



*How to Build an Online Marketing Plan for Your Local Business*

Are you ready to take 2017 by storm with a local online marketing plan? When you create a documented strategy, you end up with a blueprint that helps you increase your customer base and grow your revenue. It is time to get results for your business.

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## Content

Consumers deal with advertisements everywhere they look. Promotional emails clog inboxes, websites are loaded down with display ads, and smartphone apps push marketing messages. People tune out ads, which means you need another way to get their attention.

Content is [your secret weapon](#), since the typical buyer does not want to learn about your business through your ads. In fact, 70 percent prefer to look through your content, such as blog posts and videos, to get a sense of who you are and what you offer.

## Email

Email is a tried and true marketing tactic for a reason: it offers the intimacy of direct mail with the convenience of an online platform. Plus, many people check their email on their smartphone. You also get a foothold into the mobile market, which is incredibly valuable for your local business. The money you spend on email marketing gives you an excellent ROI, since you generate \$44.25 for every dollar you put into your campaigns.

## Social Media and Review Sites

Word-of-mouth advertising gets people in the door based on recommendations from friends, coworkers and colleagues. This social proof provides reassurances that people receive value for their money when they go to a particular business. Social media

networks and review sites provide online platforms for individuals who want to share their experiences with companies.

You can connect with your target audience directly, without any intermediaries in the way, or you could, in some cases, provide customer service through these channels. As you engage with people on social media and have relevant conversations, [you can boost your brand awareness](#).

## **Mobile**

Mobile is the most valuable part of your local online marketing strategy. When your potential customers pull out their phones to look up business information, you reach them at the moment they are making a decision. Fifty percent of these searches result in someone making a purchase or going into the store, which means you need to be front and center. Mobile-optimized websites ensure that you do not drive anyone away due to a poor online experience.

## **Local Search Engine Optimization**

You will have a difficult time growing your customer base if people cannot find you online. However, you can improve your local search presence by using search engine optimization, which is a technique used to move your website up in rankings on Google and other search engines. One way to do this is by listing your business on directories.

## **Steps for Creating a Local Online Marketing Plan**

### **Step 1: SWOT Analysis**

SWOT stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. You perform this analysis by looking at internal and external attributes to get a clear picture of your local marketing landscape. Strengths and Weaknesses address your company's attributes that help and hurt your goals, while Opportunities and Threats represent helpful and harmful characteristics.

### **Step 2: Action Plan**

Use your SWOT analysis to create an actionable plan for improving your local marketing efforts. You want to play up your strengths, put a system in place to compensate for your weaknesses, take advantage of new opportunities and mitigate the risk of threats.

### **Step 3: Campaign Calendar**

Local online marketing plans have many moving parts, from your content assets to your social media channels. Use a campaign calendar to keep everything coordinated, so you get the most out of your resources.

## **2017 Local Marketing Predictions**

Online marketing shifts on a regular basis, and businesses need to keep an eye out for trends that could impact action plans. Here are a few of the latest trends in 2017.

### **Instagram Continues to Grow**

Instagram wears the social media darling crown, and it is not taking it off for 2017. This platform has 300 million users and recently added shopping features; Instagram is [expected to pull in \\$3.2 billion this year](#).

### **Mobile Payments**

Apple Pay, Android Pay and Samsung Pay are three major players in the mobile payments market. As consumers learn about the benefits of paying through their smartphone, they will want to use this convenient method everywhere they go.

### **Webrooming**

The typical consumer looks at 10 or more sources online when trying to make a purchase decision. When consumers do this for a product they want to buy locally, the technique is called webrooming. Make sure your website features a product catalog that gives them the information they need to make an informed decision about their selection. Buyer's guides, how-to articles and videos provide a range of content to help address pre-sales questions and overcome customer objections.

### **Video Gets the Most Views**

The increase in video content consumption over the past few years is substantial, and viewership continues to grow. By 2018, 79 percent of buyer traffic will be generated via video. If you have not dipped your toes with this type of media yet, you need to get started to future-proof your local business.

It is time to prepare your digital efforts for 2017. Put together your local online marketing plan, and hit your business growth goals with these strategies.

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