10 WAYS TO Trow your business DIGITALLY

Times are tough for small businesses, and getting your business online may not have been a priority in the past, but now it's essential.

Follow our ten tips for growing your business digitally to boost your online presence, grow your digital offerings and potentially increase your sales.





Opt in or check out ...

Every business should have an email list, or a list of people that you market to, and part of growing that list is to offer opt ins, or free content that entices your customers, keeps you in their minds, and adds new potential customers to your email list. Now is the time to make those email freebies really relevant to the current climate. What do your customers need from you? Do they need something nice to arrive on their doorstep, or something booked in to look forward to? Think about creating care packages, craft kits or gift vouchers, all deliverable by post or electronically that will give them a boost.

Do you offer essential services, like food or maintenance? How can you best serve your customers whilst ensuring their safety and yours? Are you still able to work remotely for them, or can you do doorstep deliveries? Make sure your opt ins are relevant and get them out there for all to see.

Tell us about it...

If you don't have a blog on your website, now is the time to add one! Write 3-5 blog posts that are relevant to this time, and offer your customers some valuable and helpful content that will get you noticed, and get them through a difficult time. Be uplifting and genuine, and give them tips on getting through.

Maybe you're in the decor or gift business. Try writing a blog on how to make their house feel more homely, interior design tips, and perhaps even include links to buy mail order.

Perhaps you offer services to small businesses or workers? Give them tips on setting up a home office space that really works. Give the some tips on how to get their businesses online (website set up or Facebook page creation) or what they can do to make their work/life balance work for them whilst working at home. Give people something creative to do, if you're an art based business, offer free tutorials or craft projects to keep them and their kids occupied.

Well-being businesses can offer tips on relaxation and reducing anxiety and stress, and perhaps some home practices to help balance life and emotions.

Diversify ...

Now is the time to diversify your offerings to suit the climate. If your business relies heavily on face to face businesses, such as photography, think of ways to boost your income. Once this situation is over, perhaps there will be an increased demand for family portrait sessions. Offering a discounted gift voucher to buy now with a 12 month shelf life will bring in much needed income now and give your customers something to plan and look forward to. You can even write a blog post about how to feel at ease in front of the camera, tips on what to wear for a shoot, and choosing a location etc.

If you are already home based, then this is your time! You're used to working at home, with all the distractions that come with it. Why not share your knowledge with others, and make life easier for them too! It goes without saying, that being genuine in all of this is essential. Too salesy and people won't be interested. Genuinely want to help? They'll love you for it, and it will help your business long term.

Run a fitness or well-being business? Share your classes for a low cost fee online via platforms like Zoom and Facebook. Do you own a restaurant? Start a delivery service, either of ready cooked food, or fresh ingredients along with some recipes, or offer online cooking classes using basic store cupboard ingredients by video for a small fee. Got a great physical product but can't get out to sell it? Can you sell a digital version, or can it be posted? Mail order is still very much active, and if it's solving a problem for someone, they'll want it.

Don't be limited by the way you usually sell. Think outside of the box and diversify and adapt your offerings.









Get your social on ...

Use your time wisely, and schedule a month's worth of social media posts in one go. This will help you to plan your time effectively, make sure that you keep present in people's feeds and give you less to think about when it comes to posting daily. This also ensures that you don't post too much about the current situation, and how you're feeling about it, which may have a negative effect on your audience.

Use things like stories on both Facebook and Instagram for current posts, short videos and daily thoughts, and keep your main feed for business offerings, news, fun and promotions.

Remember to schedule on all your streams if you can, you may wish to use a scheduling tool like Hootsuite, Buffer or Tweetdeck. Post to Instagram, Facebook, LinkedIn, Pinterest and Google My Business, along with any other streams you choose, like Twitter and TikTok.

Get in touch ...

Send an email to all your existing clients to let them know you're there for them. It's easy to get caught up in our emotional responses to situations, especially when you fear for your business' future, but don't forget the people that support your business need support too.

Email them all to let them know you're still there, and working on new alternatives for them so you can continue to offer them solutions, and that you're adjusting the way you work to help them. If they feel you're being helpful, they'll be far more likely to take you up on any offers you may have, such as discounted rates, and gift vouchers. Make sure your tone is helpful rather than desperate, you might really need the work/sale/money, but sound like you're doing them a favour instead of the other way around.

Set up sales funnels ...

Get an automated sales funnel in place wherever you can. Offer a free download/product/service in exchange for an email sign up, get it set up and automated on your website via your email provider, and grow your email list. Set your funnel up to automatically send a follow up email a few days later, and remind your subscribers about you. You may want to direct them to more free content, or new services that you're offering. Either way it's an important time to capture and keep new potential customers.

"But I'm a gardener/builder/painter and decorator/photographer/offer face to face only...." It still matters and it still works.

Gardeners, why not send an email of free tips on how to care for your garden in Spring, nothing that does you out of a job (in fact you can suggest getting a professional in for certain jobs within the free tips guide), but give valuable content for free, and follow up with an email about what new packages you're launching, and how many limited spaces you have for seasonal garden maintenance packages, which need to be booked in advance with a 10% booking fee.

See what you did there? You confirmed a new customer, and gained a 10% booking fee, which will keep your business ticking over in your down time. (booking fees are non-refundable, deposits are not).

Builders, decorators, hairdressers, photographers, all the same, think about offerings to secure now and be used later, generating a small fee (income for you) and your customer gets an 'exclusive offer' and some quality work done just when they need it... win, win.



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Become a writer ...

Why not create some content that you can sell? You're super knowledgeable in your field, right? So share your knowledge. Target other business owners, or create teaching content for your customers so they can learn something too. Create an e-book or e-course that can be delivered online or digitally, and can be sold for a small fee again and again. This is called evergreen content, and stands the test of time, and generates income every time it is sold, but only needs creating once. Smart, right?

Here's a few ideas;

Hairdressers, why not create a course on hairstyles for kids – plaiting is always one that people want to learn for girls, maybe set up a camera and take a few step by step pics, and write a written tutorial.

Beauty Therapists, create a set of skincare tips and tricks, or makeup tutorials, pics and instructions, and even add links to buy products online. You could see if your supplier will give you a commission on products sold? Gardeners, why not share how to care for your house-plants. It's unlikely you'll ever be commissioned to look after house-plants but share some green fingered knowledge with your customers so they can have beautiful gardens courtesy of you, and gargeous plants inside too!

Decorator, why not write a list of your best decorating tips, don't share your trade secrets, but there will be some at home doing a bit of DIY that could use some expert advice!

Audit it ...

Now is the time to make sure your website, Facebook page etc are all looking amazing. You are no longer the face of your business, your online presence is, so make sure it represents you and your business in the best way possible. New customers will be looking to find you, and existing customers will want to see the business they know and trust, so make sure they're up to scratch.

Need a new photo? Stage one at home with the help of your family. Get your logo and branding sorted so it's representative of you and looks professional (you may want to employ the services of a graphic designer now, they're all still working and may be able to help out with payment plans etc if you ask), and make sure your branding is consistent across all platforms. Ensure your audience isn't confused by your online presence. Having differing branding on your Facebook page to your website, isn't going to help with building that recognition, so make sure it all works together.

Top tip, if you're on a budget but have a great logo, pop on to Canva and create a Facebook banner, social media posts and stories etc. They have some great free options for designing posts and promotional material if you can't afford a professional designer right now.

Get with Google ...

Google My Business is essential right now. If you're not registered, DO IT NOW!!! Get your business on there, and verified as quickly as you can. Google will show you in local search results almost immediately, and this is really useful when reaching your local audience. Get in the habit of posting on Google My Business just as much as your other social media streams. This will encourage Google that your business is current and active, and it will help you get seen a little bit more. It goes without saying that your branding needs to be consistent here too. When people follow your links from Google to your Facebook page or website, they need to recognise your brand.







Share the love ...

You're only used to working for one business, but what if I told you, you could work for lots and make more money without much effort? Look around you. As a business owner, I'm sure you have plenty of business contacts that you communicate with regularly. Self employed people tend to know other self employed people, they flock together and chat like virtual colleagues. This is gold.

Make a list of all the other small business owners you know, whose work you rate highly, and see how you can help each other. Maybe your businesses compliment each other well, and your target market is similar? Can you get together and create an e-course or e-book for your customers? You can then advertise it on both your platforms and get double the exposure, and hopefully double the sales.

If you're in the maintenance trades, like gardening or decorating, get together online with each other and see if you can create some 'all in' trade packages for home renovations, or garden landscaping, which you can start to market now on email, website and social media. Promoting your work now will ensure that you're hitting the ground running when businesses are open again, and you're one step ahead, hopefully with pre-bookings in the bag ready to start.

Even if you can't create with another business, doesn't mean you can't promote each other. Just sharing a friend's business on your social media will help them heaps, they can return the favour for you.

Cross promotion is so valuable at a time like this, and getting twice or three times the exposure for your product or service is priceless.

Be calm ...

Ok, I know I said 10 ways, but I have a really important one for number 11.

We're in the middle of a crisis, for everyone, and businesses are feeling super worried about their futures right now. It's easy get caught up in the panic, but that's not going to help your business through this.

Take stock of where your business is right now. Financially are you running it day to day, with no real back up for emergencies, or are you ahead with a contingency in place for situations like this?

Either way, look at where you are, and see what help is available to you. If you're in doubt, contact HMRC, the local council, and look at the Government guidelines on what you're entitled to.

If you're a sole trader, and have no employees or premises to worry about, see what you can do to still earn whilst at home. Employers and directors can claim for different grants and loans, so see what you can get that will help in the short term.

The most important thing is to not give up on your business. It may seem impossible to make it work right now, but face this calmly and change the things that you can, and let go of those that you can't. This isn't going to be over in a flash, so you need to adjust your outlook and business structure to make it work.

There's lots of support out there for you too, the UK has a huge amount of business owners in the same boat right now, so support each other and we'll make it through the other side with a better business and more friends.

If you want a tailored strategy plan just for your business, get in touch and book a one-to-one strategy session with Grey Card Creative via the website, and we can plan some next steps for you and your business to get you ready to take on the online market. You'll find it in the training section.

I do hope you've found something useful in this training guide.

We've found ourselves in such and precedented situation, and it pays to remember that we're all just doing what we can to help our businesses survive.

Try some of these practices and see what results you get, and hopefully your business will grow along with your resolve.

Wishing you all the best of luck.



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