

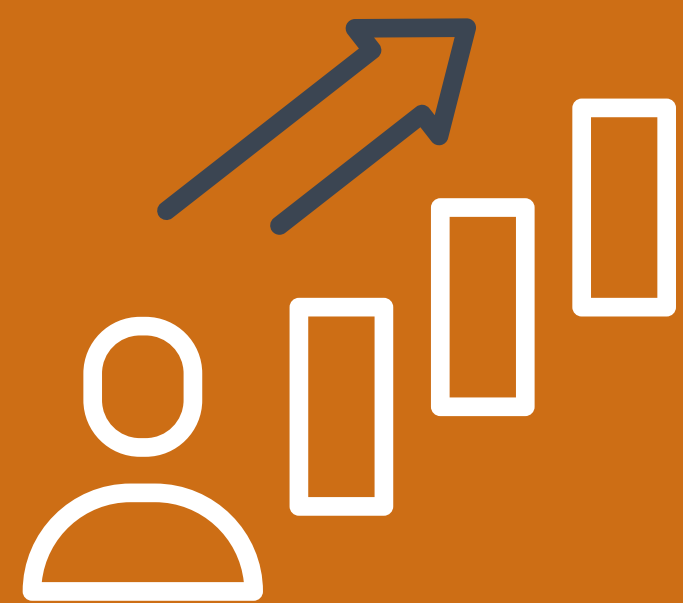
EBOOK



The Complete Guide to
Brand for Small Business

SMALL BUSINESS MARKETING

Taking your business to **market[ing]** success



MARKETING IS AS A FUNDAMENTAL AND INDISPENSABLE PART OF ANY BUSINESS.

From raising awareness to communicating with your audience via digital channels, taking a targeted and integrated approach to marketing can add immeasurable value. But for some SMEs the process of becoming 'marketing active' can be extremely daunting.

COMMON CONCERNS FOR BUSINESS OWNERS INCLUDE:

Where do you start?

Which tactics are best to use?

How will your existing customers react?

Whether you're just getting started with marketing or are looking to expand your current marketing activity, this guide addresses some of the important questions raised by this process and will help you identify the practical steps needed to implement a marketing strategy that is both effective and right for your business.

Why **marketing** is so important for your **business**



WHAT DRIVES A BUSINESS TO START MARKETING?

We all know how important the **‘why’** is before we dive into **‘how’**.

The following are a few common drivers that result in a business quickly becoming aware of the importance of effective marketing.



**1 REFERRALS OR
CURRENT PROJECTS
START TO SLOW**

Marketing can slip down the list of business priorities when client referrals or new projects are coming in. You might be too busy or see little need to invest in marketing when the work is coming to you. But if the workload begins to drop off, businesses suddenly realise the importance of having a strategy in place. Unfortunately, waiting until this time to become marketing active could be six or even twelve months too late, depending on your market.

**LESSON
DON'T WAIT
TOO LONG
AND BE
PROACTIVE.**

**2 A SHIFT OCCURS IN
COMPANY PERSONNEL**

You have a carefully selected team to ensure that every staff member is well positioned to fulfil their role. Everyone's doing a great job and your business is thriving. Then your best sales rep decides to leave – suddenly, not only have you lost a valuable business asset, but an essential (and perhaps your only) marketing tool. For some businesses, personnel changes like this can be the trigger that drives them to start marketing.

**LESSON
RETAIN KNOWLEDGE
OF YOUR BEST
TALENT BY
CAPTURING THIS IN
SALES AND
MARKETING
PROCESSES.**

**3 A NEW COMPETITOR
STARTS SHOWING UP IN
YOUR SALES TERRITORY**

When your business is established and succeeding within your target market areas, it's all too easy to become complacent. When a new competitor begins to appear in those places that your business normally sells to, it can act as a much-needed wake-up call.

**LESSON
KEEP CONSISTENT
AND AHEAD OF
COMPETITORS WITH
YOUR PROMOTIONAL
ACTIVITIES.**

**4 THERE'S A CHANGE OF
GUARD WITHIN YOUR
CUSTOMER BASE**

Building and nurturing customer relationships is essential to forging strong bonds with key decision makers within your target market. But when those contacts in which you've invested so much time and energy move on, starting again on a new prospect can be a difficult process.

**LESSON
MAINTAIN AN
UP-TO-DATE
DATABASE, AND
KEEP THE
CONNECTION
STRONG WITH
MARKETING
STRATEGIES.**

Planning your marketing strategy



Before rushing into any kind of marketing, it's important to take the time to plan, research and strategise for success.

You need to develop a thorough understanding of your market, competitors and your business itself. This means getting back to basics and equipping yourself with all the information you need to identify marketing activities that work for your brand.



RESEARCH YOUR TARGET MARKET

To have the best chance of reaching your target market, you need to dig deep and find out exactly what drives customers towards purchase.

How much do you know about the target audience of your product or service? What kind of triggers are they most likely to respond to? What are their pain points and how will your product or service benefit them? ➔

Understanding these aspects of your target audience will enable you to position and market your brand accordingly, so comprehensive market research is essential. It's often easier (and more cost-effective) to outsource this type of research to a professional agency.

ANALYSE YOUR COMPETITION

In order to stay ahead of your competitors, you need to know who they are, what they're doing and how they're doing it.

Once you've identified who your key business competitors are, look into the marketing methods they're using and examine the way in which they have positioned their brand. What channels and digital platforms have they chosen? How are they promoting their brand and products? Consider which elements are crucial for your own business and how you can position your brand in order to get ahead.

But don't stop there. Brainstorm ways your brand can stand out. What is it that your competitors aren't doing? Think about how you might capitalise on this opportunity.



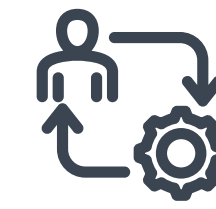


DEFINE YOUR OBJECTIVES

What do you want to achieve from your marketing activity? Whether it's to increase your revenue, establish your business in a new market segment or improve brand awareness, setting clear, measurable marketing objectives is vital in understanding what steps need to be taken in order to achieve these goals.

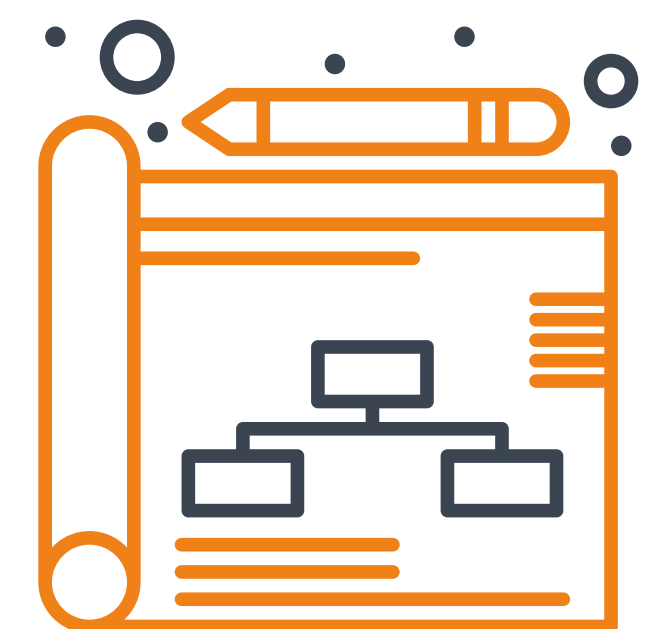
Make sure that each identified objective is specific; the infamous SMART goal is always a useful guide. Make it measurable (how much do you want to increase revenue by?), achievable (is it realistic?) and give it a timeframe for accomplishment (are you aiming to achieve this goal in three months or a year?). →

You also need to make sure that any marketing objectives tie in with your overall business objectives.

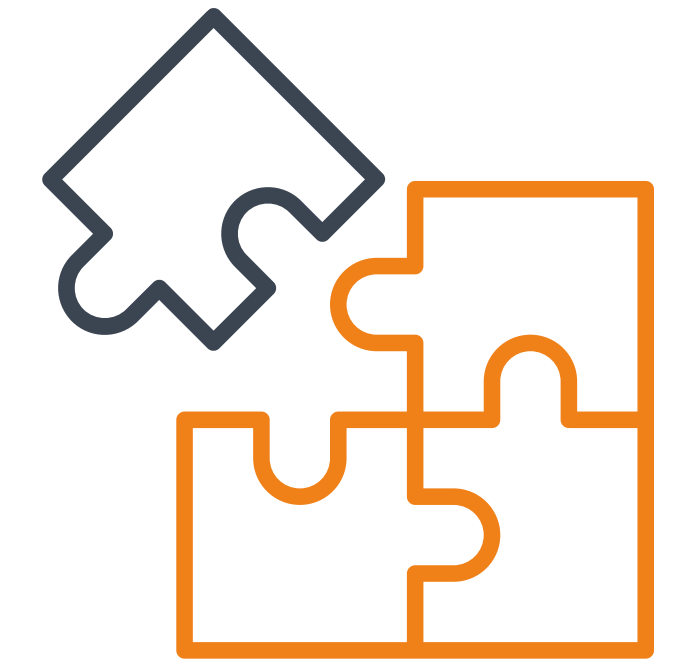


UNDERSTAND YOUR BUSINESS

You may think you have a pretty good understanding of your business, but it's surprising what insights can be achieved when you conduct a thorough SWOT analysis (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats). Be rigorous and above all be brutally honest. Is a lack of staff training letting your business down? Are your prices too high to compete in today's market? Is your digital presence somewhat lacking? Arming yourself with this knowledge will help to develop a marketing strategy that leverages your company's strengths and addresses those areas, which need to be improved.



The importance of creating a **strong brand**



In order to connect with your audience, stand out in the market, and represent the very essence of your company, you need to develop a brand that is distinctive and strong. One that makes it immediately clear exactly who you are.

When we talk about a ‘brand’ we refer to a variety of attributes that combine to form a singular identity. From a certain look and feel to a particular set of values, your brand is so much more than your logo and mission statement.

Reflect on your brand – For existing SME’s, is your brand identity strong enough? We explore the when and whys of rebranding later in this guide.



So what are the core traits of a **strong brand identity**?

How do you let your customers and or the community know who you are, what you do, and how you like to do it?

Let's look at the 5 all-important areas you'll get to know well:



ONE

DEFINING YOUR ESSENCE

Brand identity analysis and discovery starts within. This is about recognising and defining the values and mission of your organisation. What is it that you strive to do in the world and the marketplace? What does your company stand for? Developing an authentic, believable brand story that customers as well as employees can really get behind is vital to develop a strong position in the market. This in turn, is something that becomes inherently understood by all who interact with your brand.

TWO

MAKE FRIENDS WITH YOUR CUSTOMERS AND MARKET

Using market research information will help you define what value means to your target audience. Working through this stage will help to shape the tone and premise of your core business message your raison d'être so to speak in a way that will be able to connect. It forms part of the why you do what you do, and highlights how your products and services will match the needs of the customer. Finally, market research, customer segmentation and profiling will help inform this process.

THREE

ENCAPSULATE THE MESSAGE WITH A STRONG LOGO AND TAGLINE

Once you have managed to hone in on your single concept or brand definition, it's then time develop a clear brand visual identity. This takes the form of a unique and memorable company logo. Arriving at this point often involves working with a talented graphic designer, who can assist the visual translation of your company mission, vision and value. Equally important is a tagline to support your logo that can be used across promotional content. It conveys the theme and value of your brand and sells your product. It should be able to do all this in no more than seven words.

FOUR

DESIGN A LOOK AND FEEL THAT COMPELS YOUR AUDIENCE

A powerful visual representation is essential for creating a strong, recognisable brand. Colour scheme is important and needs to remain uniform throughout messaging. Other areas like fonts, pictures, layouts etc. will visually reinforce your brand.



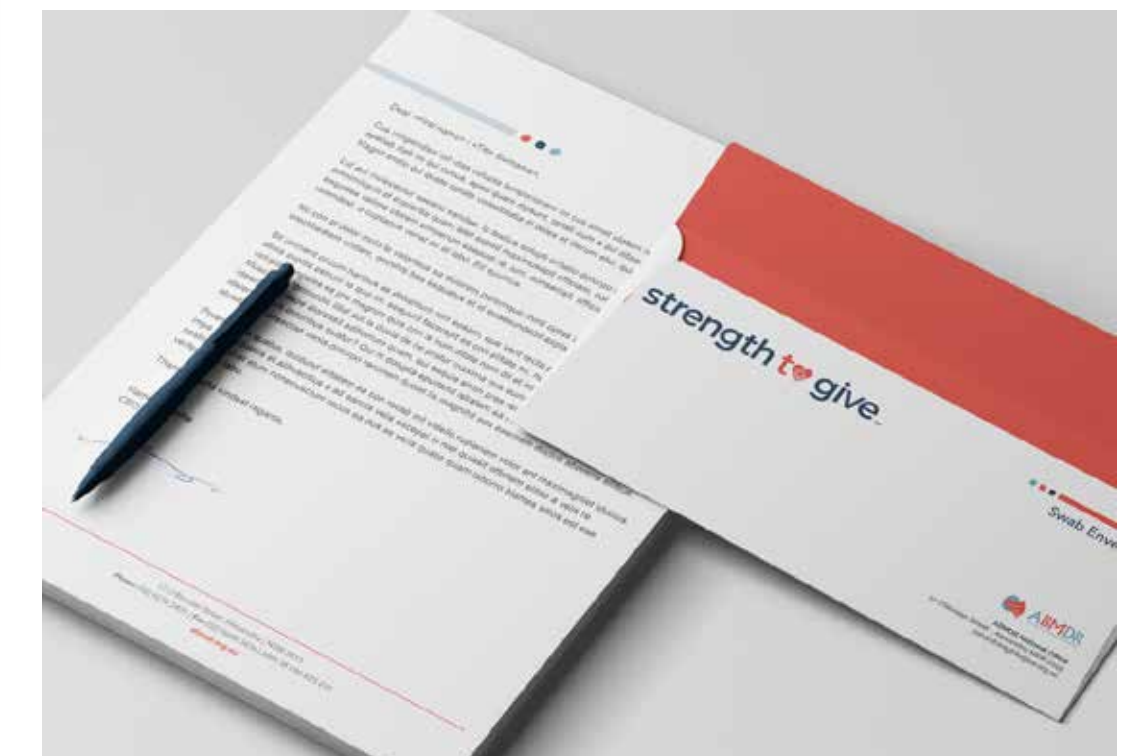
FIVE

CREATING A STRONG BRAND TAKES TIME

With so many factors involved, building a solid, unique brand and positioning it effectively is not a quick process. Each and every aspect needs to be carefully considered to make sure it is just the right fit for your brand image from the big picture to the smallest detail.

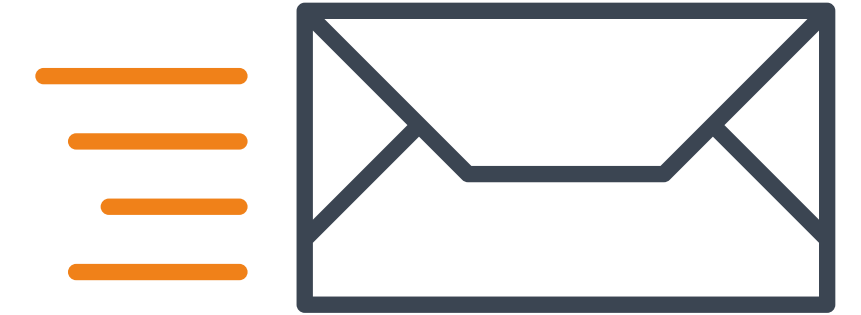
Not only does your brand need to resonate with the audience you're targeting, it needs to be recognisable, memorable and stand the test of time.

Finally, as the ultimate expression of everything your company stands for, your brand needs to connect not just with your external audience, but also on an internal level. So is your brand strong enough to work successfully across staff, stakeholders, and your end customers?



BECOMING MARKETING ACTIVE

Once you've taken those initial steps and got your brand off the ground, the next stage is to *start marketing*. To help, we've got five important tips for taking your brand to market.



1 **KNOW YOUR GOALS FROM THE OUTSET**

Before you commence any type of marketing, you need to be clear on what you want to achieve. Once you've established a set of defined goals, you can identify the steps you need to take to achieve these targets. When setting marketing goals, it's important to choose targets that are achievable. Where possible think about how you can track the success of the campaign. Tools like Google Analytics and social media data showing impressions, shares and views can help.

2 **GET YOUR MESSAGING RIGHT**

First impressions mean a great deal – so what your initial marketing communicates about your brand shapes the (usually lasting) opinion potential customers form about your brand. Getting the message right in the early stages is essential.

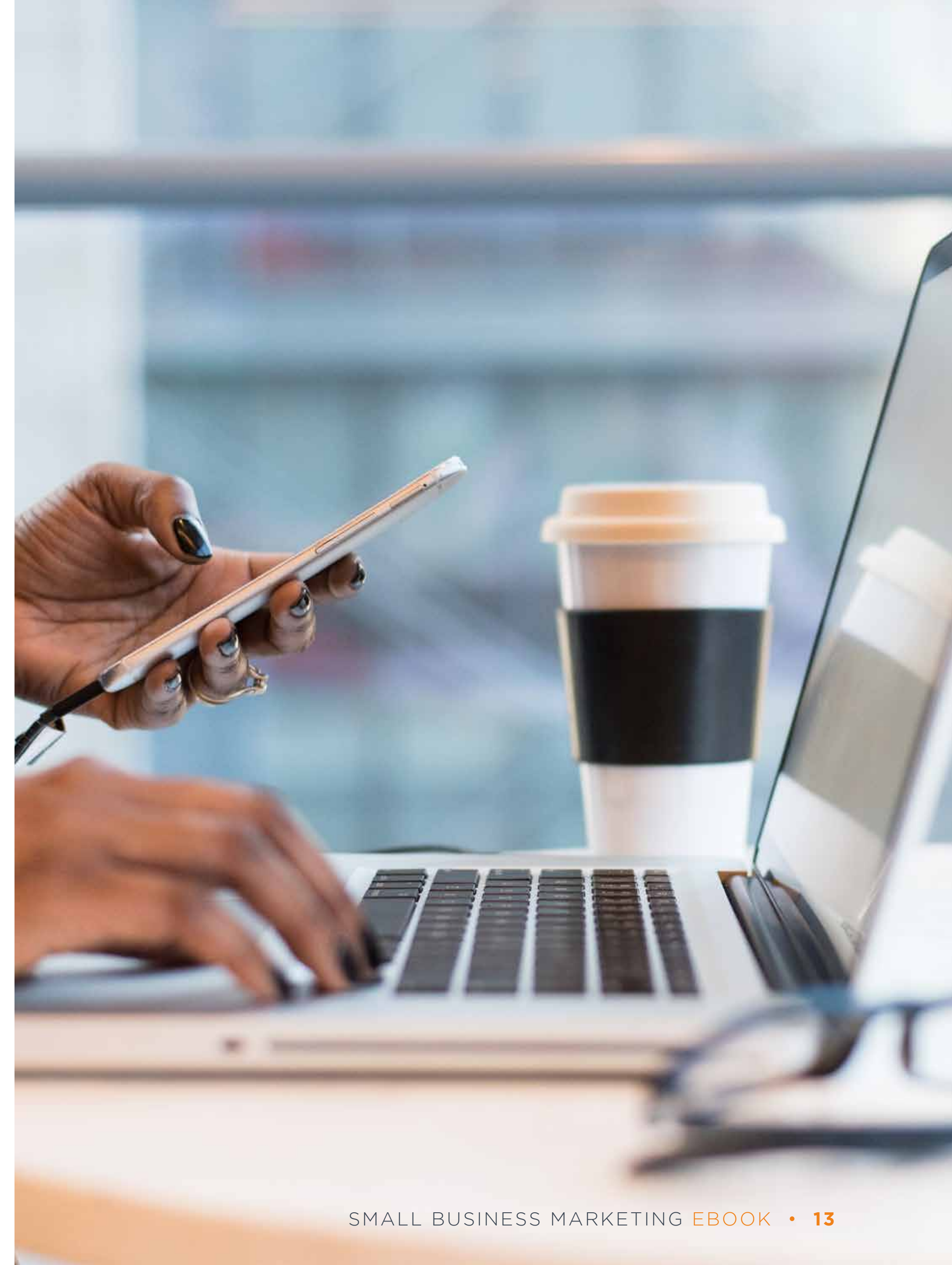
3 CHOOSE THE RIGHT CHANNELS

From digital marketing to direct mail, the key is to identify which channels suit your brand and goals. Potential marketing channels include:

- Email marketing
- Brochures and flyers
- Social media – The big four: LinkedIn, Facebook, Instagram and Twitter
- Content marketing
- Paid advertising
- Event marketing

4 PROVIDE CLEAR CALLS TO ACTION – AND INCENTIVES

Whether your call to action is driving traffic to your website, encouraging email newsletter opt-ins, or increasing your social media following, you need to make this call to action as clear and straightforward as possible. ➔



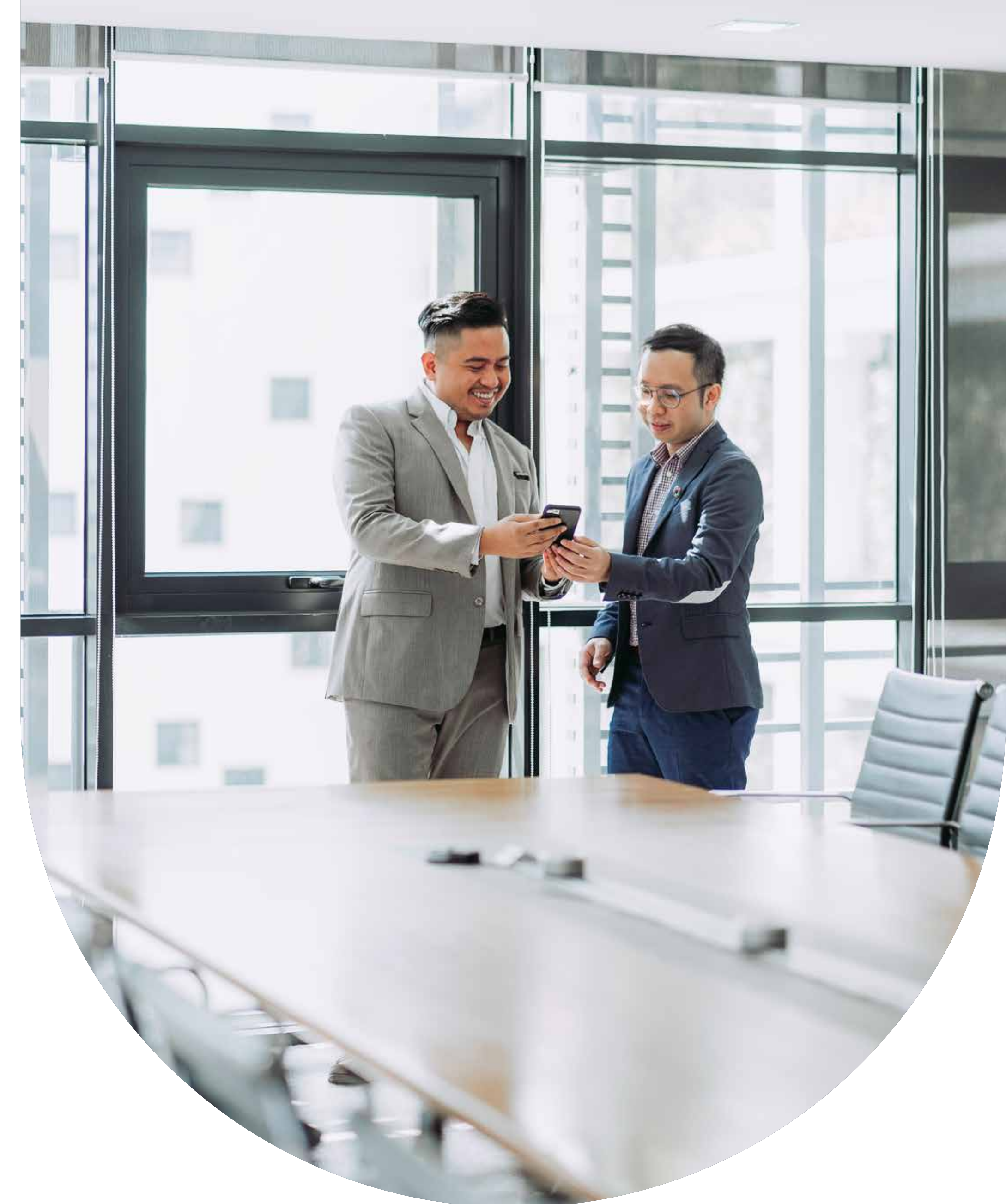
Best practice is to provide an answer to a pain-point or question with every call to action. By providing compelling incentives for performing the desired action, your audience is much more likely to follow your lead.

5

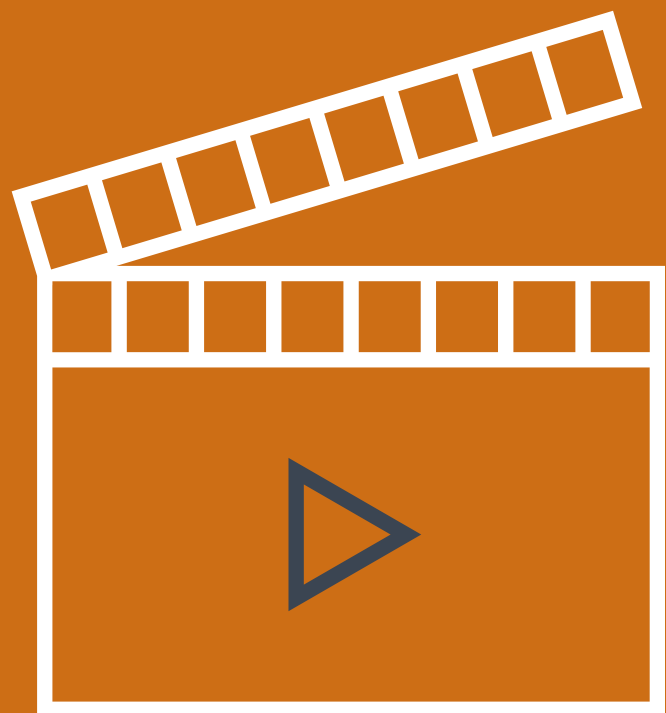
GO FOR THE HIGHEST QUALITY YOU CAN AFFORD

While budget will always play an important role in any small business decision, opting for cheap-looking, inferior quality marketing materials can do considerable damage to your brand in both the short-term and the long-term. At this early stage it's important to remember that **first impressions are critical**.

Quality doesn't just extend to the physical materials on which your marketing is delivered. Skimping on components like copywriting or design can be just as off-putting as cheap paper, so avoid cutting costs by doing it yourself, especially if it is not an area of strength. If price is an issue, consider taking a 'less is more' approach and focusing on doing a few key tactics well.



Action time!



IDENTIFY THE MARKETING CHANNELS BEST FOR YOUR BUSINESS

With a raft of marketing channels available, choosing which platforms to market your business can be a daunting task. Let's explore five easy-to-implement marketing channels to take your first steps towards becoming marketing active.



HIGH QUALITY WEBSITE

For many potential customers, your website will form the basis of their first impression of your business, so investing in a quality site can make a big difference. Using professional web design services ensures that your website looks professional, is functional and allows you to communicate with your target audience, sharing the benefits of your product.



MAKE A START WITH EMAIL MARKETING

Email is the most popular form of communication for businesses, offering a convenient and cost-effective means of contacting a large number of people. But to leverage this channel →

to its full potential, you need to plan your email marketing carefully to ensure your message is successfully delivered (both literally and figuratively).

A successful email marketing campaign relies on:

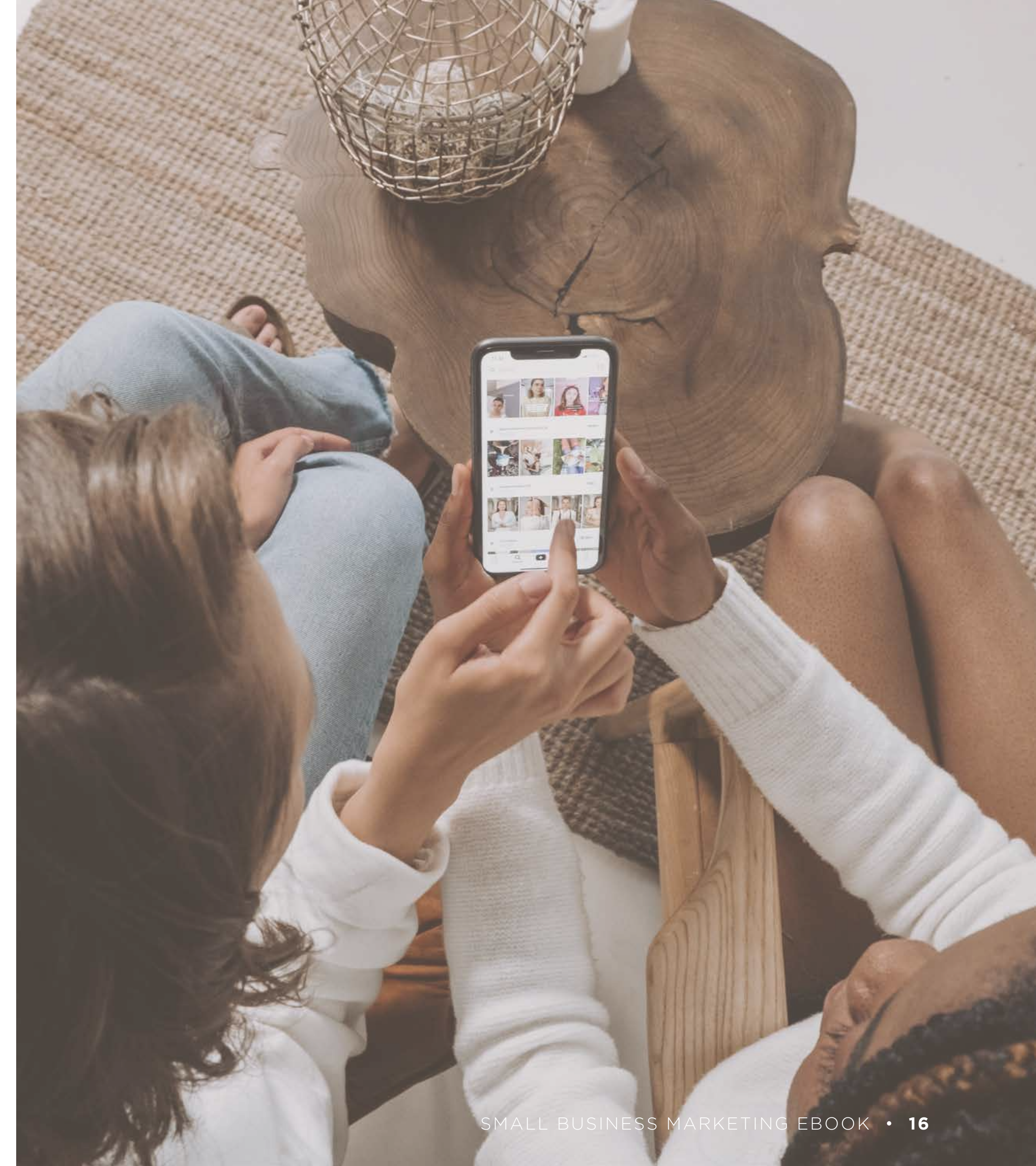
- High quality data
- Engaging graphic design
- Compelling copy and messaging

Providing customers with information that is beneficial to them is far more effective than simply plugging your brand – even better, use what you already know about your customers to personalise the communication. Finally, use in-depth tracking software to measure the results of your campaign (open rates, click-throughs etc.), and use this feedback to inform your next round of activity, which could also inform some quality sales calls.



GET INVOLVED WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

Social networking websites, such as Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn, Instagram and even newer tools like Pinterest and Snapchat are increasingly important marketing platforms. If your research suggests your target audience are serious about social media then you need to be too. ➔



Once you've established which platforms your target groups are using, create company profiles on these sites. Be proactive and regularly update social networking profiles with relevant and interesting information like articles and photos. Social media is a great way for you to inform users about your brand, keep them updated with latest developments, special offers and incentives. Don't be boring!



DELIVER YOUR MESSAGE VIA DIRECT MAIL

It is important not to overlook traditional forms of marketing communications. In fact, the most effective strategies are those that incorporate both online and offline elements within the marketing mix.

Printed direct mail pieces – such as flyers, sales letters and brochures – can be highly effective in raising brand awareness and attracting attention. Creativity is key, as is consistency with your overall branding. Like email marketing, having a compelling message that is relevant and beneficial to the recipient is essential, and so are clear calls to action. Invest in good quality print materials to keep your brand image sharp.



NETWORK, CONNECT AND IMPACT YOUR COMMUNITY

Be seen in your community. If you're offering something unique think about connecting with local media and get a write up in the business section of your local paper. Attend community events. Consider sponsoring a local sports team, writing a post for a local online publication or attending networking events in your industry and city. It's amazing how far 'who you know' can take you.



Maintaining marketing momentum

Building a brand is one thing, but keeping it going successfully over time is the true test of a business. So what do small businesses need to be aware of when attempting to maintain their brand in the long term? Here are our tips for effective brand maintenance.

BE CONSISTENT

Ensuring brand consistency is an essential aspect of maintaining your brand. Communicating your brand image and messaging clearly and consistently across all channels strengthens your brand and enables people to instantly recognise it. It also encourages customer loyalty and reinforces your brand in the market. Be sure to maintain consistency in aspects including visuals (logo, colour scheme, imagery), brand voice (tone, style of communication) and messaging.

LISTEN TO FEEDBACK

Digital marketing channels have greatly increased opportunities for customers to provide feedback. Whether it's on your social media profiles, via your website, or on online forums, never ignore what your customers are saying about you. Successfully maintaining your brand in the long term involves taking on board the feedback you receive and adjusting your business accordingly.

ANALYSE, REPORT, MEASURE

Careful and continuous monitoring of your marketing activity is absolutely vital for keeping up momentum. By analysing results and tracking ➔

the progress of projects and campaigns, you can identify which areas of your business marketing need to be improved in order to develop your brand and grow on your successes.

REVISIT REGULARLY

While maintaining brand consistency is important, this doesn't mean your brand strategy should always stay exactly the same as it was when it was first set up. To remain current, relevant and competitive, you need to be constantly refining your brand in order to keep the momentum going. Conduct regular reviews of all areas of your brand and consider how to make improvements while still staying true to your core values.

DON'T BE AFRAID TO TRY SOMETHING DIFFERENT

In fact, be afraid if you're not. While it can sometimes be difficult to break away from familiar approaches and techniques in order to test a new angle or a previously unexplored channel. Without new, exciting ideas, your brand runs the risk of becoming stale and boring in the eyes of your audience.



KEEP UP WITH YOUR COMPETITORS

Staying competitive in the marketplace means always keeping an eye on what your key industry competitors are doing, and ensuring your brand has a presence strong enough to compete with rival companies.

Remember too that it's also about what your competitors aren't doing – keep your eyes open for new opportunities that can position your brand as a pioneer by getting there first.



ACTIVELY INVOLVE YOUR STAFF

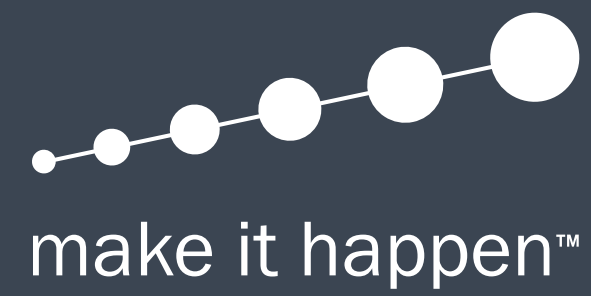
It's all very well for the key players in your company to know exactly what your brand is about and the direction in which it's going, but if other staff members aren't made aware of this information, your brand won't be maintained on the ground level.

Get employees involved in branding decisions and use regular internal communications to ensure everyone understands your brand and remains up-to-date with important brand developments.



DOES YOUR BRAND NEED A REVAMP?

Mention this ebook for a special offer 30-minute brand consultation and audit FREE when we chat. Let's see where you stand!.



Let's talk challenges...

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