



POPULATION
TURNOVER &

WORD

of Mouth

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Advertising in Lee County



If you speak to anyone who has lived here for any length of time, it's not uncommon to hear people say the Lee County area is special. There's no denying that. There are many reasons as to why this small

corner of the Southeast is unique. Many of these qualities are why we love it. There are some things in particular, however, that require us to operate our businesses a little differently in order to be successful here. It's clear, we aren't a big bustling city which is why many of us are small hard working businesses who may not be familiar with certain ways to advertise or promote ourselves.

This e-book has been created by Inner Spark to help small businesses recover and effectively implement marketing tactics following the hardships that have come from COVID-19. However, it is not tailored specifically to COVID-19, meaning that the information within can be used by any business at any time!

This e-book aims to serve as an educational tool for all the small businesses in our area, offering dedicated articles on certain marketing topics in order to help your marketing efforts in our unique (and special) community.



Marketing for a Small Business



Marketing is an area of business that, while essential, can be difficult to understand especially for small businesses. Small businesses often have shortages in workers, money and time.

This makes it hard to have a knowledgeable, dedicated, full-time marketing employee. Here at Inner Spark Creative, we are a full-service advertising agency that can assist with any and all marketing needs. These are our five essential tips to help your small business begin its effective marketing:

Is your business B2B or B2C?

Most small businesses can either classify themselves as selling to other businesses (B2B) or selling to consumers (B2C).

B2B relationships are ongoing and the sales process takes longer than B2C relationships. The B2B relationship involves trust and usually approval from multiple levels of the business, such as manager to owner.

B2C relationships are quicker because products go straight to the consumer. If a business is selling items online for a consumer to purchase straight from their website, they are a B2C.

It is important to use different marketing strategies for B2B's and B2C's in order to be most effective. Knowing whether your business is a B2B or B2C helps you decide where to advertise, in order to most effectively and efficiently reach your target audience - for example target ads on social media or at a trade show.



Create a Website

You cannot thrive in today's world as a business if you do not have a website. The first thing a potential customer will do is Google your business with the hope of finding your website to learn more. Even if you live in a small town where everyone knows one another, a potential customer will still want to get their first impression via your website.

Your website does not need to sell products, you just need to have information about your business. Your website must be easy to navigate, flow visually and deliver marketing to potential customers.

If you need help building, redoing or maintaining your website, learn more about these services [here](#).

Choose the Right Social Media Platforms for Your Business

With data from Pew Research Center, it is found that almost 70% of Americans are present on social media. However, you probably don't want to be on all social media platforms as a small business, and you don't need to be.

Facebook is the number one site for business marketing. With about 70% of Americans and a wide range of demographics between the 70% using Facebook, you can almost always reach your target audience via Facebook.

If your business is more visual, you might want to lean into heavier use on Instagram. You will find it is easier to express yourself visually via Instagram. Or, LinkedIn is very effective for businesses to connect with businesses which is probably the ideal option for a B2B company.

Whatever platform you choose, be sure to stay present on it and provide valuable content for your audience to maximize your marketing.



Implement SEO

Search engine optimization, or SEO, is the process of getting unpaid traffic from search engines.

You can implement onsite SEO by using relevant keywords on your website to help place your website on the top of the search engine list. Sharing your website with social media platforms such as Facebook or Instagram is an example of something that will help you implement some offsite SEO.

SEO is an extremely complicated marketing tactic, as there is no one factor you can focus on, instead there is an exhaustive list of tasks that need to be completed to help SEO. SEO is a slow race that needs to be consistently done over time in order to see the best results. By engaging a professional to help monitor everything from an SEO perspective, you will be more likely to start to increase your ranking. You need to implement both onsite and offsite SEO, to help your website rank higher on search engines, and in turn, drive more people to your business.

Implement Content Marketing

Content marketing does not focus on your brand or products, it focuses on putting out content on your website and social media for your audience. This content must be valuable, relevant, authentic and consistent.

Releasing content to your audience that is not directly about your brand or product helps your consumer perception. For example, if you write a blog that offers valuable, relevant content for your website, consumers will be likely to read that blog, place trust in you and in turn, become loyal to your brand.

By releasing this content to your audience, you can also help your brand be found by the right people, who are potential customers. If an individual reads or hears about your blog and finds it to be valuable and compelling, they will come to you for the products you are selling. You can lead them to your products by linking your website in the content you are putting out.

Be aware that you cannot look for immediate results with content marketing, it is a long-term process. It is a worthwhile process, however, if you are willing to work and be consistent.

The Content Marketing Institute says, “It can be an ideal approach if you truly want to provide a better experience for your customers while making a positive impact on the business in terms of its perception and its bottom line.”



Digital Advertising

Social media is a great place to buy advertising . Facebook advertising is affordable and easy and when buying Facebook ads they can also be distributed to the Instagram platform too as part of the same budget. It is a great way to target your audience in almost all areas of business. Both Facebook and Instagram have algorithms that provide you with data on how your effectively your ads are reaching users.

Sites through the Google Display Network are also great for advertising . They will give you huge brand exposure, increased brand awareness and targeted advertising . The number of people that end up on sites owned by the Google Display Network are significant and therefore a great way to reach your audience. Digital advertising is so targeted and so easily trackable. This means you as a business can track engagement and conversions and ensure you are getting a good return on investment.

It is best to employ a multitude of marketing strategies for any business. You just have to find the right fit for you and your business. However you want to market your business, we can help get you started and keep you succeeding at Inner Spark Creative. Contact us today at (334)-826-7502.

Impact of Population Turn Over on Your Business

So how do you manage your business when you lose 10% of your clients every year? It's not easy but in Auburn, that is the norm. While Auburn would not necessarily be considered a "Transient" community, the population turn-over is nearly double that of the Alabama average.



The good news is that our population base is currently growing (more people move into Auburn than moving out).

This population turn over creates a unique challenge as well as a unique opportunity for businesses. While there is no single answer of how to integrate this fact into your marketing, the one common factor is that you **MUST** consider the turn over and respond to it.

Keep Your Current Clients

Part of your clients may be moving away each year but most are staying right here. Working hard to keep your current clients coming back is a good strategy since keeping a client normally costs much less than recruiting a new client.

Here are a few ways to encourage current clients to stick with you:

- ALWAYS deliver a top quality product
- Provide exceptional customer service
- Reward repeat business
- Make your clients feel appreciated



Encourage Referrals

Word of Mouth is some of the best advertising available and is either free or inexpensive. Assuming that you have taken good care of your current clients, encourage them to tell their friends about you. You can implement a reward system for referrals, have a referral contest, or simply provide a discount for your clients to share with their friends.

Keep Seeking New Clients

Even if the ideas above are successful, you will likely still need to promote your business to see continued growth. Electronic media (Website, Social Media, SEO, Pay-per-Click) are good ways to do that. Remember, our community is very “connected,” with a higher than normal percentage of our population using the Internet on a daily basis. Be consistent in your advertising and don’t expect overnight results. Brand Building is important and will yield long term results but takes time.

Leveraging Word-of-Mouth Advertising to Grow Your Business



Word-of-mouth advertising is essential to driving everyday business and increasing positive brand awareness for every company.

Customers engage with a business on a multitude of platforms and touchpoints

and it is important to keep a positive reputation from social media to customer service. Driving positive word-of-mouth can be key to customer retention and acquisition. Using, for example, social media, you can create engaging content to drive the consumer's engagement with the brand on those platforms. Word of mouth advertising can make a big difference in the growth of your company. Here are some key cornerstones to help increase positive word-of-mouth advertising:

Tap into Value

As consumers, we remember experiences that were relatively average less frequently than we remember amazing or terrible ones. It is important for a reputable company to stay top-of-mind when a customer thinks of businesses that provide those amazing experiences. Tapping into the value of your company through its products, services and customer service can streamline how you market your value. Servicing a customer beyond what is expected of you can incorporate an added layer of value to your business and pleasantly surprise the customer.

A customer has a network of friends and family that they will be more prone to recommend your business to if they have a great experience. At the core, providing great customer service requires insight into your values and purpose. Your customers then have the opportunity to experience that and therefore talk positively about your business.



Emotional Engagement

Creating content that produces an emotional reaction is more likely to instigate word-of-mouth advocating for a business. Engaging content that can result in an emotional reaction in the consumer is more likely to be remembered than just a regular sales push. When advertisements produce any type of emotional response it is easier to recall it because we can associate it with a feeling. Engaging content is a great stepping stone to developing a business' online presence and reputation. Creating content that gets people talking provides your customers with great content they want to share. The more the content is shared by loyal customers, the more people are able to see and engage with your brand. Consumers want to believe and be a part of a company and a business beyond just their role as a customer.

Social Currency

Social currency is the basic idea that people behave in reciprocal ways on social media platforms. If you provide your followers and customers with good content they are more likely to share that information to generate awareness for you.

Reciprocity is important on social media, good content stems opportunities for people to share the content that provides value to them. Sharing what you think is important and content your customers would find intriguing can increase engagement. Posting unique creative content can help drive the customer to share the post, comment, like, subscribe or drive traffic to your website. Developing good content that makes people's attention linger just a little bit longer can boost your brand's image and social currency on platforms like Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.



Know your Audience

Authenticity is a major factor when trying to differentiate your business. Use marketing tactics and messaging that is unique to your company and your customer. Standing out from other companies in your market will draw the customer's eye to your brand. Knowing what piques the interest of your customers will help you create content that is relevant to them. Content that is relevant to your customers will create an outlet for them to want to engage with it and share it.

Word-of-mouth is not as controllable as other forms of marketing but if the proper tactics are enacted it can help create a positive reputation across all customer touchpoints.

Connection is the driving force between a brand and its customers. How a business develops and helps foster a positive connection with their customers is what makes them stand out above the rest.

While it is hard to control what customers are saying about you, a business can facilitate the customer service and experience they provide to be a positive one. Letting your work and service speak for itself gives your customers a reason to speak on behalf of your company.

Getting new customers is vital to the growth of any business, but make sure that your current customers remain satisfied. Your existing customers and their recommendations are the catalysts to building your reputation and increasing your acquisition of new customers. New customers feel more comfortable taking a chance on companies they are not as familiar with if their current customers are pleased with the results they are getting. Word of mouth marketing can be one of the most effective marketing strategies if done correctly, using these tips can be a helpful step in the right direction.

We're Inner Spark.

A creative communications agency where brand identity is explored and amplified. Inner Spark is your strategic marketing partner, leveraging the latest tools and techniques to help our clients stay competitive and ahead in the market. We're all about potential, striving to build stronger connections between company and customers—we're here to help you ensure your message is heard.

More than a Vendor

We made a list of everything people hate about working with an agency, and decided not to do those things. We decided you deserve better.

Always a Partner

We're the agency that cares. You deserve a partner that cares as much about your success as you do. At Inner Spark, we take our business relationships personally.

Services Provided:

Marketing Strategy

PR/Reputation Management

Web Development

Video Production

Search Engine Ranking

Graphic Design

Social Media Marketing

Direct Mail

Geofencing

Copywriting

Media Representation

Printing Services

Email Marketing

Research



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