


A man and a woman, both wearing light blue button-down shirts, are looking at a laptop screen. The woman is on the left, smiling, and the man is on the right, also smiling. They appear to be in a modern office environment with large windows in the background. The image is framed by red diagonal shapes in the top-left and bottom-right corners.

# Small Business Tips from the Experts

How to Attract  
Customers & Build  
Online Communities

# How to Attract Customers & Build Online Communities

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## Tom Yawney

Tom Yawney is a writer, speaker, and digital media strategist. Since 2010, Tom has helped hundreds of companies build their online presence through digital marketing and advertising. Register for this free event and learn how to create a solid digital marketing plan.

### Top 3 Tips to Prioritize your Digital Marketing Efforts

#### 1. Understand Your Customer Journey

Technology has transformed how consumers make purchases. Think about it...

Before the Internet, it was very difficult for people to gather research and opinions on products and services. Perhaps more importantly, if a consumer had a bad experience, they didn't have a mechanism to share their thoughts with the world.

While the Internet changed the buyer's journey, this process took a dramatic turn once smartphones were adopted by the masses. Prior to smartphones, it was difficult for people to research products and services in real time. You would have to go home, sit at a computer, jot down notes and move towards a decision. Purchasing decisions took place over a period of days - or weeks.

But smartphones have allowed people to make educated decisions in the moment.

So the pendulum of leverage has swung towards the consumer, and we all have incredible power to make informed decisions, and to express our frustrations to a global audience in real time. So it is very important for business owners to respect that power, and to understand the common journey of their customers.

The average Canadian is hit with more than 5,000 selling messages every single day. This ranges from what we see in our physical world, to what we see through our devices. As a business owner, there have never been more options to engage your clients and potential customers - and that is both a blessing and a curse.

Where should you focus your attention? Here are a few high-level tips for different types of business:

#### Service Industry

If you operate a service-based business (restaurants, barbers/salons, spas, hotels, resorts, etc.) you need to focus on building positive reviews. Over 80% of consumers perform a search before making a purchasing decision. So, reviews can make or break your business.

#### Pro Tip

Respond to your reviews, whether they are good, bad, or indifferent. Responding to reviews demonstrates a level of diligence and care that will build trust with potential customers. Just make sure to keep the dialogue constructive and positive!



## Product Sales

When people are looking to make a purchase, they are looking for information to inform and validate their decision. With this in mind, make sure your website provides product descriptions, details of the specs, and great imagery is key.

If you have the resources, creating a video of product reviews is highly advisable. Most people would prefer to watch a video than to read, and many consumers turn to YouTube for product reviews.

## Events / Seminars / Experiences, etc.

In order for people to attend your event or seminar, they need to know it exists!

That means you need to build awareness that will lead to interest and intent. Social advertising is a great way to do so. You can create ads with custom imagery and a unique proposition. Those ads can guide people directly to a purchase page - and this transaction can be completed in 30 seconds or less through a mobile device.

## Pro Tip

Using social influencers is a great way to promote your product to a captive audience. Influencers have large audiences on social media, they provide the production of content and distribution to their community, and they set trends.

## Pro Tip

It is incredibly important to ensure the path to purchase is void of friction. What does that mean?

It means that people will not wait more than 7 seconds for a page to load. So your website needs to move quickly. It means that you should not ask for any superfluous information on your website forms. Make it easy, and only request the information needed to process the transaction.

It means that your web property needs to be responsive for smartphones, tablets, laptops, and desktops. If your website doesn't show up properly, people will leave the site.

## 2. Create A World-Class Mobile Experience

Most businesses receive up to 50% of their website traffic from mobile phones. So there are a couple things you must do to ensure a professional mobile experience.

The first item is to ensure your website is responsive for all device types. This will provide a consistent user experience to your customers and prospects. Keep in mind that some businesses have a desktop website, and a separate mobile website. The problem with having two websites is that you need to update both sites, and you need to market two websites independently. It is much smarter to work off a single website that caters to all devices.

Secondly, make sure you have "Click to Call" initiated on your website. This allows people to touch or click the phone number on your website, and call you directly. If you do not have this feature in place, the user will need to remember your phone number, or grab a pen or pencil to write down the number. The reality is most people will not do this, they will simply hit the "back" button and move on to the next option.

Thirdly, make sure your Google My Business listing is up to date with a proper business name, address, and phone number. Your "directions" listing should be set to ensure people are guided to the correct address. There is nothing more frustrating than being guided to the wrong location! It's a quick way to annoy someone and lose out on the transaction.



### 3. Answer Customer Questions as a Blog or Video

Ask your sales people if they have noticed any commonly asked questions. If the answer is yes, turn those questions into blogs and/or videos. Here's why...

If people continue to ask the same questions, they are definitely posing that same question to Google - or their favourite search engine. So if you answer those commonly asked questions in the form of a blog or video, you will have an opportunity to rank in search engines for those queries.

Producing these blogs and videos will also arm your sales people with marketing material to help advance a sale. So this strategy will provide value to your staff, to your customers, and it will help your website rank better in search results.

Hope these tips have proven helpful! For further advice, feel free to reach out at [info@theinfluenceagency.com](mailto:info@theinfluenceagency.com).

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