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**WHY**

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**CANADIANS**

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**BUY**

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THE BEST WAYS TO  
**WIN MORE CUSTOMERS**  
WITH DIGITAL TOOLS

PRESENTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH







“We’re showcasing what we offer and what sets us apart”

RODNEY GOODCHILD, OKANAGAN SPIRITS

# In

his nine years as director of marketing and operations for Vernon, B.C.-based craft distillery Okanagan Spirits, **Rodney Goodchild** has spent a significant amount of time on the floor, interacting with customers who arrive for tastings and tours or to stock up on their favourite liquors or liqueurs. The most common thing he hears from them? “We read about you online.”

Whether “online” means review sites, articles, social media or the distillery’s own website—or a combination of all four—is hard to say, he adds. But such interactions highlight the importance of small businesses having a robust online presence that helps potential customers not only discover their existence, but continue to connect after the initial interaction. “We’re showcasing what we offer and what sets us apart,” Goodchild says.

A decade ago, there was no Facebook, Twitter or Foursquare to help small businesses connect with customers. All small businesses needed back then was a simple website, an ad in the Yellow Pages and a phone number. Nowadays, digital technology provides a wealth of possibilities for connecting in the virtual realm. But how can business owners be sure they’re making efficient use of their time and money, rather than just chasing after the latest thing?

Deciding where to invest resources requires careful planning, but there’s no denying that having a digital presence is crucial for a small business today. Fully 96% of Canadian adults go online at least once a day, according to an online poll of 1,076 respondents conducted in August 2015 by Rogers Custom Insights Team and *Canadian Business*. Further, 69%—and 93% of those aged 18 to 34—own a smartphone. And while more than half of respondents (59%) said they shop at small businesses at least once a week, 71% said big businesses are

better at serving their needs online. This suggests a lost opportunity for small businesses. Indeed, 82% of those who felt big business do a better job online cited that as a reason for why they often buy from large companies rather than small ones. A bookstore is a good example: Consumers might like the idea of purchasing at the shop down the street, but when they’re at home on a cold winter’s night looking for something new to read, it’s just that much easier to shop online, whether it’s for ebooks or hard copies. In fact, when those surveyed were asked how many online purchases (excluding digital downloads) or service appointments they had made via a website or mobile app in the preceding 90 days, the reply was an average of 6.1 from large businesses or chains—and just 3.8 from independent small or mid-sized businesses.

On the plus side, 80% said they would shop at more small businesses if they were easier to find and evaluate online, demonstrating a chance for such businesses to not only develop better digital offerings, but to boast their smaller stature and ties to the community.

All in all, it seems Canadian consumers—especially the younger generation—have great expectations when it comes to how businesses meet their online needs. But rather than be viewed as a chore, digital technologies should be seen as an opportunity to reach more customers than ever—and to make business owners’ lives easier, too. “Where I’ve seen social media being used in a great way by small businesses is building those ongoing relationships with people,” says Leigh Himel, principal at Toronto marketing agency Gravity. “Building community and word of mouth, and always being present where people are, becomes a strategy that you use to build a passionate group of people who care about your success.”



“We’re not trying to put all our eggs in the [Instagram] basket, but we are having fun with it.”

EMMA KNIGHT, GREENHOUSE JUICE

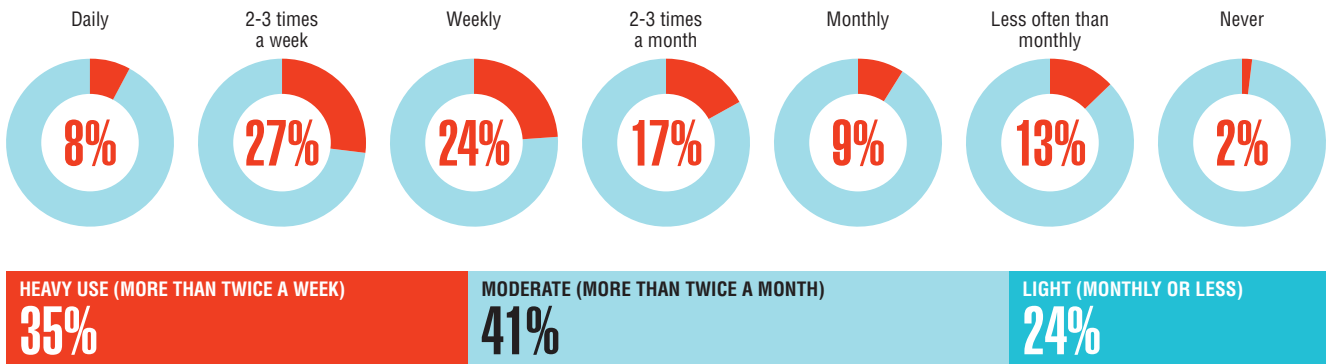
### ► DIGITAL WORD OF MOUTH

For Toronto’s Greenhouse Juice, which opened in January 2014, digital marketing was an essential tool to get the word out about its cold-pressed, glass-packaged juice offerings. “It was the coldest winter in recent memory for Toronto, so we approached January as a soft launch, not knowing whether anyone would be interested in juice,” says director of brand development **Emma Knight**. “There wasn’t really anything like it on the market at the time.”

Knight knew that word of mouth was going to be key to let consumers know about the offerings of her business, then just a single retail shop in the affluent Rosedale neighbourhood. She was also aware that social media—“the digital version of word of mouth,” as she puts it—would be an important tool to help the team at

Greenhouse not just promote their product, but also educate consumers about how it was made, and why its premium price point was justified. That meant a focus on Instagram, the photo-centric sharing tool that was taking the world by storm at the time—and was a perfect fit for Greenhouse’s stylish packaging and brand ethos, not to mention target market. (The company also had Facebook and Twitter accounts and a basic website created on the social platform Tumblr.) Alongside sampling and events, Knight says, Instagram ended up being a big part of how the word got out—and not just on the brand’s own account, which has since grown to more than 20,000 followers, with hundreds of likes (and plenty of comments and questions) on each post. “People would take pictures and share them with their friends,” she says. “Suddenly we were in the exciting position of

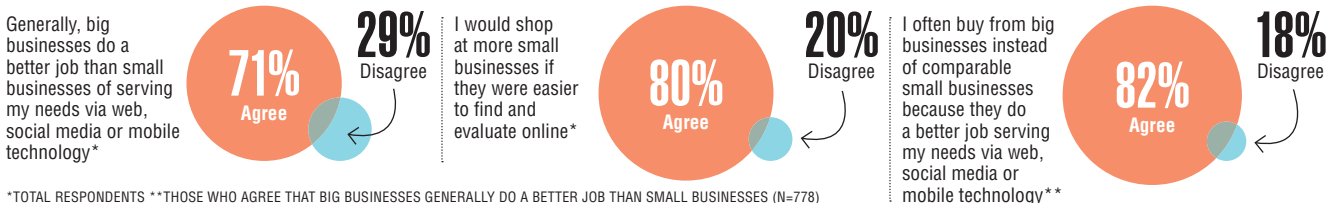
### Excluding restaurants and bars, how often do you shop at small businesses, including those online?



### In the past 90 days, approximately how many purchases (excluding digital downloads) or service appointments have you made with:



### Do you agree with each of the following statements?



\*TOTAL RESPONDENTS \*\*THOSE WHO AGREE THAT BIG BUSINESSES GENERALLY DO A BETTER JOB THAN SMALL BUSINESSES (N=778)

having people come in from as far afield as Peterborough who had found out about us on Instagram.”

In fact, while word of mouth (76%) and walking or driving by (50%) were cited as the most common ways survey respondents discover small businesses they might like to buy from, 30% included social media in their top three, and 8% said it is their number-one means of discovery. And with the way technology use is evolving, those numbers are certain to grow: While 85% of respondents said they use social media such as Facebook, Twitter or Instagram, that proportion is significantly higher among younger age groups. Ninety-three percent of 18- to 34-year-olds surveyed said they use social media, compared with 88% of the 35 to 54 group and 76% of respondents aged 55 and up. Search engines are a top discovery method, too, with 45%

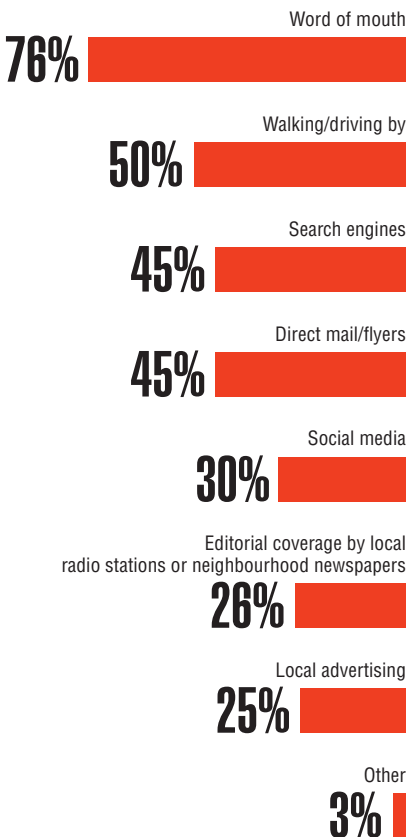
naming them as among their top three and 21% as their primary tool for discovery. Overall, 29% of respondents named digital as the number-one way they discover small businesses they might like to buy from.

### ➤ FACEBOOK

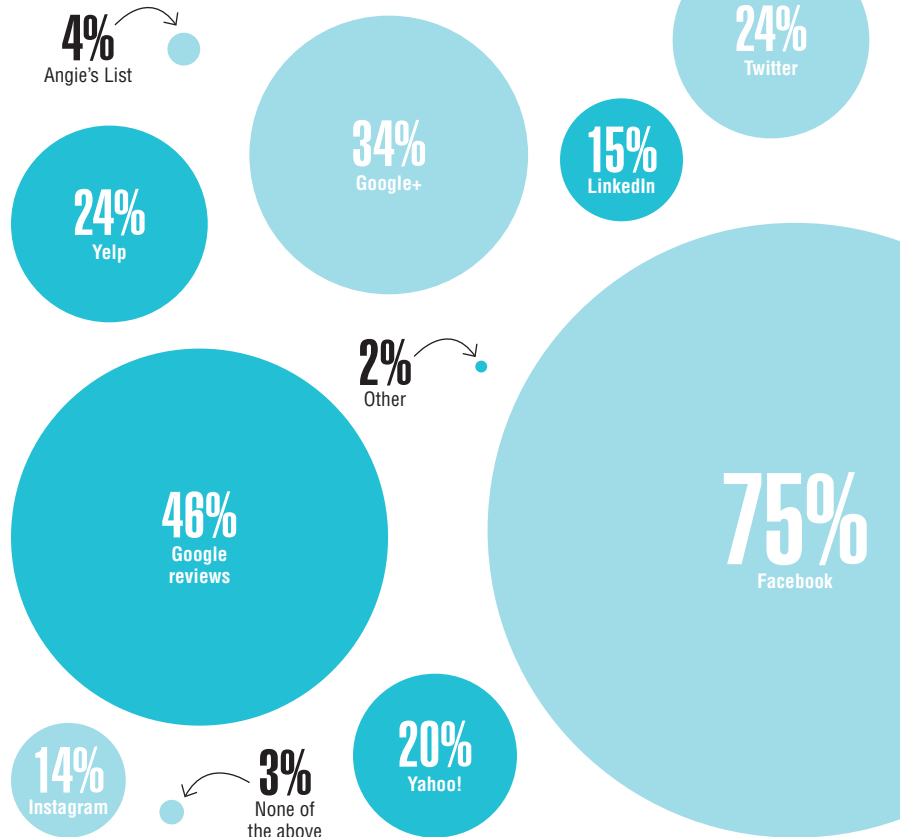
These numbers aren't surprising to the major players in the social and search space—and they're working hard to build and maintain their market share. According to Facebook, for instance, there are now 45 million business pages on its platform globally, and 77% of the 20 million Canadians who use the site at least once a month are connected to a small business on Facebook.

Facebook recently announced major updates, adding features intended to make their business pages more appealing for both large and small companies and help

#### Which of these are in your top three ways of discovering small businesses?



#### If you use social media to learn more about a small business, which services are you likely to consult?





“Using Facebook, we could start talking about it, and build a bit of a community around the farm”

IAN BAIRD, TERRE BLEU

them connect with consumers, such as more prominent call-to-action buttons, an improved layout on mobile devices and sections that meet the needs of various types of businesses, such as services for a spa, or shop for a retail store. And while this push to create more tools for businesses is certainly part of a play for more advertising dollars, it’s highly targeted—and measurable—advertising that’s customizable for just about any budget, meaning it can work well for many kinds of businesses. “We’ve invested in simplifying our tools to make it easy, and we’re also measuring business results,” says Alison Twiner, group director, global marketing solutions at Facebook Canada. “We know that our ads will drive outcomes, and Facebook is where Canadians are spending their time.”

As a success story, Twiner mentions Terre Bleu lavender farm in Milton, Ont., owned by **Ian Baird**, a former technology consultant. Baird knew he wanted to target a specific demographic—locals, primarily women aged 25 to 55—who would be more likely to be devoted customers, with a higher purchase amount per visit, which is important for a business that’s open only briefly during the summertime (when the lavender is flowering) and on certain holidays. So as he built up the farm—it takes several years of growing before lavender can be

harvested—he worked on building up his Facebook audience, too. He wanted to “tease the market” before Terre Bleu finally opened to visitors in the summer of 2014. “Using Facebook, we could start talking about it, and build a bit of a community around the farm,” Baird says. “We did no advertising other than Facebook.”

Baird’s strategy was to use Facebook’s advertising tools to attract a highly targeted audience of people who lived within a 50 to 100 kilometre radius of the farm and had interests in relevant topics such as food and photography (he runs a side business, also promoted through Facebook, renting out the farm—and its horses-turned-models—as a location for engagement, wedding and other photo shoots). “We’re at about 17,000-plus people now [on Facebook],” he says. “They’re really local, specific, and very passionate about our farm. It’s been extremely effective.”

This targeted advertising strategy proved so successful, in fact, that the 2014 season was a runaway success, allowing Baird to invest in a 3,000-square-foot building for 2015 and more than double the size of the farm—at 25,000 plants, it’s now the largest lavender farm in Ontario, giving its the ability to produce even more of its premium wares, such as unpasteurized lavender honey and macarons. Last year, they opened a Christ-

▼ GETTING STARTED: CREATING A WEBSITE

- ❑ Make a list of what customers will want to know: things like hours of operation, contact information, location, product or service assortment and prices. Add an FAQ if you anticipate common questions, and a description of your business that includes any keywords people might search for (e.g., “flower shop in downtown Halifax”). Write this information out, and have someone edit the text for spelling, grammar and clarity.
- ❑ Collect photos: head shots, product lineups, your storefront or anything that helps depict your business. Professional photos are best; if you use stock, choose pictures that are distinctive rather than generic.
- ❑ For basic sites, set up a Facebook page or sign up with a site such as Squarespace, which offers easy-to-use, mobile-friendly templates, and handles all the tech stuff (including simple ecommerce and registering a domain name) for a monthly fee.
- ❑ Ready to invest more? Hire a web design firm with a portfolio you love.
- ❑ Think of websites as a process rather than a finished product: Start simple and add as you need to, rather than building a site that’s more than you need.

▼ GETTING STARTED: LAUNCHING ON SOCIAL MEDIA

- ❑ Create accounts on Facebook and Twitter as a minimum, plus Instagram, Tumblr or LinkedIn if they fit your business. Try to use the same user name for as many of them as possible to avoid confusion. Even if you don’t use the accounts right away, having a presence allows people to tag and find you. It also reserves the user name for future use.
- ❑ Fill out the fields for your name, biography, website, contact information, hours and other information relevant to your business. Add a profile photo: Your logo is ideal.
- ❑ Add links to your main social media accounts from your website, and promote them in-store and on bags, business cards and other collateral.
- ❑ On any platforms you’re not ready to use regularly, post a message telling customers how to get in touch. Consider adding a few other informative posts too. On Instagram, for example, a coffee shop might add a few enticing photos of food, drinks and the interior.
- ❑ Like, follow or explore other businesses on your target platforms that use them well. Get a feel for the social culture before digging in. Always be kind and respectful, always reply, and always take conversations offline if they’re getting testy or involve a complex issue.

mas pop-up store for just eight hours, promoted it only on Facebook, and had cars lined up on the highway, waiting to get in.

The trick, says Baird, is to know what you want out of Facebook, and develop your strategy accordingly, rather than just aiming for the biggest numbers possible. “It isn’t important to me to get 50,000 likes,” he says. “It’s more important to get 5,000 likes that are really interested in lavender and in the products we make.” By building in an opt-in audience of customers who feel part of a community, he was then able to target that audience with messaging that keeps them up to date on the farm, and to track the performance of that messaging to learn what parameters are the most successful: time of day, type of post, or specific kinds of images. And while only a minority of his followers will see posts organically in their feeds (without him paying for it), the cost of advertising to followers is significantly lower than advertising to a general Facebook audience, he says. “It’s easier to maintain a customer and keep that customer loyal than to try to find a new customer.”

### ➤ TWITTER

Ivan Pehar, manager of strategic accounts at Twitter Canada, has a pastry shop he frequents in Mississauga, Ont. that does exactly the same thing. The bakery uses Twitter to share updates with followers: the daily cupcake flavours, say, or any end-of-day specials. Conversely,

Pehar will use Twitter to contact the shop with orders, so they can have them ready when he arrives. “The way that we’ve done business for the past hundred years is changing,” he says. “If you want to buy something through Twitter and the functionality is there, why wouldn’t I want to fill that order?”

Certainly, while Twitter’s penetration is quite a bit lower than Facebook’s, its users are keen communicators with brands and businesses, and eager to start up conversations, whether based on a positive or negative experience, or simply a question. “If you ask any small business owner if they want to have the ability to engage with current or potential customers, the answer would be a yes,” Pehar adds. “And customers are going to talk about your brand, product or business whether you’re on Twitter or not.” Indeed, the social media platform is where those conversations are increasingly taking place. “At the end of the day, being on social media gives you a voice,” says Pehar. “We have some stats internally where 80% of all customer service requests come through Twitter.”

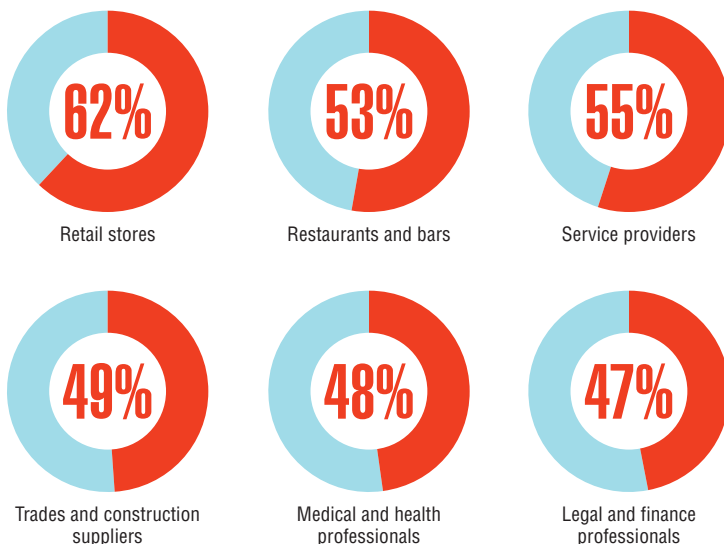
### ➤ GOOGLE

On the search engine side, not only are these highly functional tools a top means of discovering small businesses, they are the most popular digital resources used by survey respondents to look for products and services, no matter the type of business. Interestingly, among those who use search engines to find businesses, unpaid results rank significantly higher than paid: 51% say they would look at or click on unpaid listings in search results, whereas only 14% would look at or click on paid listings if they were at the top of the page, and 11% if they were in a sidebar. The presence of location information, such as an address or a map, and review information, such as star ratings, increases the likelihood of respondents looking at or clicking on listings: 64% choose the former, and 54% the latter.

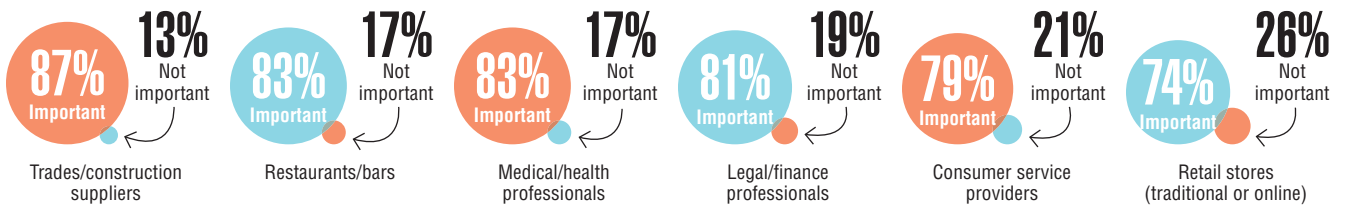
“We know that the web is where Canadians go to find information about products and services,” says Karen Godwin, head of small business for Google Canada. “But many small businesses aren’t showing up online when and where people are looking.” Godwin notes that with the growth of mobile has come an increase in location-specific searches: People are increasingly including words and phrases such as “near me,” “nearby” and “closest” in their search terms. “In fact, Google search interest in ‘near me’ has doubled since last year in Canada,” she adds.

Godwin’s number-one tip for small businesses is to get set up on Google My Business (free for basic use), a

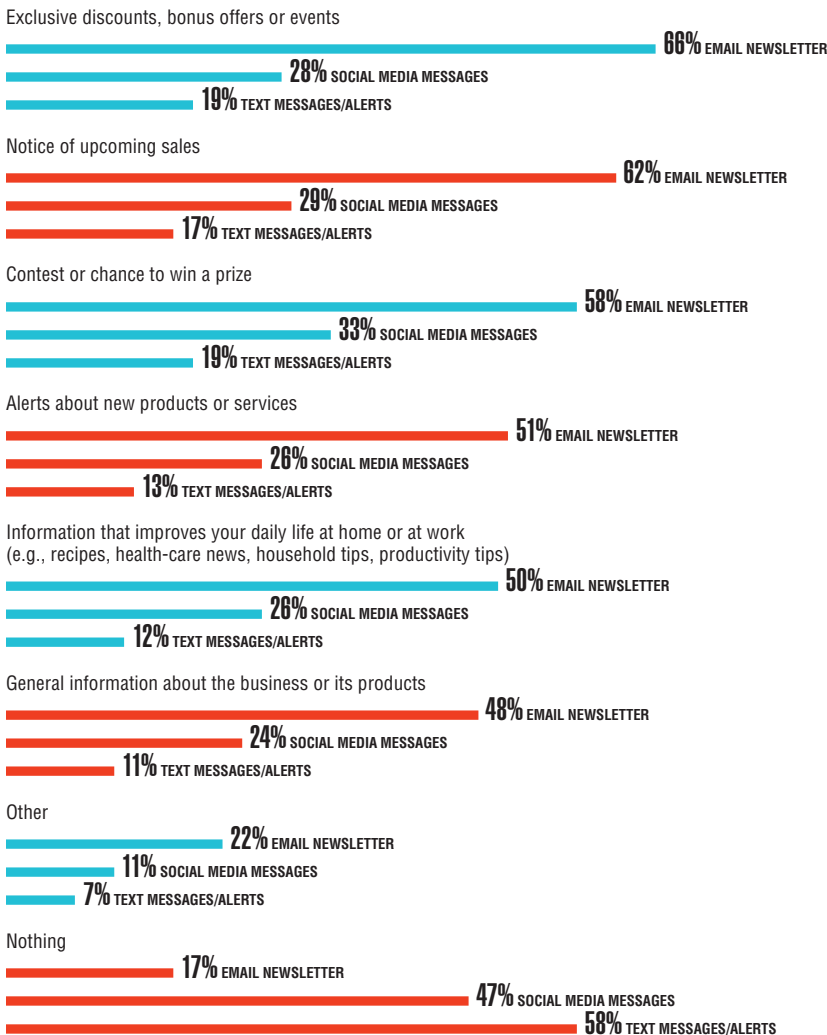
#### How likely are you to use a search engine to find:



**How important are customer reviews or testimonials when deciding whether to do business with:**

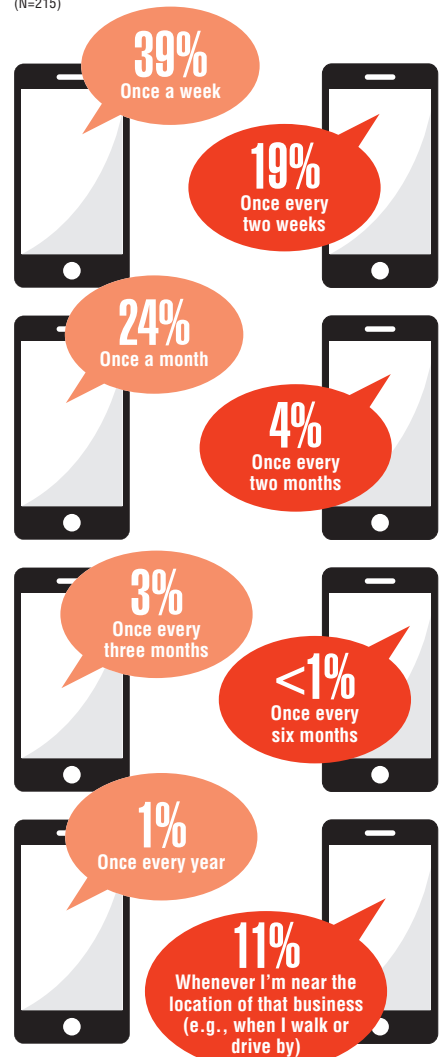


**What would persuade you to sign up for the following types of communication from a business or professional?**



**If you want to receive text alerts, how frequently is acceptable?**

(N=215)





**Do you agree with the following statements?**

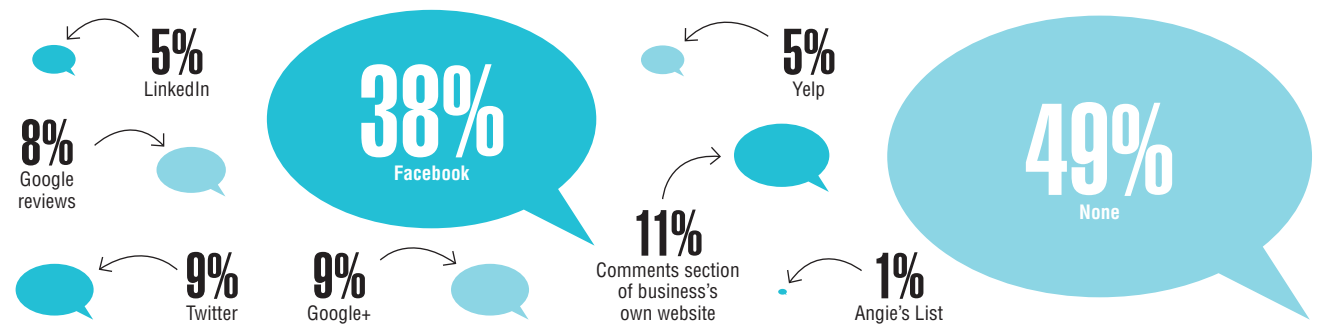
Within the next five years, I expect all businesses to allow me to order products or book an appointment using the web or my smartphone.



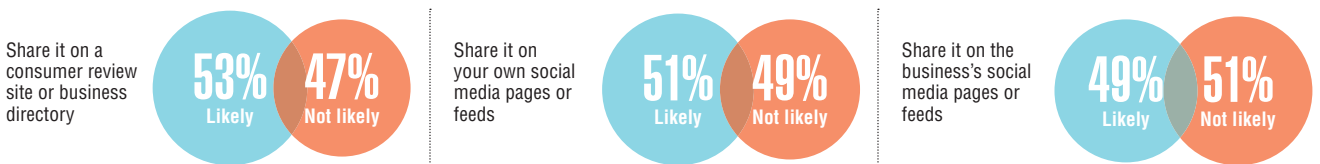
I often choose big businesses over small businesses even when they have similar products and prices because of their loyalty program.



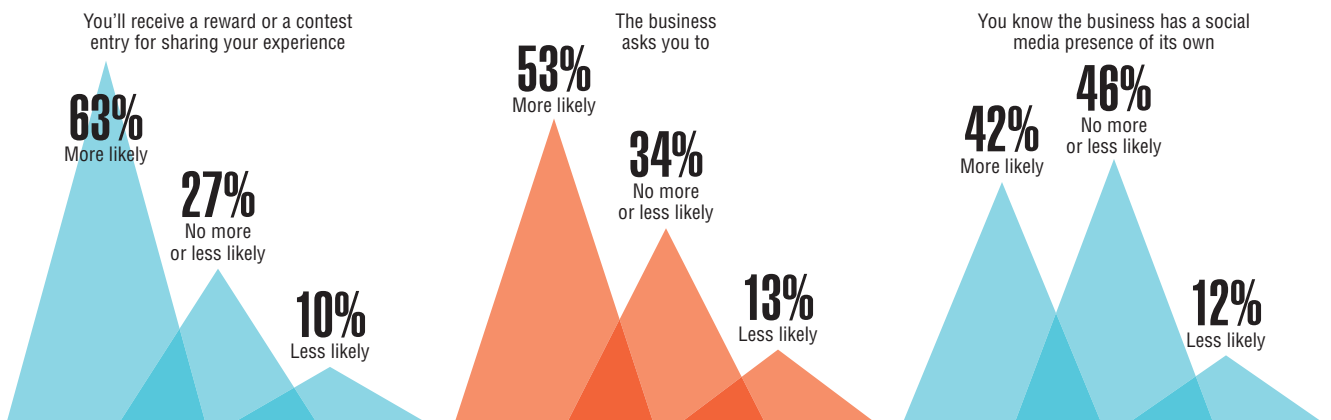
**In the past six months, which of the following have you used to share a good experience you've had with a small business?**



**If you have a good experience with a small business, how likely are you to:**



**How likely are you to share a good or bad experience on social media or review or ratings sites if:**



**If you use a smartphone, when are likely to use it to learn more about a business?**



**If you use social media, how likely are you to share a good experience you have had with a:**

(N=924)

Small business or independent professional



Big business or chain



**If you use social media, how likely are you to share a bad experience you have had with a:**

Small business or independent professional



Big business or chain



“one-stop shop” that lets them verify their address, store hours and other contact information (including Maps location), view and respond to reviews and monitor other Google accounts they might use, such as YouTube, AdWords or Google Analytics. “To go a step further, add photos of your business or a virtual tour of the business interior,” she adds. By ensuring your location is accurate in Google Maps, you’re helping customers find you easily; by adding a category for your business (say, “coffee shop”), you’ll show up in search results when people look for coffee shops in your area.

The growth in searches “near me” seems obvious when you consider smartphone penetration in Canada. Among those surveyed, 69% said they own a smartphone, an average that conceals the age-related numbers: Smartphone ownership is at 93% of those aged 18 to 34, 79% of those aged 35 to 54 and 40% of the 55 plus group. And a significant 31% of respondents aged 18 to 34, and 15% of those aged 35 to 54, said they prefer their smartphone to other types of computers in most situations.

Google’s data, says Godwin, shows even higher uptake. “Our research tells us 83% of Canadian smartphone users use a search engine when looking for a local business,” she says.

**➤ REVIEWS**

Once potential customers do find you in search results, that’s where reviews come in. Reviews by fellow customers on crowd-sourced websites like Yelp! have become a powerful tool to help people learn more about small businesses: Between 74% (for retail stores) and 87% (for trades and construction suppliers) of total respondents said that customer reviews or testimonials are important when deciding whether to do business.

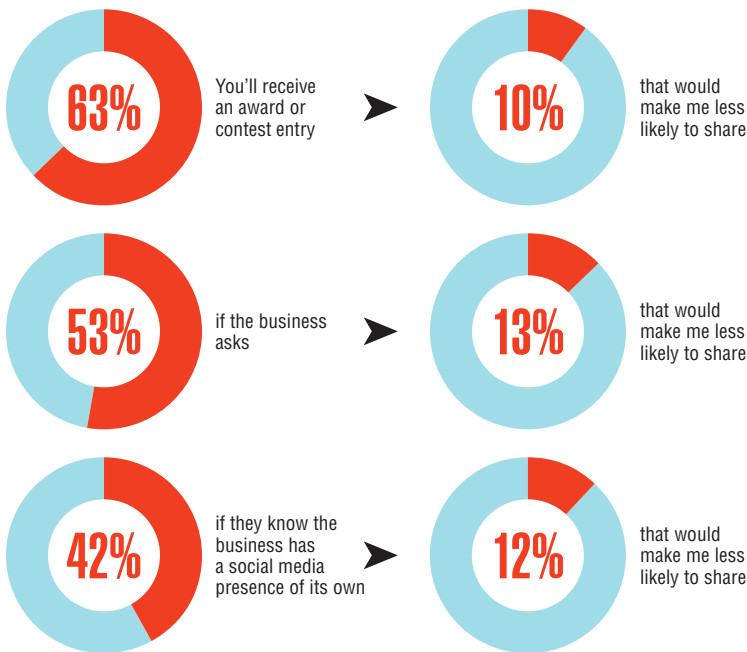
And while it might seem like businesses have no control over what is said about them online, the truth is there’s plenty they can do to manage their online reputation. “Asking customers to leave feedback on Google is an easy way to help your business stand out from competitors who have fewer reviews,” notes Godwin. “It can be as easy as asking for customers to share their



“It’s my right arm. I can’t work without it...People can book online, cancel online, you get a confirmation email right away and a reminder.”

**JUNE CROKEN, HAIRDRESSER**

**If you use social media, how likely are you to share a good or bad experience if:**



feedback on Google at point of sale or during a positive customer interaction.”

Interestingly, survey respondents said they are more likely to share good reviews of small businesses than of big businesses or chains. Sixty-five percent said they are likely to share a good experience they have had with a small business or independent professional, while 56% are likely to do the same for a big business or chain—and 51% of respondents said they have used social media or digital platforms in the past six months to share a good experience they have had with a small business. These numbers are skewed by age, with younger respondents more likely to share reviews: 77% of the 18 to 34 group (compared with 47% of the 55 plus group) said they would share a good experience with a small business, while 63% (compared with 41% of the 55 plus group) said they would do the same for a big business.

When it comes to negative reviews, though, the size of the business doesn’t seem to matter as much: 60% said they are likely to use social media to share a bad experience they have had with a small business or inde-

pendent professional, while 63% said they are likely to do the same regarding a big business or chain.

For Okanagan Spirits and other tourism-related businesses, says Goodchild, TripAdvisor is the primary review site that gets customers in the door. They’re so happy with their status on the popular travel ratings site, they post a badge from it (a “certificate of excellence”) in a prime position on their site. Interestingly, while they’ve always made a point of asking customers to post reviews, Goodchild noticed a jump in quantity since their Kelowna location started offering sit-down service with cocktails, thanks to a change in liquor licensing in B.C. “It’s funny,” he says. “We haven’t changed our approach in encouraging people at all, but since we opened our patio lounge in Kelowna, the reviews have rocketed.”

**➤ HOME PAGES**

Of course, despite the plethora of digital tools available to communicate with customers, a business’s home base online remains its website, the digital equivalent of its storefront. And while the website is a branding tool, it doesn’t need to be fancy or complicated—most important is the information it contains. According to survey data, for example, when it comes to business websites, consumers are most often looking for basic information: Hours of operation, pricing information, maps, contact information and a list of products and services are seen as necessary by at least half of respondents across all types of businesses.

Detailed and targeted content is seen as important too. Many respondents, for example, think FAQ sections are important: from 27% for restaurants and bars up to 42% for legal and finance professionals. About half of respondents want to see online ordering or booking capabilities for retail stores (52%) and restaurants and bars (46%), while reviews or testimonials from other customers are desired by 52% for restaurants and bars and 50% for trades and construction suppliers. And 76% of respondents agree—27% strongly—that they expect all businesses to allow them to order product or book an appointment using the web or their smartphone within the next five years.

For Toronto hairdresser **June Croken**, who runs her one-woman studio out of a second-floor suite on busy Queen Street West, offering online booking to her customers was a no-brainer when she struck out on her own. “It’s my right arm,” she says of the service. “I can’t work without it.” Not only is the system hugely popular among her clientele, many of whom say it’s one of the primary reasons they come to her, but it gives her the ability to focus on the client she’s with rather than hav-

**What do you want to see on a small business's website?**

	<b>% Retail stores</b>	<b>% Restaurants/bars</b>	<b>% Consumer service providers</b>	<b>% Trades/construction suppliers</b>	<b>% Medical/health professionals</b>	<b>% Legal/finance professionals</b>
Hours of operation	74	72	67	58	66	60
Pricing information	70	66	61	57	45	50
Map of the business's location	66	66	60	54	61	57
List of products/services	61	51	56	57	48	48
Easy-to-find contact information	60	58	58	61	63	62
A way to contact the business immediately (e.g., phone number or text chat)	57	55	57	61	60	60
Inventory status	54	11	16	15	10	8
Online ordering or booking capability	52	46	28	24	26	20
Information about loyalty programs	52	33	27	16	15	12
Reviews or testimonials from other customers	39	52	44	50	43	44
FAQs section	37	27	40	41	39	42
Videos demonstrating the product or service	27	17	24	26	13	12
Third-party endorsements, seals of approval or awards won	22	31	26	38	27	31
Blog posts, articles or other content that demonstrates the provider's expertise	21	22	24	30	24	25

**Thinking about the communications you presently receive from businesses of any size or kind, how often do you read the following?**



ing to take breaks to answer the phone—or spend her limited budget on a receptionist. “It does everything,” she says. “People can book online, cancel online, you get a confirmation email right away and a reminder, and it prompts you to ask the person for a review, which is another big venue for people to spread the good word and get more interest in booking in.”

For Okanagan Spirits, a good e-commerce system was key when they relaunched their website in 2012. “We get a lot of visitors that come to the valley, experience Okanagan Spirits on-site, then walk away with a couple of bottles, and they’re excited about that, but for the most part, when they get home, that experience is over,” Goodchild says. With their product line available only in limited distribution in liquor stores, online shopping lets fans—and their friends and family who might have sampled their souvenirs—stock up, even if they can’t make it back to the Okanagan. (Free shipping on the purchase of at least three bottles helps encourage people to buy more.) The site is also a powerful branding tool, letting them get the story of the distillery across to website visitors—and trying to convert them to in-person visitors. “People do a lot of research on where they’re going,” he says. “We had to educate people on what we do and how we fit in within the wine region.”

## ➤ NEWSLETTERS

Just as important as building a robust website, though, is developing ways to communicate with customers,

Goodchild adds. Okanagan Spirits has had an e-newsletter program for a number of years—alongside its Facebook and Twitter accounts—sending communications out to customers roughly 10 times a year. “We’ve got a good return rate on them,” he says. “A lot of people will join to be kept updated on events and whisky.” The “events” part of his explanation is self-explanatory; the latter is an interesting story of how technology can be used to help build hype for a new product with limited release. The distillery’s acclaimed Laird of Fintry single malt whisky is available only in limited distribution—“even with our first barrel, we knew that our demand would outstrip supply”—so a lottery system was developed to give everyone an equal chance to purchase a bottle. Each year, as the amount of available whisky has gone up, lottery entries have increased even more: This year, as of mid September, more than 3,000 people had entered for a chance at just 1,500 bottles. “We wouldn’t have had the same level of interest and opportunity to promote” without digital tools, Goodchild says.

Interestingly, while people feel the same about email missives, regardless of their gender, the same is not true of social media: 58% of women, compared to 49% of men, said they could be persuaded to receive social media messages.

Willingness to sign up for text messages correlates across age and income groups with the percentage who own smartphones. Forty-two percent of total respondents said they could be persuaded to sign up

### ▼ GETTING STARTED: CREATING A NEWSLETTER

- ❑ Sign up for a newsletter service such as MailChimp and create a list. Build a sign-up form and add it to your website, specifying what the newsletter will be used for.
- ❑ If you have a database of email addresses, add them to your list. Be sure they are compliant with Canadian Anti-Spam Legislation, or CASL, meaning recipients must have actively opted into receiving communication from you—and there must be an easy way for them to unsubscribe.
- ❑ Create a schedule for when you will send newsletters. Monthly or even quarterly is a good place to start, or tie dates to product releases or holidays relevant to your customers.
- ❑ When writing newsletters, remember to be interesting and informative. Think of what your customers want to know about, versus what you want to promote. Write a subject line that is specific rather than vague, and tells readers what they’re getting.
- ❑ Always test, proofread and double-check links before sending. A second pair of eyes is always helpful.

### ▼ GETTING STARTED: RENOVATE YOUR SITE

- ❑ Ask someone who doesn’t know your business well to assess your site as though they were a potential customer. What information is missing? Is anything hard to find?
- ❑ Look at the site from your own point of view. Does it represent your business well? Does it help attract new customers, and keep current ones informed? Are there new features you would like to add, such as ecommerce, online booking, a Twitter feed or a newsletter sign-up form?
- ❑ Create a website update to-do list, and collect any necessary words or images. Find examples from other websites to use as models or inspiration.
- ❑ Add “content marketing” to your toolkit with articles or videos that give customers useful information related to your product. Or, if you can commit to regular updates, create an engaging blog.
- ❑ Invest in high-quality photography—of your products, your work or your staff—to boost the professionalism of the site.

for text messages from businesses or professionals—54% of those aged 18 to 34, 46% of those aged 35 to 54 and just 29% of those aged 55 plus.

Of the 215 respondents who said they would be willing to receive text messages or alerts containing discounts or bonus offers, 71% said that offers of a percentage discount on purchases would be acceptable to receive, while 66% would be happy to receive bonus offers such as buy one, get one free. Unsurprisingly, respondents are more open to receiving text messages of such offers when the discounts are higher. Similarly, a higher number of respondents (62%) indicated they would be receptive to a buy one, get one free offer than the number who would be open to a buy one, get one half off offer (43%). Forty percent say they would be open to receiving text messages about any offer, so long as it relates to a product they're interested in or have purchased before, underlining the need for such messages to be well targeted.

For Greenhouse Juice, part of the appeal of digital marketing is the ability to experiment with various platforms and see what gains traction with their community. Right now, that's Instagram, alongside Facebook, Twitter, their Tumblr blog, and a recently launched e-newsletter. Next year? Their customers might be flocking to a new platform, and they're ready to go there with them. "I have no idea whether Instagram is going to remain the most important social platform for us over the next six to 12 months," says Knight. "We're not trying to put all our eggs in that basket, but we are having fun with it."

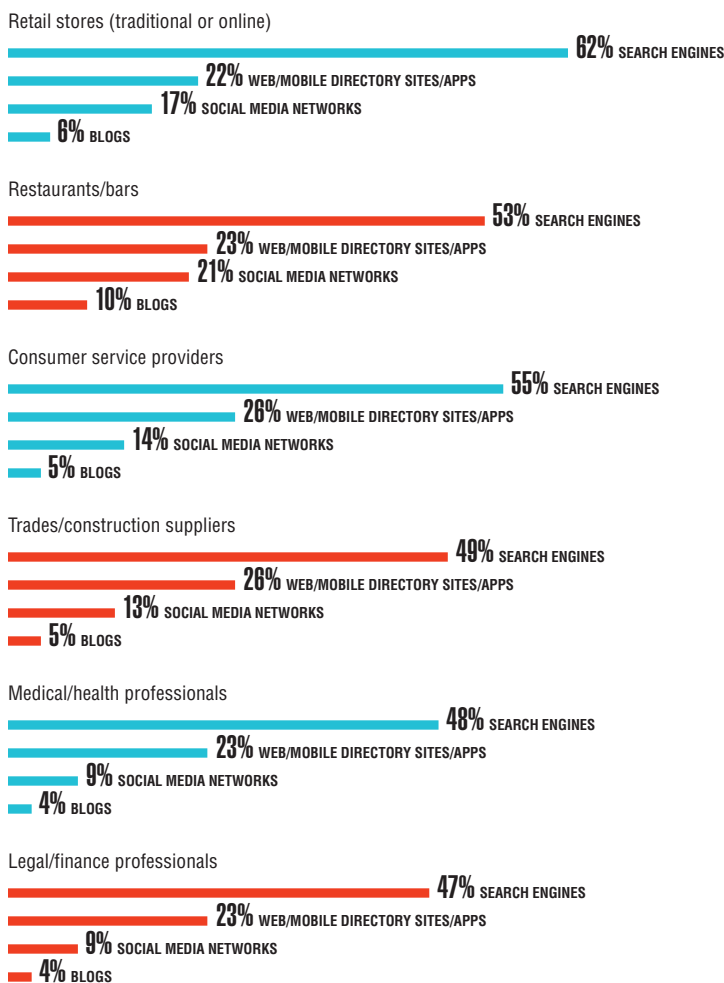
At the same time, they know that the main website is their flagship digital property—especially given their strong e-commerce play—and that any refreshes will need to take into account their customers' needs. "In the early days, cold-pressed juice was an unknown quantity to a lot of our potential market," Knight says, "and it was really important on our home page to say what it was and why it was special." A straightforward, mobile-friendly e-commerce system was also essential, so much so that they had one custom built rather than going with the not-quite-good-enough out-of-the-box options they researched.

No matter which way the digital trends develop, Knight says that Greenhouse will be ready to adapt; not necessarily to jump on every bandwagon, but to be able to stay in touch with consumers, turning interested parties into customers and turn customers into more-frequent buyers. "I think if you're not constantly innovating in the digital space, then you won't be there for long, because it's changing quickly and will only evolve

more quickly," she says. "In terms of the way the brand is expressed online, it's important to be flexible."

The trick, says, Himel, is to know what you want to achieve and be selective in your approach, while also being open to possibilities. "You're even starting to see big brands choose wisely," she says. "It doesn't matter what the latest, greatest tech is. What matters is knowing what you want to do and then choosing the platform that's going to deliver on that. Focus on doing fewer things really, really well—don't follow the shiny objects unless there's a purpose." ●

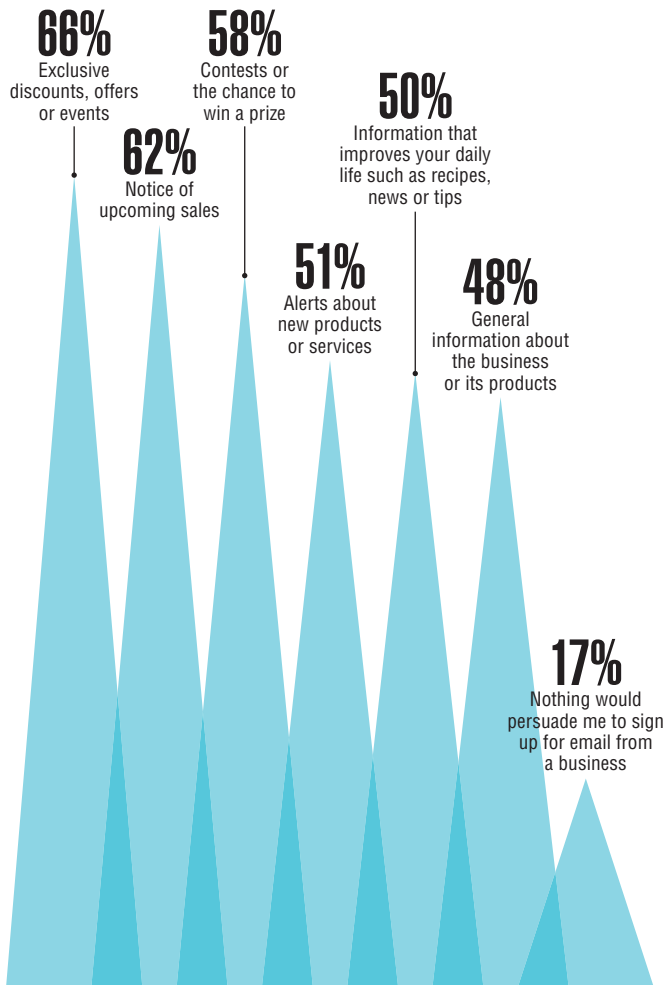
#### When you are searching for products or services, which of the following resources are you likely to use?



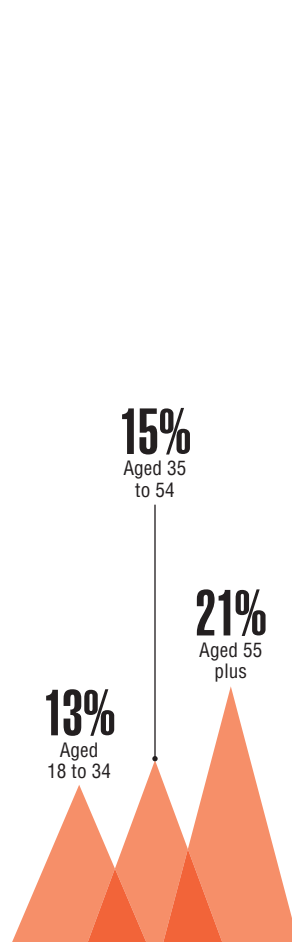
**If you like receiving text messages, which of the following offers are acceptable to receive in that form?**



**What would persuade you to sign up for a newsletter?**



**Respondents who said "nothing" would persuade them to accept email**



**Respondents who said life-improving tips would persuade them to sign up for an email newsletter**

