

BOAT MARKETING INSIDER

Get More (and Better)

TRAFFIC

With Your Local Business Blog

Try These 7

Growth Hacks

To Help Your Small Business

SOAR



Why

SMS Marketing

Should Be in Your *Mix Right Now*

HOW TO INCREASE CUSTOMER

RETENTION

WITH EMAIL

Contents

Get More (and Better) Traffic with Your Local Business Blog

03



You already know that content marketing is widely considered to be essential for your business. Maybe you've already got a blog that gets some organic traffic. What's next?

The sad truth is that most local businesses aren't blogging about the right things in the right way. As a result, they're losing business that's going to their competitors. Want to learn more about the types of content that will help attract more qualified visitors to your site and help you grow your business? Then this article is for you.

Why SMS Marketing Should Be in Your Mix Right Now

08



With more consumers working from home and budgetary concerns at the forefront for most people, you might think that mobile marketing isn't as effective as it used to be. People aren't

spending as much time out and a lot of the advantages of mobile marketing don't apply in the same way. But guess what? I'm here to tell you that mobile marketing is more important than ever – and you need to make room for SMS marketing in your budget right now. Here's why.

Try These 7 Growth Hacks to Help Your Small Business Soar

13



I've been thinking a lot lately about growth hacks – little tricks you can use to fast-track your growth and increase your sales and profits. By definition, a hack is meant to be simple – something

you can do right away. Sometimes hacks are clever and weird things but sometimes, they're well-documented things that small business owners overlook. Here are 7 growth hacks that I think you need to start using – today.

How to Increase Customer Retention with Email

18



There's something undeniably exciting about attracting new customers to your business. It's the reason that new customer marketing gets all the attention. But guess what? It's not a

very cost effective way to grow a business, which is why it never ceases to amaze me that more local businesses ignore customer retention as a growth strategy. If you're wondering the best way to increase your customer retention, look no further. Email is the answer. Read on to learn more.

Welcome To The Boat Marketing Insider

Thanks for checking out the August 2021 issue of The Boat Marketing Insider magazine, your online marketing resource guide for marine businesses. Each month, we'll be covering topics that resonate with marine 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,

Harry Casimir
CEO, Boat Marketing Pros

THE BOAT MARKETING INSIDER IS
BROUGHT TO YOU BY

Boat Marketing Pros is a digital agency offering websites and digital marketing to the marine industry. We help clients all over the US 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.

To schedule a free strategy session, visit our website at www.boatmarketingpro.com.

Cheers!

A young woman with long brown hair and round glasses is smiling and looking at a laptop. She is wearing a blue and white striped shirt. The background is a light, bright setting. The text is overlaid on the top left of the image.

Get More *(and Better)* Traffic with Your **LOCAL BUSINESS**

BLOG

You already know that content marketing is widely considered to be essential for your business. Maybe you've already got a blog that gets some organic traffic.

What's next?

The sad truth is that most local businesses aren't blogging about the right things in the right way.

As a result, they're losing business that's going to their competitors.

If your blog is getting minimal traffic, you might be tempted not to post often or even to write it off entirely. That's a mistake. Instead, keep reading to learn about the types of content that will help attract more qualified visitors to your site and help you grow your business.



What Does the Buyer's Journey Have to Do with Your Blog?

I see a lot of local business who think that all blog topics are created equal. I cringe when I see post after post about internal company business or news that doesn't tie into defined business goals. It's a waste of valuable real estate on your website.

One of the best ways to use your blog to attract more qualified leads is to focus on topics that are relevant to your ideal customer and their journey toward buying your product or hiring you to perform a service.

A good way to start is to make a list of questions that people frequently ask about your products or services. Those can serve as the jumping off point for blog posts.

There are a few mistakes you should avoid with this type of content.

- > Avoid topics that won't move customers through your sales funnel.
- > Avoid topics that are too competitive. You want to be able to rank and as a local business,
- > Avoid topics with search volume that's too low.

Your best bet is to focus on long-tail keywords and questions. Remember that voice searches are more popular than ever, and most people ask questions when they do a query with Cortana or Siri.

To make the point, let's look at an example. If the owner of a fashion boutique were looking for blog topics, she might want to write about clothes. Her inventory is mostly casual clothing and ranges from designer jeans to office casual. She won't be speaking to her buyers' journey if she writes about:

- > Which clothing is suitable for a formal wedding?
- > Kids' clothing for back to school

Likewise, she's not going to be able to compete with articles about how to choose the right pair of jeans from sites such as Stitch Fix. And finally, she's unlikely to get a ton of traffic if she chooses an obscure topic about buttons.

The goal with this type of content is to find a sweet spot that helps people find your website AND provides them with information that moves them toward a purchase.



Linkable Content and Traffic

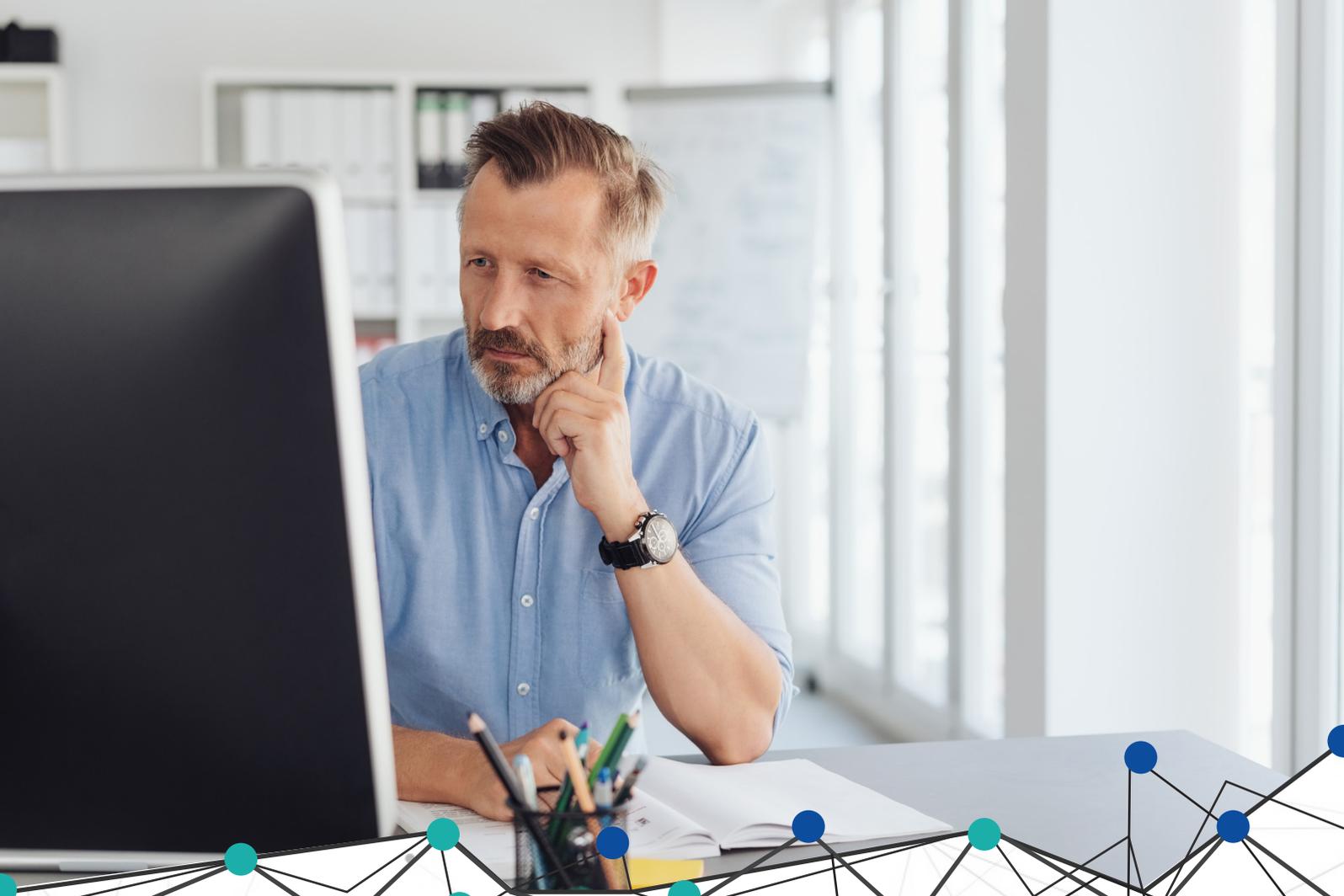
Your second option is to choose blog topics that are likely to attract backlinks over time. This type of content usually falls into one of two categories:

1. It provides actionable information that solves a problem; or
2. It contains data that will be useful to other people.

In the former category, we might be looking at a post that explains how to restore and care for cast iron pans. That would be ideal for a kitchen supply store or possibly a cooking school. In the

latter category, it might be a wedding expense infographic that helps people allocate their budgets properly, a topic that would be useful for a wedding planner or bridal boutique.

Because you want the content to be linkable and stay linkable, your best bet is to choose evergreen content. Evergreen content is content that remains useful over time. The alternative with a data-driven blog post is to commit to updating it regularly as needed to keep it relevant.



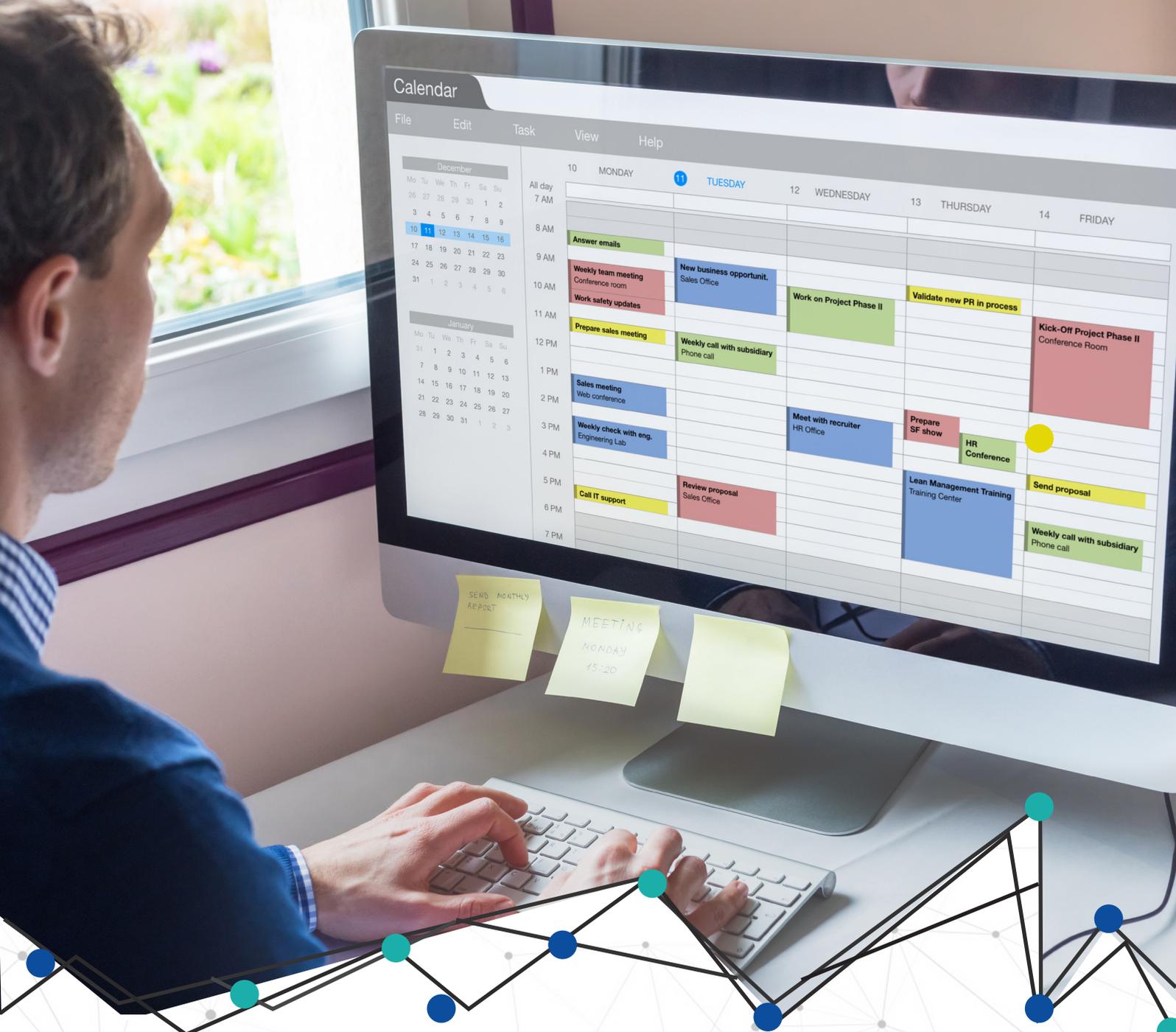
Tips for Finding Blog Topics

Thinking of blog topics can take time, so let's finish with a few tips to help you decide which topics will help you attract new visitors to your blog.

- 1.** Have a goal in mind. Each blog post you write should be written with a goal in mind, whether it's attracting more leads or getting backlinks.
- 2.** Mine your Frequently Asked Questions for blog topics. Look specifically at questions where you've provided a short answer to a question that could be fleshed out into a blog post. An example might be a question about how to use a product.
- 3.** Use Google AutoComplete to find topics. When you type a keyword into Google, you'll see a list of potential searches. These can be excellent ideas for blog topics.
- 4.** Look at Google's "People Also Ask" and "Searches Related To" sections on the results page. When you type in a question or keyword, Google will

usually list 3 questions that people also ask about the topic you're searching. If you scroll to the bottom of the page, you'll see a box with related searches. Both offer potential blog topics for you to consider.

- 5.** Use online tools to find topics. BuzzSumo is a good tool to learn what posts are trending and can offer ideas for popular questions and topics. Ahrefs' tool can help you see which topics are ranking and which have a lot of searches.
- 6.** Pay attention to the content format. There are some topics that simply won't lend themselves to blog content. If the listings you see on a search results page are mostly directory listings, remember that you'll need to outrank them to see any real SEO benefit. Choose a topic that will work as a blog post for the best results.



I suggest making a list of potential topics and creating a schedule. Make sure that you cover each topic thoroughly and break your post up with images and subheadings. If you can use related questions and long-tail keywords as headings, you'll be likely to attract traffic for multiple searches.

Blogging can be the ideal content marketing tool for small businesses if you choose your topics wisely and have a goal in mind. The information I've included here can help you turn your blog into a lead-generating powerhouse.



Marketing is always changing and the changes in 2020 have been profound, mostly because of the COVID-19 pandemic. We've all had to adjust our work and home lives as a result.

With more consumers working from home and budgetary concerns at the forefront for most people, you might be thinking that mobile marketing isn't as important as it used to be. After all, people aren't spending as much time out and a lot of the advantages of mobile marketing don't apply in the same way.

But guess what? I'm here to tell you that mobile marketing is more important than it ever has been – and you need to make room for SMS marketing in your budget right now. Here's why.

SMS Marketing Statistics

You might not be convinced that SMS marketing is worthwhile, so let's look at some statistics to give you an idea of just how popular, effective, and expected it is for companies to reach out to their customers via text.

> 75% of all consumers say they are comfortable receiving SMS messages from companies (with permission, of course).

> 75% of consumers also say that they like to receive special offers via text.

> 67% of consumers would rather text to schedule or confirm appointments than do it via the telephone.

> Text messages have a 98% open rate (compared to about 20% for emails.)

> 83% of millennials open SMS messages within 90 seconds of getting them.

> SMS messages have an average click-through rate of 36% compared to only 2% for emails.

> 50% of consumers make a purchase after receiving a text message with a coupon or discount code.

These numbers speak for themselves. Text messages are popular and effective. They also happen to be an affordable way to connect directly with your customers wherever they are.



How to Get Customers to Opt in for SMS Messages

While SMS messages are popular, you still need to get your customers' permission to send promotional information via text message. There are two easy ways to do that.

1. Send a text to the people whose mobile numbers you have and ask them to opt in. You can easily set up a text with a Y for Yes, N for No response. People who respond with a Yes can be added to a regular SMS list.

2. If you haven't already done so, start requesting mobile numbers from new leads and customers. You can then set up an automated SMS asking them to opt in for promotional offers.

Once customers have opted in, you can connect with them wherever they are.



How Expensive is SMS Marketing?



One of the biggest benefits of SMS marketing is that it is very affordable when you consider the high open and click through rates. The ROI on SMS marketing is extremely high when compared to email and other forms of marketing.

Business News Daily did an evaluation of the top SMS messaging services. SimpleTexting was their top pick. Their least expensive plan costs \$25 per month and allows businesses to send

500 SMS messages. That comes out to a cost of \$.05 per text.

By asking customers to opt in for text messaging, you can be certain that you are only paying to send text messages to people who want them. Given the high ROI of SMS marketing, it's likely that you will recoup the money you spend quickly.



Tips for Using SMS Marketing



Now, let's talk about some creative ways you can incorporate SMS messages into your marketing mix.

1. Put your call to action up front. While most text messages are only 160 characters or so, only the

first 30 or 40 characters will appear in the preview screen on a subscriber's phone. Since that preview may be the first impression they have of your message, it's a good idea to put your call to action at the top of your message. A customer who sees "Redeem your 50% coupon" in a



preview window is more likely to open your message than one who sees "Hi, it's Joe from Company Name."

2. Send coupons and discount codes. As I noted above, 75% of consumers want to receive special deals via text. You'll increase your sales and built brand loyalty by giving people what they want. You can offer a straight discount, run a buy one, get one promotion, or advertise special sale prices in a text message.

3. Use triggers to send texts. A lot of companies use text messages based on triggers. For example, you can send a text message to notify a customer that an online order has shipped, that they've abandoned an item in their shopping cart, or that you have released a new product. These are all triggers that you can use to justify connecting with your customers via text.

4. Personalize your texts. The more data you collect from your customers, the better able you will be to personalize the texts you send them. I've talked a lot about segmenting your email list, but I'd argue that segmentation is a must for text messaging. It's a great way to make your customers feel seen and appreciated.

5. Learn about your customers. Sending a short survey in an SMS message is an affordable way to conduct audience research that you can then use to improve your marketing. Just make sure that the survey works on mobile!

6. Identify your influencers. How do you know which customers will recommend you to their friends and family? You ask them! Sending your subscribers a text message with a survey or even a simple yes or no question can help you identify potential influencers and brand ambassadors. When a customer tells you that they would recommend your company, you can follow up and offer a discount code if they'll mention you on social media.

What I hope you can see is that SMS marketing is here to stay – and even with people staying close to home, it's a good investment for your business.



Try These

7 Growth Hacks

To Help Your Small Business Soar

Wouldn't it be great to find some simple tricks that would help you leap ahead of your competitors and see your small business soar to new heights?

Well, I've got good news for you. I've been thinking a lot lately about growth hacks – little tricks you can use to fast-track your growth and increase your sales and profits. By definition, a hack is meant to be simple – something

you can do right away. Sometimes hacks are clever and weird things but sometimes, they're well-documented things that small business owners overlook.

Let's focus on the later because I'm willing to bet you're not doing some of these things.

Here are 7 growth hacks that I think you need to start using – today.



#1: Use Content Upgrades to Grow Your List

You know what an upgrade is. It's something that allows you to increase the value or utility of something you've already purchased. In the case of a content upgrade, it's a free piece of content that you use to attract new subscribers and leads.

Let's say you have just published a killer blog post, but you have some content that you didn't include. Maybe it's more detail about one of your

points. Maybe it's a list of tips and tricks.

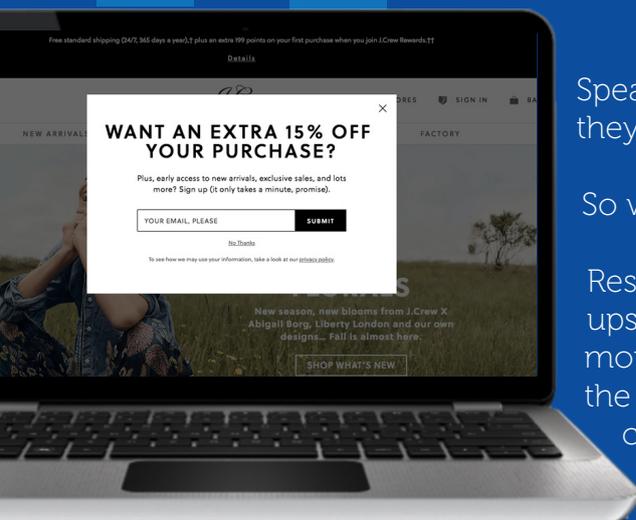
Whatever it is, try offering it as a freebie at the end of your post. You can make it your call to action or even a pop-up that appears when people try to close the window or hit the back button. Something simple like "Enter your email to get a free growth hack cheat sheet" can help you grab readers' attention and get their emails before they leave.

#2: Use Exit Intent Popups

Speaking of popups, you should be using them. I know, I know; they're annoying and some people use popup blockers.

So what?

Research shows that popups are effective and exit-intent popups are ideal because they grab visitors' attention at a crucial moment. Maybe they've looked at your product but balked at the price. A strategic popup offering a coupon or discount code could be the only impetus they need to stay on your site and buy your product.



#3: Retarget Your Visitors

What happens when someone visits your site and doesn't complete your opt-in form or buy a product? If the answer is, "Nothing" then you're missing out on a HUGE opportunity to give those visitors the nudge they need to take the next step.

Retargeting uses a tiny piece of code called a pixel to identify people who leave your site without taking a specified action. You can then show those people a retargeting ad based on what you want them to do. Some examples include:

- > Completing your opt-in form
- > Paying for items in their shopping cart
- > Scheduling an appointment

I recommend Facebook and Google retargeting for the best results.

#4: Prioritize Social Proof Use Social proof

Don't underestimate the importance of social proof in the form of customer reviews, testimonials, and comments. According to Bright Local, 84% of consumers trust online reviews and testimonials as much as they would a personal

recommendation from a friend. I'm amazed by how many local businesses don't highlight social proof on their websites. Your reviews and testimonials should be front and center, not hidden on some interior page.

It's not reasonable to expect your site's visitors to go hunting for what they need. Make it easy for them to find it and you'll almost certainly see an increase in your conversions and sales.

#5: Use Calls to Action on Social Media

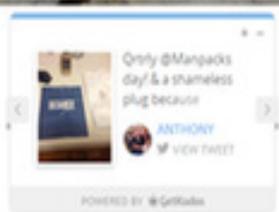
You wouldn't create a landing page or publish a blog post without a call to action – or at least

I hope you wouldn't! But I'm always seeing social media posts from local businesses that don't include a call to action.

Don't make the same mistake.

A call to action is needed because it tells the people who see your post what you want them to do next. Believe it or not, they may not know! Whether you want them to

redeem a coupon, enter a contest, sign up for your list, or leave a comment, you need to tell them if you want to get the result you expect. They're not mind readers!



Give a gift



Christmas? Birthday? Bar Mitzvah? Father's Day? We've got you

Razor Blades

Manpacks now offers 4 premium, 5-blade razors for just \$9/month—





FEEDBACK

#6: Solicit Customer Feedback

Speaking of asking for things, when was the last time you asked your customers or clients for their opinions? I'm willing to get it's been a while, and it's time to end the drought.

Customer feedback is one of the most valuable things you can get. People want to tell you what they think of your business. If you wait for them to tell you, it's probable you'll hear more negative feedback than positive because people are often more motivated to sound off about what they don't like than they are about what they do.

So, whether you do it in a social media post, an email, or a survey, it's time to start collecting information from your most valuable study group: your customers!



#7: Focus on Content Marketing

You're probably tired of hearing me go on about content marketing. I'm mentioning it again here because while B2B companies are mostly on board with content marketing as a growth strategy, B2C companies are still slow to prioritize content marketing.

You don't need to try all these things, but adding

even one to your marketing mix can help you attract new customers and retain existing customers:

- Social media posts
- Blog posts
- YouTube videos

You don't need to be publishing new content every day for it to be effective. Doing one or two blog posts or Facebook posts per week is enough to get your started. If you're not using social media at all, choose one site as your focus. I think you'll be happy with the results.

These seven hacks aren't rocket science. They're things that you can start doing immediately to see an increase in your conversions and sales. Even choosing one can help you move in the right direction – so what are you waiting for? Go!

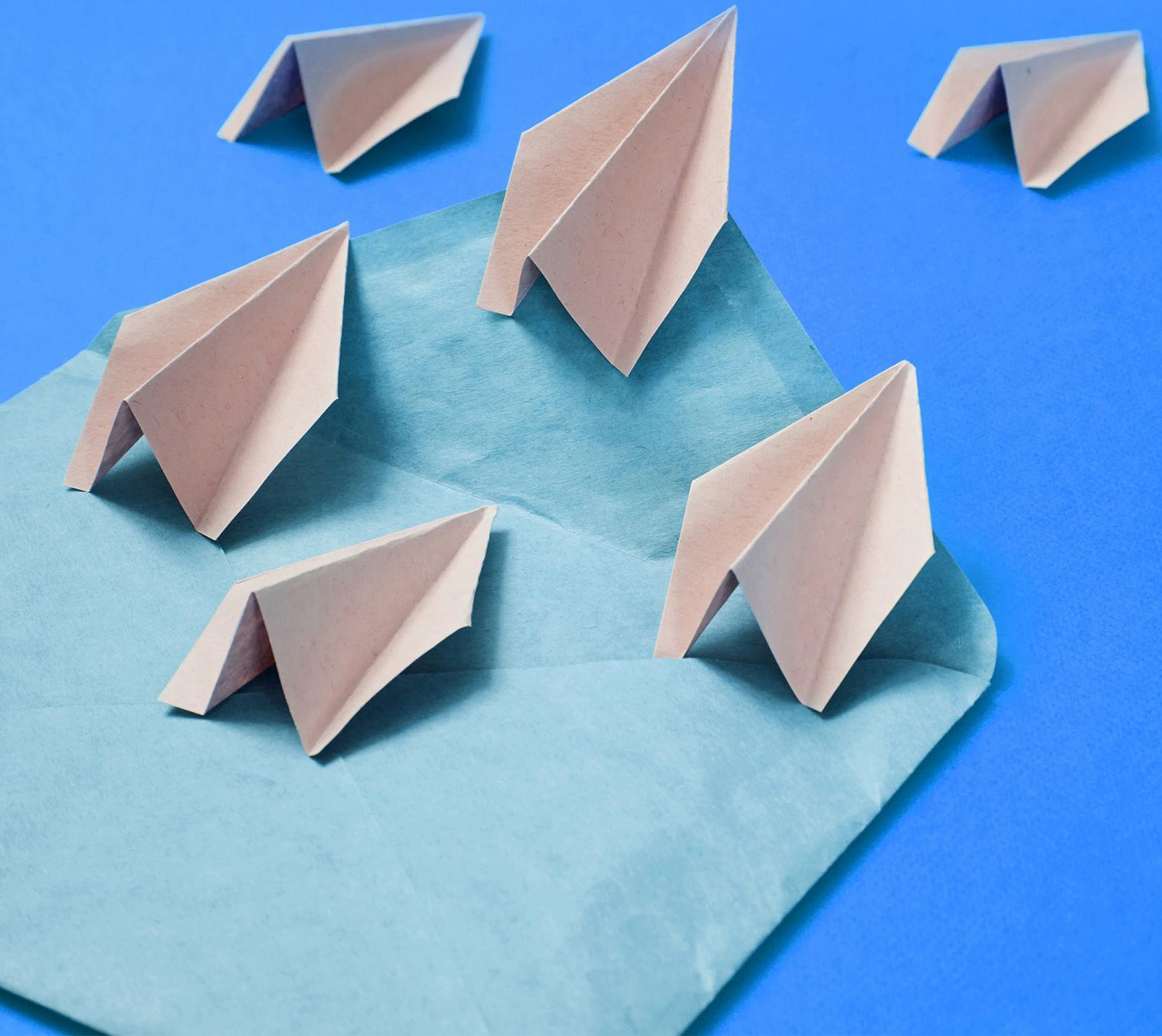


How to Increase Customer Retention -----With Email-----

New customers are great. There's something undeniably exciting about attracting someone to your business who might not have found it otherwise. That's the reason that new customer marketing gets all the attention. It's the glitziest way to grow a business.

But guess what? It's not a very cost effective way to grow a business, which is why it never ceases to amaze me that more local businesses ignore customer retention as a growth strategy.

If you're wondering the best way to increase your customer retention, look no further. Email is the answer.



ENGAGEMENT



Onboard New Customers and Subscribers

Your plan to retain customers should kick off at the beginning of your relationship. A lot of businesses make the mistake of ignoring customer retention until people are at the point of leaving. We'll talk about that later, but for now, let's talk about what you can do after someone buys from you for the first time or subscribes to your list.

The first email you send should be a welcome email, but it can be more. After you've welcomed a new customer you should consider getting them to engage with your brand in another way. Here are some examples.

- Offering them a discount code or coupon to get them to make a follow-up purchase.
- Ask them to respond to questions, so you can segment your list and send emails that feel personalized.
- Ask them to write a review

If a subscriber doesn't open or engage with your welcome email, you can consider nudging them with a follow-up email. Sometimes it can work to offer them a discount or coupon but be wary of doing that with customers who haven't bought from you before. You don't want them to think of yours as a discount brand.

Send Emails Based on Customers' Behavior



The question of when to email customers is one that looms large for small business owners. I think one of the best methods is to use a customer's behavior as a trigger for an email.

For example, say a customer has just bought one of your products. You may want to consider sending a confirmation email that suggests up-sell or cross-sell products to them. If you choose your product recommendations wisely, you might end up with a bigger sale – and a customer who's more committed to your brand than they were before you emailed them.

Here are some other examples of behaviorally triggered emails:

- > When a customer reaches a given point in their journey with you, send them a survey to ask for their opinion so far.
- > Ask them to review your product or service.
- > Send an email reminding them that they have items in their shopping cart.
- > Send an email suggesting products based on their previous purchases.

Emails like these can benefit your business in several ways. First, they offer an affordable way to acknowledge a customer's activity and let them know that you care about their business. Second, they can help you gather valuable information about what kinds of emails your customers want to get.

And finally, each time you "touch" a customer via email, you're solidifying their opinion of your brand and – hopefully – increasing their loyalty to you.

Segment Your Emails to Increase Their Appeal

If you send out a survey or behaviorally-triggered emails, you can use the information you collect to segment your list. Then, when you reach out to subscribers, you can do it in a way that's designed to appeal to their individual needs and wants.

Let's look at an example. Say you own a sporting goods store. If you collect information about which sports and equipment customers are interested in, you can use that data to send emails that will appeal to your customers' personal interests. A customer who is interested

in winter sports might get emails when you have a sale on ski gear or introduce skate sharpening to your store.

You may even market one product in three different ways focusing on different benefits and uses for it. The specifics are up to you, but the main point is that segmentation can help you provide relevant email content to your subscribers.

Send Re-Engagement Emails

What happens when a customer is at risk of abandoning your brand? You can get depressed about it or you can look at it the way I do – as an opportunity.

Customers don't always abandon brands because they're dissatisfied. They might be cutting back on their spending or they might think they've seen everything you have to offer.

Here are some suggestions for bringing them back into the fold.

1. Offer them an upgrade or a freebie. Sometimes, injecting a little bit of excitement into the relationships is the way to go. A customer who's using a basic product may appreciate the added features of an upgrade and reengage with your brand.

2. Solicit feedback. A dissatisfied customer may need to know that you care about their business, and the feedback you collect can help you improve your products and services.





3. Offer value. Sometimes, a long-term customer might need a reminder of why they bought from you in the first place. Let them know about updated features and products or give them some tips for using the products they've bought.

If you can take a customer on the verge of leaving and re-engage them, you can give your sales a boost and improve your retention rate at the same time.

Send Exit Emails

What happens when you know that a customer is leaving? There's nothing you can do to stop them but that doesn't mean you should do nothing.

What I suggest is sending an exit email. It may be useful to:

- Collect information about why the customer is leaving
- Keep the door open for a future relationship
- Leave things on a positive note

The last thing you want to do is make customers happy they've left. Be gracious and express gratitude for their business and let them know that you'll be there if they decide they want to reengage with you.

I hope you see the benefit of using email to increase customer retention. Retention may be less glamorous than new customer acquisition, but it's also less expensive – and it's also the best growth strategy I know.



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