

THE PROSPEROUS

PARTNER

THE FUTURE OF
f facebook.
MARKETING FOR
LOCAL BUSINESSES

How to Use **yelp** 
TO DOMINATE
YOUR COMPETITORS

6
WINNING
CONTENT
MARKETING
STRATEGIES
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**25 MUST-HAVE
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When was the last time you updated your website or did an audit of its features? A good website must evolve with the times. Research shows that the average web user will wait only about six seconds for a page to load, and has minimal patience for things like complicated navigation or broken links. It's your responsibility to do what you can to ensure that visitors to your website have a smooth and enjoyable experience that will encourage them to visit again – or to come to your physical location and make a purchase.

Welcome To The Prosperous Partner

Thanks for checking out our 6th issue of The Prosperous Partner, 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,

Eddie Hill



Prosperous Internet Marketing Inc., based in Northwest Florida, is one of the leading small business marketing services in North America for over five 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



6 WINNING CONTENT MARKETING STRATEGIES FOR LOCAL BUSINESS

As a small business owner, you know that effective online marketing plays a significant role in the success of your company. The competition for internet users' attention is fierce, and if you want to make your company stand out from the competition, you have to stretch your marketing budget as far as you can. You might not have the money to

take out Google ads or even to pay for Facebook advertising, but that doesn't mean that you have to accept lackluster marketing results.

The key to help your company succeed is to make use of content marketing. "Content isn't just words on a page, It's everything you put out there on the web to engage your audience."

1. CONCENTRATE YOUR CONTENT CREATION EFFORTS ON EVERGREEN CONTENT.

The key is to find topics that will interest your current and future customers for some time to come. Some examples might include how-to guides, tutorials, frequently asked questions, and posts addressing problems that are common to your customers. For example, if you own an apparel store, a post about dressing different body types could have a long life online because it will always be of concern to the people who shop at your store. You can and should re-post evergreen content periodically, and make updates as needed.

If you know anything at all about search engine optimization (SEO), you know that it's a broad topic and one that is constantly changing. In the early days of the internet, all a webmaster had to do was stuff websites with keywords to get a high rank on Google. Today, search algorithms are very sophisticated. Keyword density is only one small piece of the puzzle.

There are certainly sources where you can buy backlinks, but that's considered a "black hat" SEO practice and is just as likely to earn you a penalty from Google as it is to bring traffic to your website. Instead, look for guest blogging opportunities on websites that are relevant to your business. You can also try to get your site listed in industry directories.



3. USE SOCIAL MEDIA WISELY.

A lot of small companies make the mistake of looking at Facebook (or Twitter or Instagram) as a way to advertise themselves. The problem with that is that it completely leaves out the social aspects of social media. The people who follow you on social media are not doing so because they want to be at the receiving end of an endless stream of promotional messages. They do it because they want to be entertained, engaged, and informed.

"At least 80% of your social media content should be aimed at providing value to your followers." That means that for every five things you post, four of them should be entertaining, relevant, and devoid of any overt sales pitches. The other one can be a direct marketing appeal, but even then, you should make sure to include something of value for your followers.

4. ENCOURAGE READERS AND FOLLOWERS TO SHARE YOUR CONTENT.

The whole point of content marketing is to bring new visitors to your website and ultimately, to your business. For that reason, it isn't enough simply to create compelling content; you must also make that content interesting enough to share, and provide people with the means of sharing it.

To make it interesting, write a great headline – many people who write online say that they spend as much time on their headlines as they do on the rest of their content combined – that includes numbers or compelling words like tips, tricks, ways, ideas, lessons, or facts.

It's also important to keep your headline short, no more than 65 words so that the whole title can be viewed on a list of Google search results. In terms of making it shareable, you should embed social sharing buttons on your website and blog, and actively encourage your followers to share your content. You won't want to do it on every post, but on something that you think is especially likely to attract new customers, come right out and ask people to share what you've created.



5. FIND WAYS TO MAKE YOUR CONTENT VISUALLY COMPELLING.

The average internet user is exposed to hundreds of pieces of content per day. You can make yours stand out by adding compelling images – originals are best, since many stock photos are generic and not very exciting – infographics, or videos are even better. An infographic can be an especially good way to share a large volume of information or data. It's easier to read and absorb than an article would be, and infographics are highly shareable, and videos are naturally more engaging for visitors than reading a lot of text.

6. SUBMIT A PRESS RELEASE.

Don't underestimate a well written PR, it's like a news nugget that online search engines like Google, Yahoo and Bing love as well as it attracts local press. It's an easy way to boost your online visibility, and marketing your business at the same time. Once you've submitted your PR online – contact your local news media and ask if they would publish it too – you may be surprised!

Whether you do it yourself through directories like PR Web or PR Newswire or hire marketing agency to create and submit it on your behalf, press releases are a great content marketing strategy for any local business.



If you use these six strategies, your content will always be compelling, entertaining, and valuable to your followers. The more value you provide, the more likely it is that one-time customers will become repeat customers, and that new visitors to your website will end up buying from you.

THE FUTURE OF facebook[®] MARKETING FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

There is no question that Facebook is one of the most effective online marketing platforms for small businesses. Setting up an account is free, and you can post almost any kind of content within reasonable limitations, including written content, photographs, videos, and more. Paid advertising on Facebook is relatively inexpensive and can be capped to

fit in any marketing budget, large or small.

The key to using Facebook wisely is to stay on top of new trends as they emerge. You can't afford to use the same marketing strategy that you used five years ago – or even one year ago. If you want the time and money you spend on Facebook marketing to pay off, you must find ways to keep up with changes on Facebook and use them to your advantage.



DYNAMIC PRODUCT ADS

Facebook advertising is well-established as a way for businesses to get in touch with both existing and prospective clients. One of the most promising new options for Facebook advertising is the Dynamic Product Ad. These ads work by showing customers one or more of your products based on their activity on your website or mobile app.

There are only a few easy steps required to set up a Dynamic Product Ad:

1. Upload your product catalog to Facebook. A product catalog is a list of the products you want to advertise on Facebook, and it includes several pieces of information about each product. You can find step-by-step instructions for creating a product catalog [here](#).
2. Put the Facebook pixel on your website and modify it to include the products you want to

promote. If you're using a mobile app, you'll have to install App Events to track activity. The purpose of doing this is to help track user activity so you can target your ads.

3. Create your ad template. You can use any products you want to use from your product catalog. For example, you might want to show a client who looked at a down coat some boots, scarves, and other outdoor apparel.
4. Run your ad and track the results. As they do with any other ad, Facebook will provide you with detailed data so you can modify your ad as needed.

The benefit of using Dynamic Product Ads is that they are a powerful form of retargeting, and you have the opportunity to display a moving ad with a series of pictures – something that's more eye-catching than a traditional, static ad.



FACEBOOK LIVE VIDEO

Videos have been a popular form of Facebook marketing for some time, but they're more important now than ever before thanks to the addition of Facebook Live Video. Live Video provides companies with the opportunity to interact directly with their followers in real time so they can take questions, share up-to-date information, and provide real value to their customers.

As of this writing, Facebook Live Video is not available to everyone. However, the chances are good that it will be before long. It's an ideal way to answer questions from customers, unveil a new product, or share a demonstration of a product. You can also use it to give a virtual tour of your plant or store, or to show employees at work.

If you have access to Live Video, you can start broadcasting from your mobile device. Facebook has recently made it possible for users to broadcast using other video tools, but if you are on mobile, all you need to do is click on the "Live" icon in the status update box – it looks like the silhouette of a person – and follow the steps.





CANVAS ADS FOR MOBILE USERS

One of the primary complaints about mobile advertising is that even if a user clicks on your ad, it takes too long for them to get to your page – resulting in a high bounce rate. Facebook has decided to attack this problem directly by introducing Canvas Ads, a new immersive ad experience for mobile users.

In a nutshell, a Canvas Ad is a mobile ad that loads nearly instantaneously when a user clicks on it. It redirects them to a full-screen ad that is fully interactive. You can use photographs, videos, text, and call to action buttons in any combination that works for your brand.

Some of the interactive features allow users to zoom in on a particular product, swipe through to view a carousel of images, or even tilt their phones to see a panoramic image. These features allow advertisers to be creative and provide their customers with unique mobile content that they can engage with in whatever way suits them best.

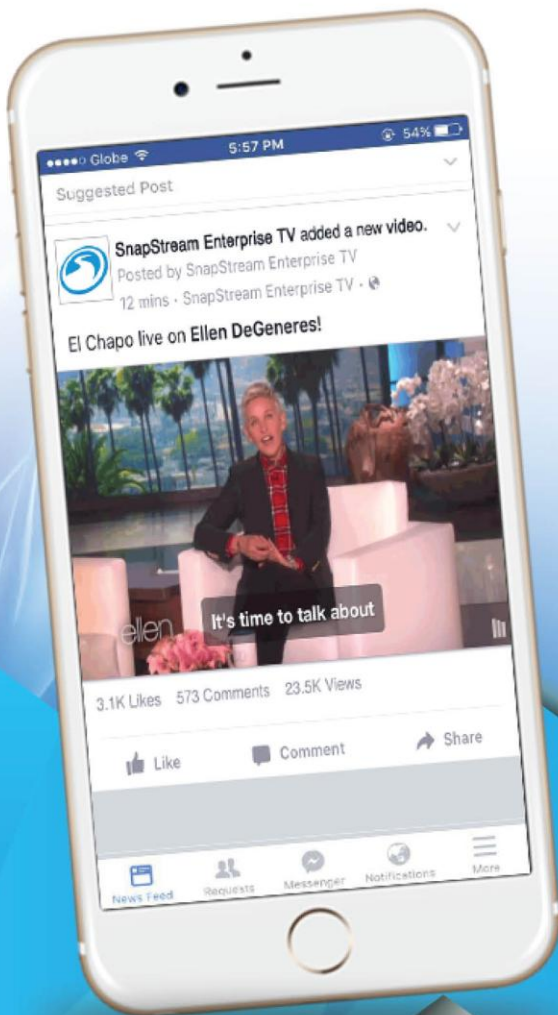




VIDEO CAPTIONING

Recently, Facebook introduced automatic playback for videos that appear in users' newsfeeds. While this might be seen as a boon for advertisers, it is often an annoyance for users who might be startled by a sudden burst of sound from a video.

One option that allows you to take advantage of the benefits of automatic playback and minimize irritation is the addition of video captions. When you add captions to your video, what happens is that the captions play automatically (with the sound muted.) The movement of the video will still catch the eye, but without the troubling (and often unwanted) sound that accompanies it. If a user wants to add sound, all they need to do is click the speaker icon on the video to enable the sound playback.



CUSTOMER SERVICE TOOLS

Aware that an increasingly large number of businesses are using Facebook for customer service, the social media site has added some options to help businesses manage their responses to customers. One is the addition of the Response Time, which shows visitors to your page how long it typically takes you to respond to comments and inquiries. You don't have to do anything to add this feature. It appears automatically and will give you special status if you respond in less than five minutes.

The other customer service tool you need to know about is the status feature, which allows you to set an "Away" status when you know you won't be available to respond to questions. That's a feature that can help decrease the chances that a customer will be annoyed if you don't respond right away.

The world of Facebook marketing is constantly evolving. As the above features become commonplace and available to everybody, there is no doubt that Mark Zuckerberg and his team will continue to add new advertising options.

How to Use **yelp**

TO DOMINATE

YOUR COMPETITORS



You're a small business owner, so you already know about Yelp. It's one of the most popular websites available when it comes to online reviews. A good average rating on Yelp is essential for local businesses. Research shows that close to 90% of all consumers check online reviews before patronizing a business, and that means that you

can't afford to ignore Yelp when managing your online reputation.

But perhaps the most important thing you need to know about Yelp, if you don't already, is that it's now free to use. While they do have paid advertising options, you don't need to spend any money to dominate your competitors completely. Here's what you need to do.

1

CLAIM YOUR BUSINESS IF YOU HAVE NOT ALREADY DONE SO.



You don't have to have claimed your business to have reviews on Yelp, but there is no excuse for not claiming it. All you have to do is look up your business and click the "Claim My Business" button. You will then be walked through a series of steps to claim your business.

2

CONFIRM YOUR PROFILE INFO ACCURACY.

Once your business is claimed and confirmed, you need to update your profile and make sure all of the information listed is accurate. Check all of the following and correct any mistakes you find:

- Your business name, address, and phone number (NAP) listing. Make sure that your listing is correct and that it appears the same way as it does on your website. Consistency is a key component of local SEO. You should also check to make sure your map location is correct.
- The URL and hyperlink to your website. Make sure that you have a working link, and that it directs users to the page you want them to see first.

- Your menu. If you own a restaurant or other establishment that serves food, make sure that you have a working link to your menu so that users can see what you have to offer.
- Pictures of your business. Most experts agree that the ideal number of images to include is 10 (or more if you prefer). You can show pictures of the exterior of your business, as well as the interior, your products, and your staff.
- Fill out the "About Your Business" section completely. There are three parts to it: Specialties, Business History, and Bio. The total character limit is 3,000, so that means you can use between 150 and 300 words per section. One of the things you should do in your write-up is to differentiate yourself from the competition. Are your prices lower than theirs? Do you have longer hours? Mention it here.
- Your hours of operation, service areas, and payment options.

3

LOOK AT THE EXISTING REVIEWS ON YOUR PAGE AND RESPOND AS NEEDED.

There may not be much to gain by responding to old reviews, but it can't hurt – particularly if some of the reviews are negative. One of the keys to using Yelp effectively is to engage with the people who review your business, even when you disagree with what they're saying.

4

FIND SUBTLE WAYS TO ENCOURAGE CUSTOMERS TO LEAVE REVIEWS.

For example, you might include a card with a note asking them to leave a review, or link to your Yelp page when you sent emails out to your list.



5

MONITOR REVIEWS AND RESPOND TO THEM IN A TIMELY MANNER.

. It can be very upsetting to get a negative review, and there's no question that some customers are unduly harsh when leaving reviews. However, the way you respond is going to say a lot to people about how you run your business, so be careful not to take any review personally. When you do get a negative review, it's important to check your ego, remember that your goal is to please your customers, and try to read between the lines to identify the reviewer's real problem. Even if it's cloaked in insulting language, the chances are good that there's some truth in every review you get. Few people would go out of their way to fabricate a review. Once you have identified the core problem, you can respond.

We've included some useful tips for responding to negative reviews in a way that will placate the reviewer and show readers that you take customer satisfaction seriously:

- » Thank them for taking the time to write a review. It might gall to thank someone who tore you apart, but do it.

- » Validate what they said in their review. This is not the time to be argumentative or to go into denial. You don't have to agree with any name-calling, but you can certainly acknowledge that they had a bad experience.
- » Apologize for whatever you or your staff did wrong. If a customer waited over an hour for a table or was overcharged, don't dance around the issue. Come right out and apologize for it without making excuses.
- » Offer to correct the situation. If they were overcharged, give them a refund and a coupon. If they had a negative service experience, give them a voucher for a free drink or appetizer and let them know that you want to make it right.
- » Keep the lines of communication open. For particularly volatile reviews – or those that might take more than one message to resolve – provide either a phone number or email address to get the conversation off of Yelp. You want customers to know that you care, but you are under no obligation to carry out a contentious back-and-forth in public.

You should make sure to monitor reviews every day and respond within 24 hours.

6**TRACK YOUR YELP METRICS.**

Find out how much traffic your profile is getting, where it ranks in Yelp's search results, and what actions users are taking after they view your profile. For example, you can find out how many people clicked through to your website, and how many mobile check-ins you received.

7**CHECK OUT YOUR COMPETITORS' PAGES AND LOOK FOR OPPORTUNITIES.**

Looking at competitors' reviews is a fantastic way to keep abreast of what they're doing. If you notice a slew of complaints – or a host of positive reviews – you can use that information to update your profile and improve your customers' experience.



The bottom line is that Yelp is an extremely effective, free tool that you can use to advertise your business, track your competitors, and engage with customers on an ongoing basis. Even a negative review can turn into an opportunity to improve your brand recognition and customer loyalty.



25 MUST-HAVE FEATURES YOUR WEBSITE NEEDS

When was the last time you updated your website or did an audit of its features? A good website must evolve with the times. Research shows that the average web user will wait only about six seconds for a page to load, and has minimal patience for things like complicated navigation or broken links. It's your responsibility to do what you can to ensure that visitors to your website have a smooth and enjoyable experience that will encourage them to visit again – or to come to your physical location and make a purchase.

With that in mind, here are the 25 must-have features that you need on your website.

LET'S START WITH THE HOME PAGE:

1

An easy-to-remember domain name. Your domain name should be as close as possible to the name of your business.

2

An attractive and compelling logo that includes your business name and is relevant to what you do.

3

A short tagline that lets people know what your business does. The ideal tagline should have no more than ten words and give people a clear idea of who you are.

4

A strong image above the fold. Nobody wants to click on a website and see a wall of text. What you have on your website should be a combination of text and graphics, and it's very important to start off with a striking image (or images on a carousel) that will draw people in and engage them.

5

Top navigation. The most common site for navigational tools is across the top of your website. You don't want visitors to your site to have to guess how to get from your home page to your store, or from your blog to your home page.

6

A search function in the upper right-hand corner of the page. Menu placement is important, but some people who visit your site are going to want to search and you need to make it easy for them to do so. You should also plan on including a search function on your blog page.

7

Bread crumb navigation on every page. Bread crumb navigation allows users to return to your home page at any time. You can have a link to your home page or, as many companies do, turn your logo into a hyperlink that will return visitors to your home page if they click it.

8

Key information about your business, including your full name, street address, telephone number, and hours of operation. You may also want to include a map.

9

Customer testimonials or reviews. More than 80% of all internet users say that customer reviews and testimonials play a crucial role in their buying decisions. You should have at least one written (or video) review or testimonial on your home page with a link to a dedicated page where users can find additional reviews.

10

A call to action. You may end up having more than one of these, but it's a good idea to have your first one above the fold (meaning before a user has to scroll down) on your home page. It might be a link to download a lead magnet, call your business from a mobile device, or sign up for a free consultation. Whatever it is, it should be easy to see. Contrasting or complementary colors are a good choice to make it stand out.



11

Main features of your business. You should include an overview of your products, services, features, and other distinguishing characteristics of your business. You want your home page to give visitors a solid picture of what you do.

12

Quality content. Any written content on your home page (or on any interior pages, for that matter) should be written for people first and then for search engines. Use keywords by all means, but remember that your most important visitors are customers, not search engine spiders.

13

Internal links in your content. Internal links may lead customers to more detailed write-ups of your services, or to your online store.

14

Social media follow buttons. If you want to build your social media following, you should have buttons for all of your accounts (Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, Instagram, and so on) in the footer of your home page.

NOW LET'S LOOK AT SOME MUST-HAVE FEATURES FOR YOUR INTERIOR PAGES:

15

A contact page with an easy-to-use contact form and a Captcha to help avoid spam. Even if your contact information is on your home page, you need to have a dedicated contact page, too.

16

A personalized "About Us" page. People who visit your site want to know about you. The "About Us" page is where you can share the history of your company, brief biographies of yourself and your staff, and your vision for your business.

17

A "Frequently Asked Questions" page that addresses common questions and concerns and clarifies what you do. Your FAQ page doesn't need to be long, but it should be as comprehensive as possible. It's also a good idea to have a link to a contact form for customers who can't find what they're looking for on the FAQ page.

18

A page featuring your privacy policy. This is a legal must for every business. In most cases, you can use boilerplate language but don't skip this step.

19

A blog page. Blog entries don't need to be long, but they really are essential if you want to use content marketing as a way of attracting new visitors to your site.

20

Content in an "F" pattern. Research shows that most internet users read content in an "F" pattern, meaning that they tend to read the first line or two all the way across the page and then skim down the left-hand margin. They may read across if you have a subheading, but you want to make sure to use plenty of white space to make your content as easy to read as possible.





OTHER PAGES:

21

Social sharing buttons on every blog post. The whole point of having a blog is to get people to visit your site. One way you can do that is to enable social sharing so that the people who read and enjoy your blog can share it.

22

Comment section on every blog post. People who read blogs like to leave comments and questions. Make sure you have a comment section and monitor it regularly.

DESIGN FEATURES:

23

A clear, easy-to-read font. If you want to use a fancy font for your logo or headline, you can certainly do so. However, keep it to a minimum. The majority of your site should be in a 14-point Sans Serif font.

25

Easily recognizable links. Readers shouldn't have to guess which text is hyperlinked and which isn't. Your links should be in a color that stands out from the rest of your text.

24

A mobile responsive design. More people search online with mobile devices than with computers. That means your site must be mobile responsive if you want mobile users to visit it.

Of course there are other technical elements and design features that you may want to include, but these 25 will ensure that you get off to a good start and provide visitors to your site with what they need.

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