



# Adventures in marketing your online business

BUILD YOUR CUSTOMER BASE, YOUR BRAND  
AND YOUR SALES WITH THESE STRATEGIES.



# It's time for an adventure

Your online business is up and running – and growing. You've taken steps to ensure that your site is trustworthy, and that it provides a seamless shopping experience. But your work is far from over.

Now it's time to focus on marketing your business, so you can attract even more new customers while keeping your current ones engaged and satisfied.



E-commerce marketing may seem daunting at first, but building a loyal customer base – and your brand – can be fun. And, it may not be as time-consuming or as difficult as you think. This guide will help you get started on this new adventure, with helpful tips on how to:

- ✦ Raise your profile
- ✦ Meet customers' high expectations for email
- ✦ Get serious about using social media
- ✦ Reward your best customers
- ✦ Expand your presence
- ✦ Be proactive about planning for key shopping seasons

# Your cheat sheet



## Use personalised content for one-to-one marketing

Send customers personalised emails, re-target them based on how they engage with your emails, and create a customised experience on your site using dynamic content. When you're ready, consider search engine marketing (SEM) to attract new business.



## Get more strategic with email marketing

Email remains a top marketing tool. Make sure your messages look professional – and not at all like spam.



## Use social media to drive sales

Use sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest and Instagram to interact with customers. Be prepared to keep the conversation fresh.



## Ramp up early for selling around major holidays

Attract business before, during and after major holidays by focusing on search engine optimisation (SEO), making your site easy to navigate, and monitoring search trends.



## Sell locally – and in popular online marketplaces

Use free online tools and services, and start selling in popular marketplaces, to attract business from your area and beyond.



## Develop loyalty and rewards programmes

Show your customers that they're valued, and earn their repeat business.



# USE PERSONALISED CONTENT FOR ONE-TO-ONE MARKETING

# Make interactions meaningful and memorable

Personalised content is a powerful tool for rising above the marketing 'noise' that pervades customers' online experience.

## USE SEM (EVENTUALLY) TO RAISE YOUR PROFILE ONLINE

Another way to stand out from the crowd is through search engine marketing (SEM). With paid online advertising, you can raise the visibility of your e-commerce business on search engine results pages, making customers more likely to encounter your brand as they search for specific products or services.

"SEM is literally like raising your hand on a street corner," says Clay Schulenburg, vice president of search marketing at full-service marketing agency

He recommends that merchants have a clear understanding of who their target customers are – and where they are likely to find them – before delving into SEM. "SEM does not create demand. It helps you to harvest existing demand," he explains.

Mark Nelson, executive vice president of information sciences and technology at Kiosk, suggests that businesses hire an expert resource to help them explore SEM when they're confident their business model is working and they're ready to scale. "There are a lot of intricacies with SEM," he says. "Most businesses need help not only to develop a well-thought-out plan, but also to execute it."

## USE THESE 3 STRATEGIES TO HELP YOU STAND OUT:

1

### Personalised email

You want all your customers to feel like VIPs. But they may not if you send only generic emails, or sell overtly in every message. Inform or entertain customers by sending links to related blogs, newsletters, online videos and more. And don't forget the simple things, like sending customers birthday emails that present special offers.

2

### Personalised re-targeting

Re-targeting is cookie-based technology that allows you to 'follow' customers online based on how they've interacted with your website or with emails.<sup>1</sup> The level of engagement – for example, whether a customer forwarded an email or clicked on a link, or left an item in a shopping basket – will help you determine whether and how to re-target.

3

### Website personalisation

Today, there are many plugins and platforms available, such as [Personalize](#), to make custom tailoring of site content – based on customers' preferences and interactions – easier and more affordable for small businesses.



# GET MORE STRATEGIC WITH EMAIL MARKETING

# Use professional – looking, to-the-point emails to increase open rates

With so many ways to connect with customers through digital channels, you might think email isn't the vital marketing tool it used to be. Not so, as Marketing Sherpa reports, "72% of consumers say that email is their favoured method of communication with companies they do business with."\* So it makes good sense to get it right. Follow these tips for email success from [Infusionsoft](#), a leading marketing automation and CRM platform.

1

## Make sure your email displays well on all screen sizes

Gone are the days of reading emails only on desktop computers. Now there are hundreds of screen sizes from watches to tablets to account for. Use responsive templates that adapt to all screen sizes, and highlight direct messaging and the call to action in your emails, no matter the audience's device.

2

## Create an email calendar

It's not just about getting people on your email list—you have to keep them too. And getting too many emails is a leading reason why people unsubscribe from lists. Organising your email strategy into a calendar helps you visualise how many emails you're sending and make needed adjustments.

3

## Use segmentation to deliver personalised emails

Sending the same email to your entire list is a sure way to create email fatigue—and unsubscribes. Write directly to your various audiences. Segment your database so you can provide personalised messaging to new contacts, leads, opportunities, and customers. Your open rates will rise—and so will your conversion button that says "Shop Now—as images are more compelling than words. In the body copy, though, text links are preferred.

“Customer segmentation is about reaching the right people at the right time on the right channel—and intentionally showing care to nurture the existing relationship”.

Anati Zubia, demand generation strategist, Infusionsoft



1

### Use marketing automation technology

Use information from your Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to segment your database into marketable lists. Then build specific, automated email campaigns to nurture those leads. This allows you to send, test, and track your email campaigns to see what works and what doesn't. Plus, it frees you up to focus on other things.

2

### Know local anti-spam law

Do your homework on anti-spam laws in countries where you're sending emails. Always include your physical address and a clear way for users to unsubscribe. Bending the rules is never worth it and can really come back to bite you—even to the point of blacklisting, which will prevent your emails from landing in your recipients' inboxes.

3

### Work with a third party email provider

There's no need for you to reinvent the wheel when email providers have years of experience developing best practices for email marketing. More importantly, their email servers should be whitelisted, so you don't need to worry about being categorised as a spammer.





# USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO DRIVE SALES



## Engage with customers in online social channels

Building relationships with customers through social channels such as Facebook and Twitter can help you grow your brand and generate sales – especially through referrals. However, if you decide to use social platforms as part of your marketing strategy, be prepared for significant hands-on effort.

To gain followers, you may need to update your content regularly. If a customer reaches out to you, best practice is to respond promptly – otherwise, you risk damaging your business's reputation.



It's important to do your homework before jumping into the social sphere. These resources<sup>3</sup> can help:

For more tips, see the



#### Twitter

business site lets you explore curated content based on specific business goals, from creating or managing a Twitter presence to finding leads on .



#### Facebook

provides a Basics page with a step-by-step, general overview of how to use the social networking site to help your business grow or meet other specific business goals.

A PICTURE IS WORTH  
1,000 NEW CUSTOMERS  
(GIVE OR TAKE).

Try using these 2 highly  
visual social platforms to  
boost awareness of your  
business and brand:



#### Instagram

a photo-sharing, video-sharing and social networking service. Users can share videos and pictures across multiple social networking platforms. Like Twitter, Instagram supports hashtags, which you can use to attract attention from your target audience.



#### Pinterest

is like a big bulletin board where you can 'pin' content and get people talking about what you're sharing. The site offers business accounts and features 'Promoted Pins' that let you track and build campaigns around user engagement.



DEVELOP LOYALTY AND  
REWARDS PROGRAMMES.

# Make interactions meaningful and memorable

Rewards and loyalty programmes show your customers how much their business is valued and can increase customer engagement, which can equate to higher spend. Sarah Owen, senior vice president of Heartland Payment System's gift and loyalty division, explains the difference:



## Loyalty programmes

"A loyalty programme makes a personal connection between the brand and the consumer, tailoring offers based on the consumer's profile," says Owen. "Loyalty programmes are starting to be described as 'consumer engagement programmes' since they're focused on providing personalised offers based on the customer's experience with the brand, thus increasing engagement."



## Rewards programmes

"Rewards programmes don't look at the customer; they look at the behaviour," says Owen. "Many successful rewards programmes leverage a tiered approach, where customers are offered an easy-to-earn reward for participating in the programme, and then greater rewards as their engagement deepens. An easy way to do this is to implement a points programme, where customers earn points for certain behaviour and redeem them for rewards."



## Experiential rewards

Owen says, "It's also important to understand that experiential rewards can cause greater engagement and loyalty, and can actually cost less money. A good way to implement this is via a tiered programme (silver, gold, platinum members). As you get to higher tiers you can participate in different types of rewards, such as private shopping opportunities, secret items or member challenges. Another way is to let customers use their points to access those same types of rewards."

Before establishing a loyalty or rewards programme, Owen recommends the following points:

1

**Define the goal**

“Understanding what your programme should accomplish is the first step,” she says. For example, do you want to acquire new customers? Increase site visits of existing customers? Raise average order values?

2

**Define your customers**

To understand what motivates your customers, examine each customer segment and whether you want that segment included in your programme. For instance, identifying regular buyers is important because their repeat business is key to your long-term success. “Providing a level of status showing recognition and appreciation, along with access to exclusive experiences or rewards, goes a long way to increasing engagement with this segment.”

3

**Build your value offer based on customer experience**

Once you’ve defined your goals and your customers, you can begin to craft your programme. Keep in mind what motivates your target customers, and focus your offer on providing value that will excite your customer base.

4

**Promote your programme**

Owen says, “You need to constantly remind your customers of the great offers that they receive by actively participating in your loyalty programme. An omni-channel approach ensures you’re communicating the way your customers prefer.”



Now that you've launched your programme, leverage the data to develop and understand customer segments, and refresh your programme by offering different one-time promotions to segments based on what is appealing to them and what you want to achieve.





# SELL LOCALLY – AND IN POPULAR ONLINE MARKETPLACES



# Connect with customers in your own backyard

If you have a bricks-and-mortar location in addition to your online business, several services can help new customers find you. Two examples:



## Google My Business

This recently launched free service is designed to help small businesses increase their online presence across Google Search, Maps, and Google+. Think of Google My Business as a Yellow Pages-type service on Google, which reports that one in 5 searches on its search engine is related to location.<sup>4</sup> You can use keywords, images and videos, and encourage user reviews to help raise your visibility.



## Yelp

Yelp is a review site and app that publishes crowd-sourced reviews about local businesses. The service is essentially 'word of mouth' marketing online. It does require regular monitoring, however. You'll need to address any negative reviews promptly and connect with customers who love what you do. You can also set up your own business page on Yelp.



# Expanding your customer base?

Leverage marketplaces. Attract shoppers from countries around the world through popular online marketplaces like these:

The eBay logo is displayed in white lowercase letters within a light blue circular background.

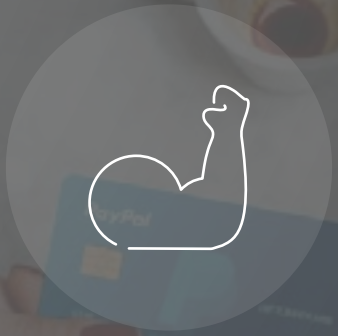
## eBay

Known as 'the world's online marketplace', eBay has millions of active users worldwide.<sup>6</sup> The Build Your Business site has tips, tools, and more for selling on [eBay](#).

The Etsy logo is a large, white, serif capital letter 'E' centered within a light blue circular background.

## Etsy

If your focus is selling handmade goods, vintage items, or craft supplies, you might want to open an [Etsy](#) shop.



RAMP UP EARLY FOR SELLING  
AROUND MAJOR HOLIDAYS.

# Attract new business you can keep all year

Major holidays present an opportunity for your business to earn new customers and deepen relationships with existing ones by offering special promotions – but you need to plan ahead.

## ANOTHER TIP

Use Google tools to stay on top of holiday shopping trends.

Optimise your online ad strategies during major holidays by monitoring [Google Trends](#) pages to see the searches most popular in geographic regions around the globe. The site can help you identify emerging searches that might benefit your business.

For example, if you sell artisan chocolates, and you notice there is a spike in searches for artisan chocolates among shoppers in Manchester, you can get in front of those customers online with a locally targeted [Google AdWords](#) campaign.

[Learn more](#) about using Google AdWords to target ads to specific geographic locations.

1

### Optimise for search

Update your keywords for better SEO, adding any product or category keywords you know will be hot sellers this year (for example, 'Father's Day gifts' or 'Father's Day'). If you have the budget, consider investing in paid search campaigns. You bid for ad placement in a search engine's sponsored links for keywords related to your business; you pay the search engine a small fee for each click.

2

### Create 'quick navigation' paths

Make it easy for customers to find what they came looking for – and what they didn't even know they wanted – by adding navigational elements (quick links) to your home page, linking shoppers directly to seasonal bestsellers.

3

### Expand email lists

Make it easy for customers to provide email addresses as soon as they arrive at your site. Enticing them with a special offer, such as '10% off your first purchase,' can help. Follow up with an email campaign, thanking them for visiting and letting them know about products, services or offers they might have missed.

4

### Build holiday promotions into your social media efforts

Launch a holiday promotion through your Facebook page and Twitter account, offering special coupons to people who follow you online. Fans are likely to forward promotions and discount offers to family and friends, bringing more first-time visitors to your website during major holidays – and all year round.

# Set a course for sales success

## CITATIONS

<sup>1</sup> For more on re-targeting banner ad campaigns and re-marketing strategies, see the

<sup>2</sup> Links to this and other tools are provided for informational purposes and in no way represents an endorsement or approval by PayPal Inc.

<sup>3</sup>

<sup>4</sup> "comScore Plan Metrix Key Measure Report [PC only, Home and Work audiences]," July 2014.

<sup>6</sup>

Ready to raise the profile of your business and strengthen relationships with customers?

Read Adventures in marketing your online business for more ideas on building out your sales and marketing strategy.

Visit [adventures.paypal.com](#) to learn more.



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