

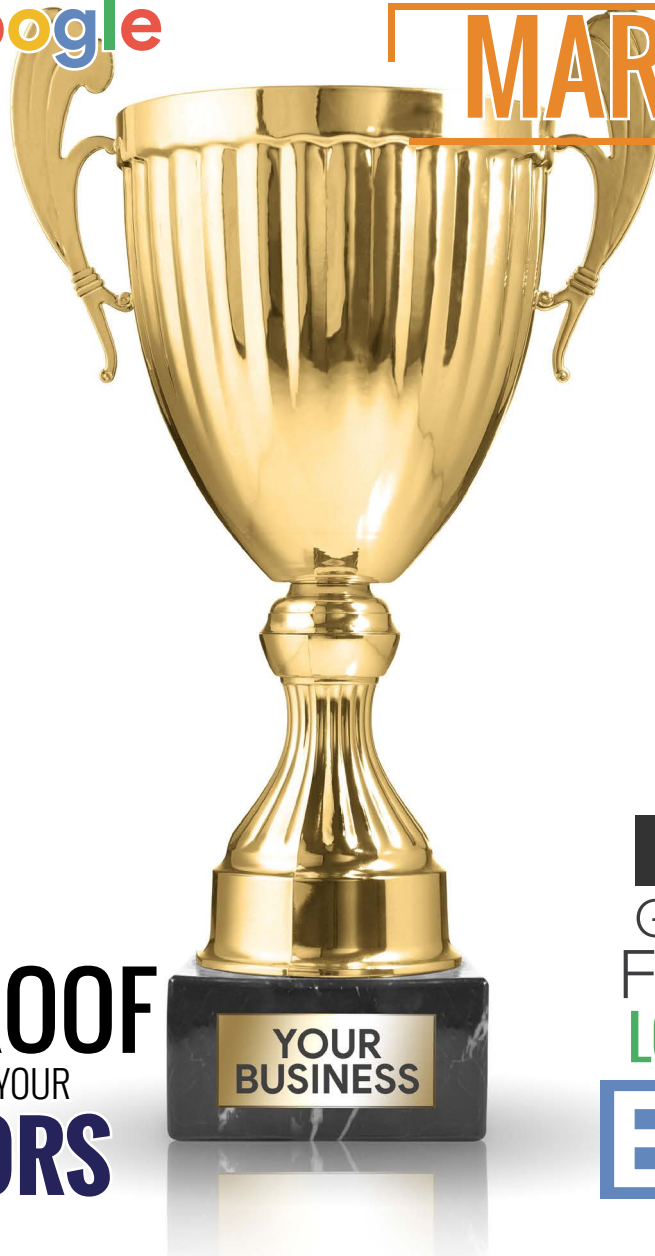
THE PROSPEROUS PARTNER

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO

KNOW ABOUT THE
LATEST Google
UPDATES

What the Future Holds for

SOCIAL MEDIA
MARKETING



HOW
SOCIAL PROOF
CAN GIVE YOU AN EDGE OVER YOUR
COMPETITORS

5 TIPS TO
GET THE MOST
FROM YOUR
LOCAL BUSINESS
BLOG

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When it comes to marketing, Google's the 800-pound gorilla in the room. And every marketer knows that Google's algorithms are proprietary... Top secret stuff. But every once in a while,

Google does marketers a solid and releases information about these updates and on May 2019, Google announced several new marketing updates all at once. Here's what you need to know about them.

What the Future Holds for Social Media Marketing

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At this point, few people would argue that social media marketing is a passing fad. It's here to stay. But... that doesn't mean it's not changing. Like everything else in digital marketing,

it's in a near-constant state of flux. So, with that in mind, let's look at where social media marketing is now, where it was, and where it's likely to go in the future.

How Social Proof Can Give You An Edge Over Your Competitors

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You've got a great product or service; you know you do! But how can you prove that to your target audience? Technically there are all kinds of ways...

But these days, by far the most popular

and impactful kind of proof is social proof. It's what happens when people talk positively about a product, service, company, or any other commodity and we're revealing how you can use it to give you an edge over your competitors!

5 Tips to Get the Most from Your Local Business Blog

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Blogging is still one of the best ways to drive traffic to your website and attract new customers. But are you making the most of your local business blog?

The answer starts with numbers and ends with specific advice. So, let's dig into some statistics, and then we'll look at 5 tips you can use to put your blog to work for you.

Welcome To The Prosperous Partner

Thanks for checking out our 57th 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 complex-ities 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
Grand Master Prosperite

**THE PROSPEROUS PARTNER
IS BROUGHT TO YOU BY**

Prosperous I.M. Inc is the leading small business marketing service in the Pensacola area for over 8 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.

HERE'S WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THE **LATEST** Google Updates



When it comes to marketing, Google's the 800-pound gorilla in the room. Impossible to ignore and if you can get it on your side, you'll be better off than you would if you tried to fight it.

Every marketer knows that [Google's algorithms](#) are proprietary. For that reason, using Google as a marketing tool can be tricky. You've got to make your best guess about what will work in most cases.

That said, every once in a while Google does marketers a solid and releases information about updates. That's what happened in May 2019, when Google announced several new marketing updates all at once. Here's what you need to know about them.



LOCAL CAMPAIGNS

Let's start with an update that's likely to be very important for local businesses. Google is calling it Local Campaigns, and it's designed to help small businesses use Google advertising to attract walk-in traffic. As a local business owner, you know that getting customers in the door is half the battle when it comes to increasing sales.

Here's how it works. To create a Local Campaign, the first thing you need to do is to provide Google with the store locations that you're promoting. You can do that by linking your campaign to your Google My Business account or, if you've got more than one location, you can select affiliate locations.

In addition to store locations, you'll need to provide a campaign budget and ad assets. (Ad assets may be copy, images, videos, and anything

else you use to promote your business.) Once you've entered that information, Google uses machine learning to automatically:

- Optimize your keyword bids
- Optimize your ad placements
- Optimize your ad assets in the best combinations

You should also know that Local Campaign ads will appear across Google's properties, including the Google Search Network, Google Display Network, YouTube, and even Google Maps.

In other words, Google's taking a lot of the guesswork out of local marketing by creating an automatic system for marketers to use to maximize store visits.

DISCOVERY AND GALLERY ADS

The next cool update from Google you need to know about is something called Discovery Ads. Google explained the reasoning behind them like this:

In a recent Google / Ipsos study, we saw that 76 percent of consumers enjoy making unexpected discoveries when shopping. And 85 percent of consumers will take a product-related action within 24 hours of discovering a product: reading reviews, comparing prices or purchasing the product—sometimes all at once!

Google Discovery Ads give local businesses the opportunity to ensure that people who are shopping online have access to their best content without needing to search for it. These ads differ from traditional Google ads in three important ways:

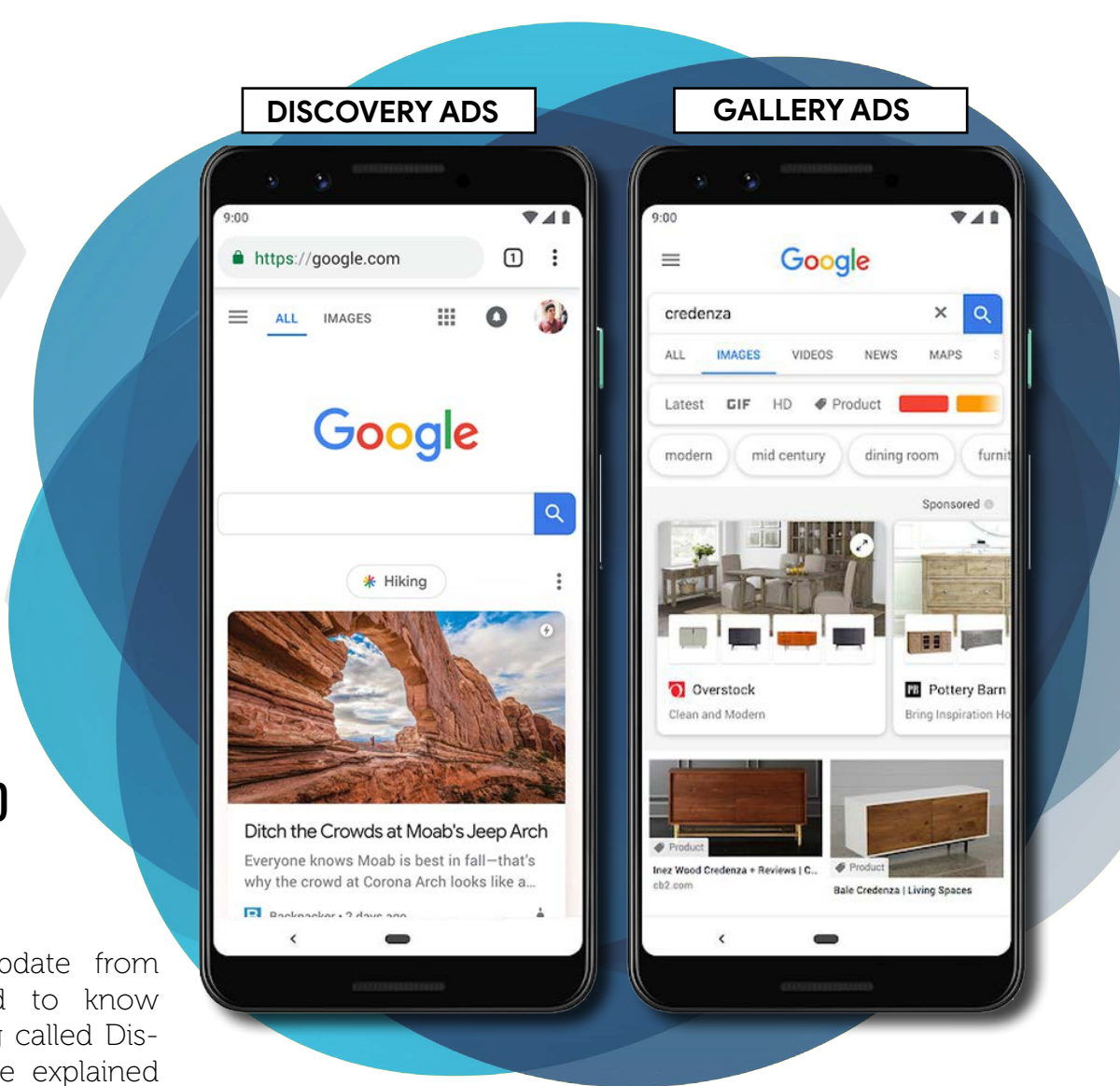
1. They use rich and relevant content you provide to inspire consumers while showcasing your brand or products. The content you provide appears in a swipeable image carousel that's "rendered natively across each Google property."

2. They anticipate your customers wants and needs and meet them, thus giving local advertisers better results from their advertising.

3. They can help you reach a large audience of people with a single campaign because they appear across multiple Google properties, including the YouTube home feed, Gmail Promotions tab, Gmail Social tab, and the feed in Discover. (That's Google's new name for the Google feed.)

You'll be able to track your results easily and see which content is performing the best.

A related update that's coming later in 2019 focuses on Gallery ads. Gallery Ads are a new search ads format that delivers more of your original content to Google's search results page. It uses an interactive visual format to help you show what your business has to offer.





FRICTIONLESS MOBILE EXPERIENCES

Do you have an app for your business? If so, then Google's new frictionless mobile update will be a welcome one.

Frictionless mobile is designed to help local business encourage mobile interaction with their customers by eliminating obstacles – or friction – in mobile app use and shopping. For example, it:

- Uses mobile-friendly text to optimize your landing pages for mobile users
- Provides mobile-optimized versions of your landing pages

- Allows you to peek at your competitors' mobile sites to get ideas
- Decreases page loading times
- Removes popups and other interstitials that can discourage buying
- Provides "sign in as a guest" shopping options and one-click purchasing to streamline mobile shopping

Even if you don't have a mobile app, your mobile store may see an increase in sales if you use frictionless mobile to improve the user experience.



STRUCTURED DATA FOR ORGANIC SEARCH

The final big update you need to know about is that Google is now allowing local businesses to use structured data to control the way their content appears in organic searches.

One of the best ways to use structured data is to incorporate it in your Frequently Asked Questions. If you do it properly, you can identify Featured Snippets that will appear when people search your keywords or look for your company online.

The biggest benefit of featured snippets is that they appear right at the top of Google's search results. They're highlighted in a way that draws users' eyes to them and gives your local business a boost by increasing its visibility.

Want an idea of how much featured snippets can boost your marketing results? According to a study from Ahrefs, featured snippets:

- Can steal traffic from the #1 ranked site. With-

out a featured snippet appearing above it, the top-ranked site on the search page gets about 26% of the traffic. With a featured snippet, that number drops to 8.6%, with the second page getting more than 19% off the traffic.

- The number of clicks on any SERP drops from 74.2% to 70.2% when there's a featured snippet there. That makes sense, since the goal of a featured snippet is to give searchers the answer they want without clicking.

And, because only about 12% of sites use structured data, you can get a leg up on your competitors by taking advantage of this new Google feature.

Google changes all the time, but these new Google marketing updates represent a significant opportunity for local businesses to improve their marketing game and attract the lion's share of traffic.



What the Future Holds for **SOCIAL MEDIA** **MARKETING**

At this point, few people would argue that social media marketing is a passing fad. It's here to stay. But... that doesn't mean it's not changing.

The truth is that social media marketing is not the same thing it was just a few years ago. And, it probably won't be the same as it is today in a year or two. Like everything else in digital marketing, it's in a near-constant state of flux.

So, with that in mind, let's look at where social media marketing is now, where it was, and where it's likely to go in the future. After all, taking a wide view is a good way to plot your social media strategy going forward.

Facebook is Still Number One

Facebook is by far the number one social media platform for businesses. To give you an idea of just how popular it is, let's look at some statistics:



There are
80 MILLION
small business
pages on
Facebook



78 MILLION
Americans say
they've bought
a product after
learning about
it on Facebook



**30% OF
MARKETERS**
believe that
Facebook has the
top ROI among
social media sites



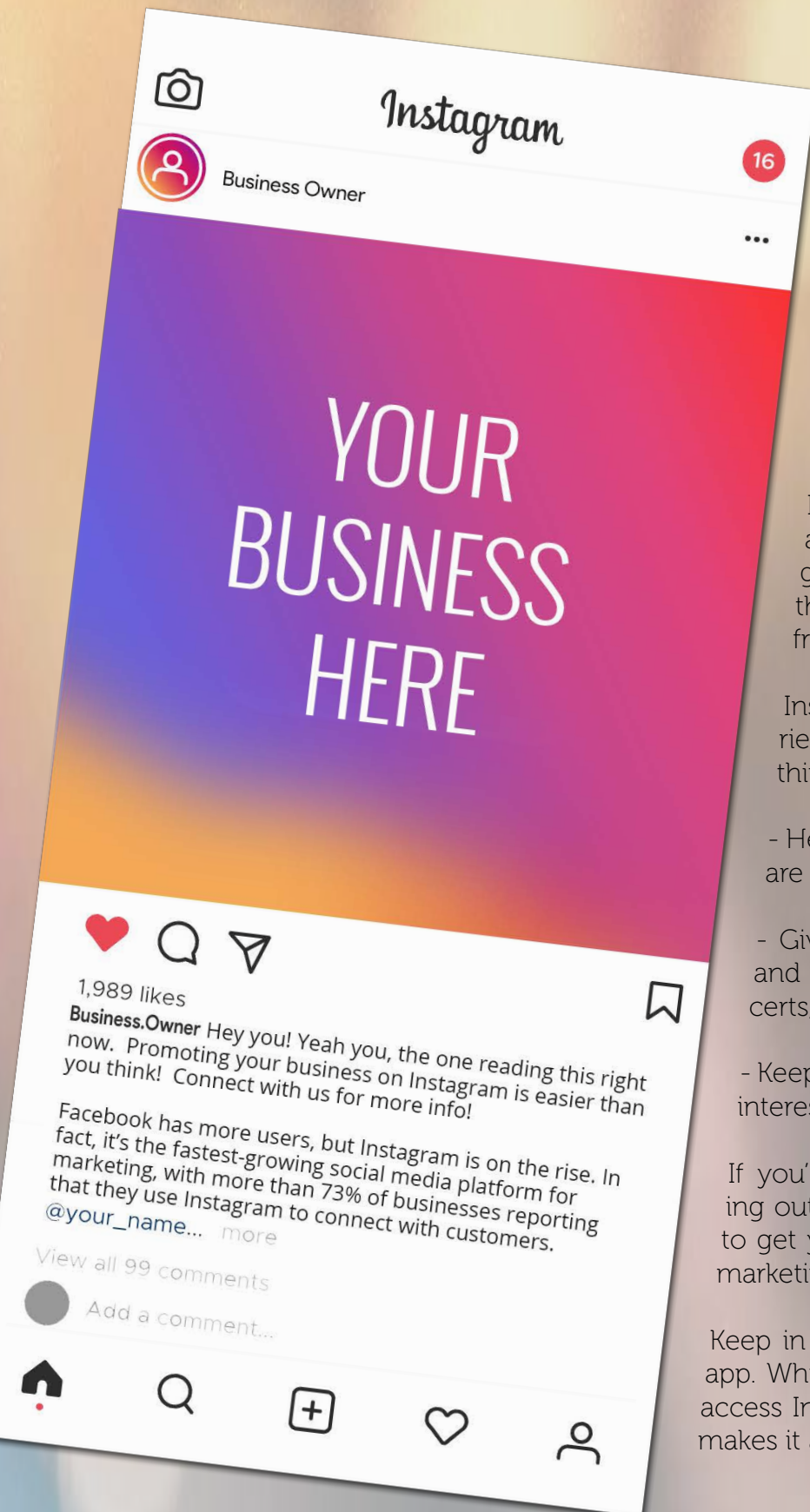
Facebook is the
**TOP SOCIAL
PLATFORM** for
both B2B and
B2C marketing

What's the takeaway here? It's still worthwhile for small businesses to advertise on Facebook. Here are a few tips to help you figure out where to spend your Facebook marketing budget:

- Mobile advertising is the fastest-growing sector and offers a way to connect with customers using mobile devices
- Video ads still get a ton of engagement
- Organic reach is still on the decline, but paid reach is up
- Only a little over 30% of businesses use Facebook Messenger
- Adding a Messenger bot or doing some Messenger advertising may be a way for you to overtake your competitors

If you invest your money in mobile ads, Messenger, and video, you're likely to see better results on Facebook.

Instagram is the Fastest Growing Social Media Site for Marketing



A big part of that growth is due to the increasing popularity of Instagram Stories for business. It might surprise you to learn that 500 million people use Instagram Stories every day and fully one third of the most popular Stories ever posted were created by businesses.

Let's talk about what that means for your marketing strategy. Here are a few key takeaways.

Instagram Stories are hugely popular and hugely effective. By a 2-to-1 margin, consumers in the United States say they prefer to get brand information from Stories instead of in their feeds.

Instagram users respond best to Stories that do one or more of the following things:

- Help them learn about new products that are relevant to them
- Give them information about interesting and relevant events, including shows, concerts, and fairs
- Keep them up-to-date on the brands they're interested in

If you're not already using Instagram, starting out with Instagram Stories is a good way to get your feet wet and see what Instagram marketing can do for you.

Keep in mind, too, that Instagram is a mobile app. While you can view it online, most users access Instagram on their mobile devices. That makes it an ideal platform for mobile marketing.

Twitter is Fading Fast



twitter

Twitter still has millions of daily users, but it's not the marketing powerhouse it used to be – and it may never regain its strength and popularity.

For example, Twitter announced in the third quarter of 2018 that 326 million people use Twitter daily. That number represents a loss of four million users from the previous year and nine million from the previous quarter.

Twitter argues that the reduction is the result of more aggressive policing of automated posting and the elimination of so-called “bot” accounts. However, it's also telling that they haven't updated their statistic about the number of Tweets per day (500 million) since 2014.

What does this mean for the future of Twitter marketing? Well, it's a mixed bag. Total ad engagements increased by 50% from 2017, and the cost per engagement went down by 14%.

If you're not already using Twitter, then it may be okay to cross this one off your list unless you have very good reason to believe that your existing customers want to see you there. (It's also interesting to note that Twitter is slightly more popular for B2B marketing than for B2C marketing – something to keep in mind if you're B2B.) However, if Twitter's in your marketing mix and getting good results, there's no reason to pull out at this point.

LinkedIn is the Place for B2B Marketing



LinkedInTM

Approximately 80% of B2B marketers say that LinkedIn is their number one marketing platform. Fully 45% of all LinkedIn users are in upper management – which means, of course, that they're decision makers in a position to use the platform to make buying decisions.

In many ways, LinkedIn is the dark horse of social media. It hasn't experienced the exponential growth of Facebook and Instagram, but its slow and steady rise is one of the reasons it hasn't been subject to the same drama and scrutiny as Facebook.

One of the most important things for business owners to know about LinkedIn is that organic reach is better there than on other social platforms, due in part to their algorithm. It filters out spam and low-quality content and prioritizes what it calls "clear" content.

Another thing that sets LinkedIn apart is that every post is reviewed by a human editor. Ultimately, they're the ones who'll decide if a post is relevant.

You can benefit from LinkedIn for B2B marketing by posting business and job-related content that's relevant to your industry and connections. That'll get it past the algorithm filters and the human ones – and give you a chance for your content to go viral.

The social media landscape might be changing, but there's still plenty of reason to be optimistic. Staying abreast of trends – and using them to figure out how to allocate your marketing budget for social media – can help you edge out the competition and grow your business.

HOW SOCIAL PROOF CAN GIVE YOU AN EDGE OVER YOUR COMPETITORS



Do you offer a worthwhile product or service?

You know you do! But how can you convince the people in your target audience of its worth? That's the purpose of marketing. It's your job to prove your product's worth.

There are all kinds of ways to prove that a product is good. Remember the old Coke vs. Pepsi taste tests? That's one example of proof.

But, in these days of social media marketing, by far the most popular and impactful kind of proof is social proof.

What is social proof? Why does it matter? And – most importantly – how can you use it to come out ahead of your competitors and grab the lion's share of your target audience?

WHAT IS SOCIAL PROOF?

Let's start by talking about what social proof is. It's what happens when people talk positively about a product, service, company, or any other commodity.

Social proof can take multiple forms. For example:

- Online reviews
- Online ratings
- Social media mentions
- Professional certifications and recommendations

The idea behind social proof is that people are influenced by the behavior of others. Social proof provides evidence of the

usefulness or validity of a thing – whatever that thing might be. There are some psychological reasons that explain the effectiveness of social proof.

1. People appreciate transparency. One of the benefits of social proof is that it doesn't come from a company – it comes from consumers of what the company makes or provides. That's part of why people trust it.

2. People also have a need to feel that they belong. There's a mental glitch known as the Bandwagon Effect that makes people more likely to support a cause or product when others

do, too.

3. FOMO (the fear of missing out) is a real thing and a powerful one. When everybody else seems to be doing something, we want to do it too.

4. Human beings are hardwired to connect with stories. Since customer reviews and testimonials are short stories, it's no wonder that we gravitate to them.

Long story short: we want to be comfortable with the products and services we use. Social proof gives us a risk-free way to evaluate things before we spend money on them.





WHY SOCIAL PROOF MATTERS

Social proof matters because social proof works. In fact, it's extraordinarily effective because it does the work for you. People might not take your word for how good your products or services are, but they'll take other people's word for it.

Research shows that about 86%

of all consumers – and 95% of consumers between the ages of 18 and 34 – read online reviews before buying a product. In fact, they read an average of 10 reviews before a purchase.

It's also interesting to note that more consumers are getting savvy about reviews. The same

study found that 40% of consumers in 2018 only read reviews that were recent, meaning they were no more than 2 weeks old. That's up from just 18% in 2017.

Here are a few other key facts...

80%

of consumers between 18 and 34 have written at least one online review

91%

of people in that age group trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation

89%

of consumers read businesses' responses to reviews

57%

of consumers will rule out any business that doesn't have a high rating (4 out of 5 stars or above)

80%

of consumers look at more than one review site before buying

What can we learn from this? Clearly, social proof is hugely important in marketing. We also know that it's likely to increase in importance because young people are the ones posting and reading reviews. That behavior will shape marketing going forward.

TIPS FOR USING SOCIAL PROOF IN YOUR MARKETING

How can you use social proof in your marketing? Here are some tips and examples to get you started.

TIP #1

ENCOURAGE (AND RESPOND TO) REVIEWS

Reviews are still the most popular kind of social proof. As a business owner, you can encourage reviews by:

- Putting a link to your Yelp or Google My Business page on your website
- Asking your social media followers for reviews
- Respond to reviews quickly and professionally
- Add a rating scale to your website or allow people to post reviews of products there

You may even want to put some of your online reviews on your website for people to see. You can also display your Yelp rating in your business.

TIP #2

GET A PROFESSIONAL SEAL OF APPROVAL

Not all social proof comes from consumers. Sometimes, it comes from a professional certification or acknowledgement of your product's worth.

This type of social proof has been around for a long time. Decades ago, Good Housekeeping magazine offered its seal of approval to products. Today, you can get a professional seal of approval by applying for and receiving a professional certification or cultivating relationships with reporters to get press mentions.



A collection of white paper airplanes is scattered on the left side of the page. A single red paper airplane is positioned in the center-right area, pointing towards the right. The background is a light, neutral color.

TIP #3

TAP INTO THE WISDOM OF THE CROWD

You already know that FOMO is real. One way to tap into social proof is to take a page out of Netflix's book. The streaming giant highlights popular TV shows and movies for streaming. They know that when people are talking about something, the ones who haven't watched it yet won't want to miss a chance to get in on the conversation.


You can accomplish that by highlighting your best-selling products or services on your website or social media.

TIP #4

INFLUENCER MARKETING

Finally, you should consider using influencer marketing to get the social proof you need to boost sales. Influencer marketing focuses on getting recommendations and endorsements from influential people, often on social media.

Keep in mind that an influencer doesn't need to be a celebrity. Most small business owners can't afford a celebrity's price for influencer marketing. What you can do is find people who have authority and clout in your niche or industry and get them to talk about your company.

A large, horizontal, abstract brushstroke in shades of red, pink, purple, and blue, with a textured, painterly appearance, spanning the width of the page.

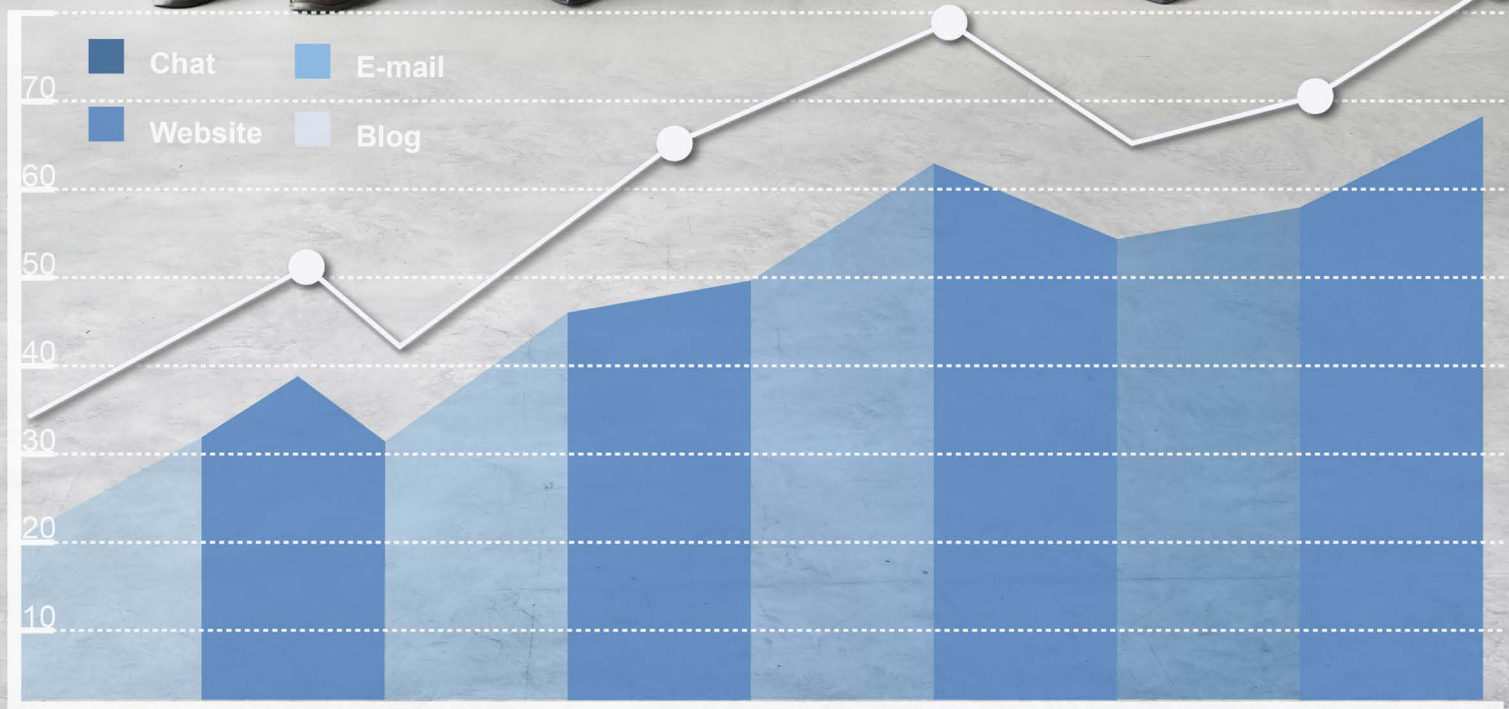
Social proof isn't new, but it is growing in importance. The ready accessibility of online reviews – and the ease with which consumers can research companies – means that no local business can afford to ignore social proof.

5 TIPS TO GET THE MOST FROM YOUR LOCAL BUSINESS BLOG

Blogging is still one of the best ways to drive traffic to your website and attract new customers. But are you making the most of your local business blog? Maybe not.

If you're not, the big question is what should you be doing? The answer starts with numbers and ends with specific advice. So, let's dig into some statistics, and then we'll look at 5 tips you can use to put your blog to work for you.





Blogging by the Numbers

A [massive study of blogging](#), which reviewed 912 million blog posts, revealed some helpful information that can help you improve the performance of your business blog. Here are some of its key findings.

Backlinks

Backlinks are still one of the most important ranking factors for Google. The blogging study found that long-form content gets 77.2% more links than short-form content. That's a huge difference, but it also has its limits.

The study also found that there was a sharp drop-off in links once a post crept over 2,000 words. But, that said, 94% of all the posts analyzed had no backlinks at all.

It's also worth noting that some post formats and titles get more backlinks than others. The three most popular post types for backlinks were:

- "What" posts
- "Why" posts
- Infographics

Those three formats got 25.8% more backlinks than "how-to" and video posts.



Social Sharing

You might think that blogging can help you out on social media, but the numbers don't bear that out. For example, there's no correlation between social sharing and backlinks.

It's also interesting to note that very few blog posts perform well on social media. The study found that 1.3% of "power" posts generate 75% of all social shares.

There were some specific findings about the length of headlines (longer headlines get more shares) and questions (blog posts with questions in the headline get more shares than those without questions.)

List posts are more likely to be shared than other posts, too – and by a significant amount. They get 218% more shares than "how-to" posts and 203% more shares than infographics.

The so-called 'sweet spot' for getting your blog content shared on social media is between 1,000 and 2,000 words.

One final statistic to inspire you: one study found that blogging can improve your chances of getting a high rank on Google by [as much as 434%](#). How's that for an impressive number?

Tips to Improve Your Local Business Blog

The data from that study is useful because it can provide you with a framework to improve your business blog. Of course, there's more to worry about than backlinks and social media, but other bits of data from the study point in a direction that may be useful.

With that in mind, here are 5 tips to improve your blog.



ciplined about coming up with blog ideas and getting those posts written. And remember, you can always hire a writer to create blog posts for you if you don't have the time or inclination to do that much writing.

#2: Give Your Posts Compelling Titles

Be provocative. Saying something that's surprising or controversial can get people to click even if they're not inclined to read blog posts. There's a reason they say that curiosity killed the cat!

A rose by any other name might smell as sweet, but when it comes to blogging, names matter! Need ideas? Check out HubSpot's [blog topic generator](#) or Inbound Now's [idea generator](#).



#3: Check Your Word Count

Earlier, we mentioned that the “sweet spot” for blog length is between 1,000 and 2,000 words, with longer posts getting more engagement, backlinks, and sharing than shorter posts.

Does that mean every post you write must be long? Of course not! But, if you’re in the habit of cranking out 300-500 word blog posts, it can help you to write a long post occasionally. It might turn into one of those so-called power posts that generates traffic on social media and Google.

#4: Add Compelling Images

This might seem like a no-brainer, but it’s surprising how many businesses don’t bother adding images to their blog posts.

There’s research that shows that people retain far more information when it’s presented with a visual aid than they do without visuals.

PRO TIP: Pixabay.com and Pexels.com are both great no cost options

#5: Add Social Sharing Buttons and Widgets

People are far more likely to share your blog posts if you make it easy for them to do it. That’s why it’s a good idea to add social sharing buttons to your posts.

Be smart about it, though. If you offer a full menu of social sharing buttons, you may find that it has the opposite effect to the one you want. Where’s your social media audience? If they’re mostly on Twitter, put a Twitter button and use the “Tweet this” widget to allow people to share key quotes from your blog. If you’re marketing business-to-business, put a LinkedIn button on your blog.

The good news here is that it’s not hard to improve your business blog. It’s mostly about being aware of what the numbers say and figuring out a blogging schedule and strategy that’ll work for you. If you do that, the clicks, shares, and links will follow.

WHAT CAN I DO TO REACH MORE
Customers On Social Media?

WHY DOESN'T MY WEBSITE SHOW
Up On The First Page?

HOW DO I MAKE SURE MY WEBSITE
Is Mobile Responsive?

**YOU'VE GOT QUESTIONS.
WE'VE GOT ANSWERS.**

**CONNECT WITH US TODAY
FOR A FREE STRATEGY SESSION
(\$199 VALUE)**

**We'll answer your questions, and show you
exactly what you're doing right, what you're
doing wrong and how to fix it fast!**

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FAST, SO GET IN TOUCH WITH US TODAY!**

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