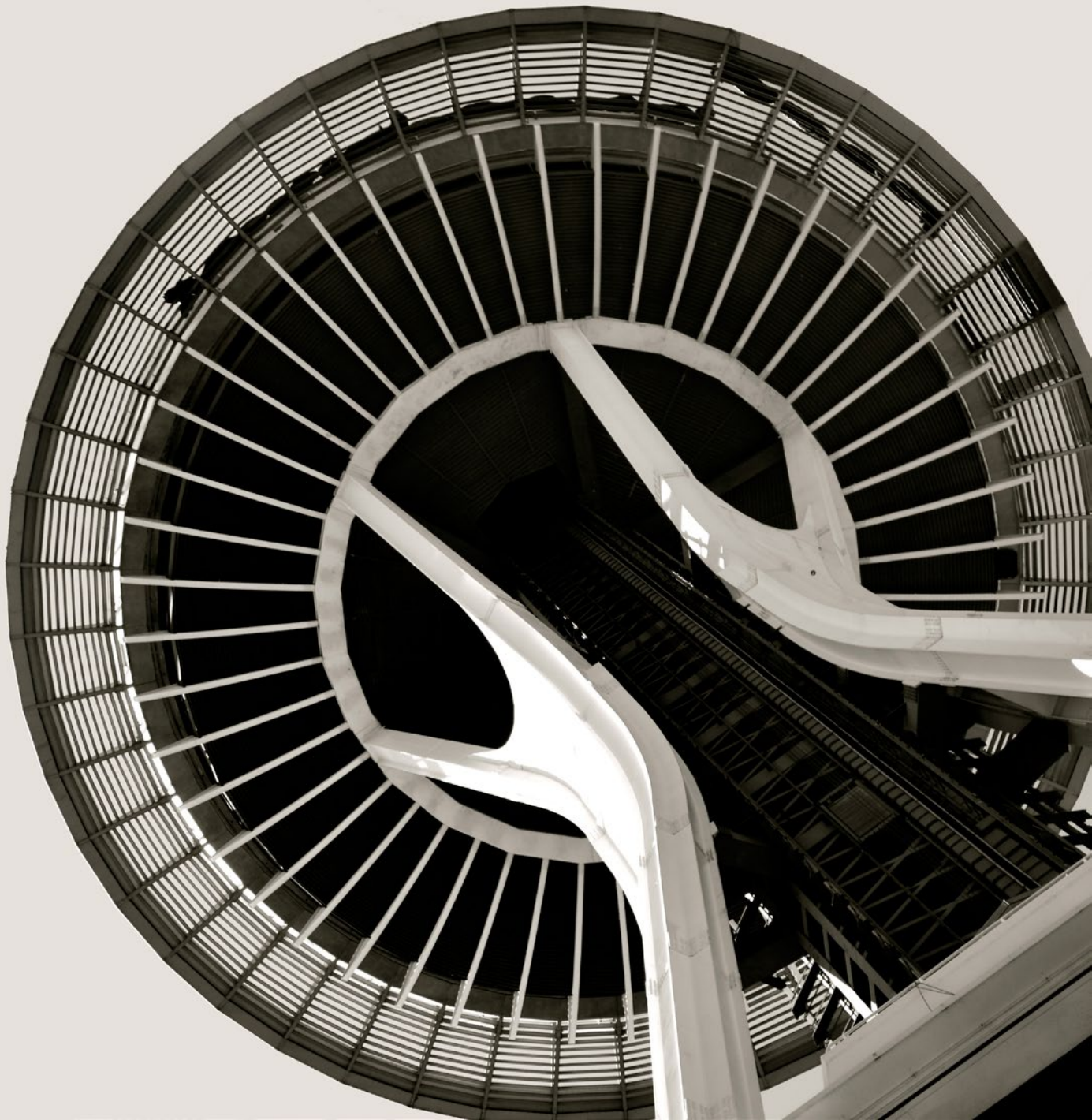
Your NAP listings tell potential customers where to find you, but they may use other terms to define what's near them. For example, many large cities have defined neighborhoods. In San Diego, these include:

- > Normal Heights
- > The Golden Triangle
- > Mira Mesa

The same is true in other big cities.

Identifying yourself by the neighborhood you're in can help you rank in "near me" searches.

The same is true of landmarks. Someone in Seattle might search for "Italian restaurants near the Space Needle." You may also want to name prominent businesses near you (provided they aren't your competitors). Adding exterior photos can also help identify your location.



A background image showing a hand holding a smartphone, with a coffee cup visible on the right side. The image is slightly blurred, focusing on the text overlay.

## Target **Mobile** Customers

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According to Review Tracker, 14% of all searches are carried out by people who want to visit a business immediately. It makes sense to target these people, many of whom will be searching using mobile devices.

One way to do that is to include your telephone number with all listings. Some sites may allow you to enable a "Call Now" feature so that mobile users can dial you with one touch. One example of this is Facebook, where mobile advertisers can choose "Call Now" as their CTA button.

## Encourage Your Customers to **Review Your Business**

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The final step you need to take is encouraging your customers to review your business on Google. Any review signal can help, but for obvious reasons, Google reviews carry more weight than those on other sites.

Keep in mind that businesses that actively solicit reviews tend to get more reviews and have higher average ratings than businesses that don't. One reason is that people who are satisfied often won't bother to leave a review – whereas people who are unhappy are motivated to leave one.

You can start by generating a link that your customers can use to leave reviews. You can find detailed instructions on how to do it [here](#).

Of course, you'll also need to monitor your reviews and respond as needed. That way, people who read reviews will see that you care about your customers' experience.

### **Remember that rankings change...**

Even if you've done all the things suggested here, it's still important to monitor your search rankings. If you're still not getting the rank you deserve, you'll need to double down on your efforts to make sure that people near you can find you.





## 6 REASONS WHY YOU SHOULD OUTSOURCE YOUR MARKETING TO AN AGENCY

Online marketing is easy. Everybody's doing it, from bloggers to Etsy entrepreneurs. Why should you pay for something you can do yourself, right?

You could look at it that way. It's certainly true that

technology has made marketing more accessible than ever. If you're just starting out, you may think that spending money to hire an agency doesn't make sense.

You're wrong.

In fact, failing to hire an agency is one of the biggest mistakes that entrepreneurs make. It's not necessary in every situation. But here's the thing:

**"If you're not a professional marketer, it's a virtual certainty that you're missing opportunities - and sales - because of the marketing choices you're making."**

Yikes. That's not what you want, right? Most small and medium-sized business can't afford to give

sales away.

So, with that in mind, let's talk about how you can

tell if it's time to outsource your marketing to an agency.



## #1: YOU DON'T HAVE A HANDLE ON YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

The first big indicator that you need a professional marketer is that you don't really know how people perceive your brand online.

Let's face it, "online" is a big place. You might think of your website as your home base, but you also need to know how your brand is represented:

- On social media (on your

profiles pages as well as in mentions)

- On review sites like Yelp and Google
- In blog posts and niche publications
- On forums related to your industry
- In online directories

That's a lot to keep track of, especially if you're wearing multiple hats as you run your busi-

ness. A professional marketer will have tools and expertise to assess your online presence.

They can take your brand's online temperature and then take corrective action to improve the way you're perceived.

## #2: YOU'RE NOT SURE HOW TO ALLOCATE YOUR MARKETING BUDGET

Where are you spending your marketing budget? Do you know how much you're spending? For a lot of entrepreneurs, the answer is no – and that's a problem.

If you're handling your own marketing, you might feel as if you're shooting in the dark. One week you're spending on Facebook ads. The next, you're

running a Google AdWords campaign. You're trying everything and hoping that something will bear fruit.

The problem is that you don't have a marketing plan. You haven't had the time (or expertise) to evaluate marketing platforms and choose those that are most likely to get you the results you want.

A marketing pro will have broad experience and should be able to assess your brand and target audience – and use that assessment to choose the best marketing options. You don't need a big budget to be successful, but you do need to know how to use it.





### #3: YOUR MARKETING CAMPAIGNS AREN'T GENERATING LEADS

This one should be a no-brainer, yet it's a common problem for DIY marketers. If your marketing campaigns aren't bringing you qualified leads, you're throwing money away.

Guess what? Your marketing campaign could be well-conceived. Perhaps you've created what could be a winning ad. You might

still have problems with:

- Knowing which platform is most likely to put your ad in front of people who need your product or service
- Choosing the right keyword to target on Google or Bing
- Selecting the right target audience on Facebook or Instagram

In other words, there's a lot more to lead generation than ad creation. You need to know when, where, and how to display your ad – and who to show it to – if you want to generate leads. A professional marketer will know.

### #4: YOU'RE NOT AWARE OF MARKETING TRENDS

The world of online marketing is constantly changing. What worked a few months ago might not be effective anymore.

Here's one example. At the beginning of 2018, Facebook announced it would change its algorithms to favor posts from family and friends over posts from pages and brands.

Companies that used to get

a fair amount of organic engagement must now pay to get the same attention.

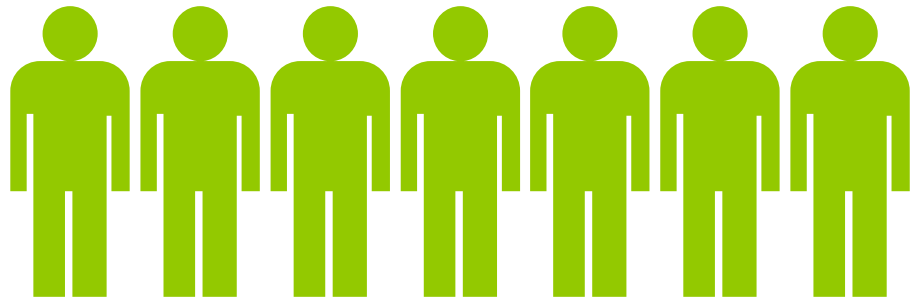
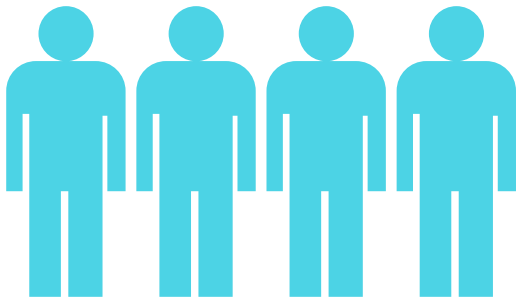
It can be difficult for entrepreneurs to keep up with what's happening in marketing. You've got other things to do.

When you outsource your marketing, you're paying someone whose job it is to know what the latest and greatest marketing trends

are. You won't have to worry about spending on outdated marketing techniques.

In other words, paying a pro will ensure that your marketing dollar goes further than it would if you tried to handle everything on your own.





## #5: YOU'RE NOT TESTING YOUR CAMPAIGNS

Very few people – even marketing pros – create perfect campaigns on their first try. Marketing is both an art and a science, and in science, testing is essential.

Many entrepreneurs never look at the results of their marketing campaigns. They don't know which metrics

matter – and that means they're not using their results to tweak their campaigns and improve them.

Marketing pros understand the value of split testing. Once they launch a campaign, they'll measure the results and tweak the ad until it's perfect. You might

not have the time to do that – and that's why you need a pro to do it for you.

Done properly, this kind of meticulous tracking and testing can make a huge difference in your conversions and ultimately, in your bottom line.



## #6: YOU'RE NOT MAKING MARKETING A PRIORITY

Is marketing something you think about every day, or is it an afterthought? For many entrepreneurs, it's the latter. They make time for it when they can.

The problem with that, of course, is that you won't get the robust results you

deserve if marketing isn't a priority. You might push it aside in favor of other needs that you view as more pressing.

Marketing should be a priority. It's the only way you'll create a strong brand, build your platform, attract new

leads, and convert them into paying customers.

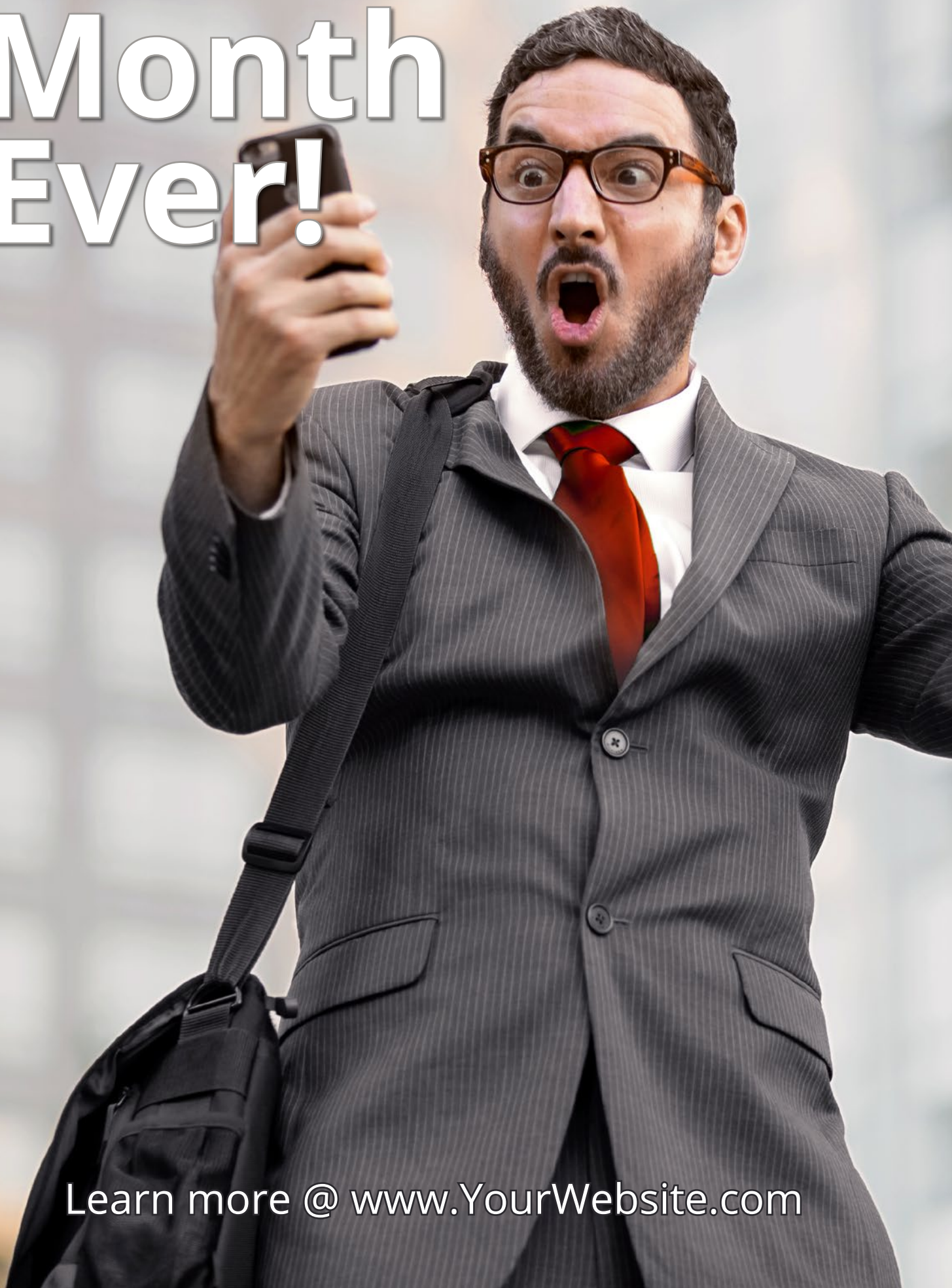
If you don't have time to give marketing the attention it deserves, you need to hire someone to do it for you. It's just that simple.

## OUTSOURCING YOUR MARKETING WILL COST YOU...

... but it won't cost you as much as running lackluster campaigns that do nothing to build your brand and attract leads. It's worth a bit of up-front investment to get the results you need.



# Best Month Ever!



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