

Marketing That Works

Small-Town Strategies for Big Results

Presented by Keith Hudson



Welcome to Marketing That Works.

What You'll Learn Today

- Marketing fundamentals for small businesses
- Clear messaging and brand identity
- Affordable promotion strategies
- Simple marketing action plan

Perfect for Rural Entrepreneurs

Practical, affordable marketing strategies tailored specifically for small business owners in Eastern North Carolina communities.

Take Action Today

Leave with a clear marketing plan you can implement immediately to attract and retain more customers in your local market.

"Let's equip your small business community with the tools to grow, adapt, and thrive."

Let's Get Started

Be Honest...

How many of you own a business?

Have turned your passion or skill into your business, something most people only dream about?

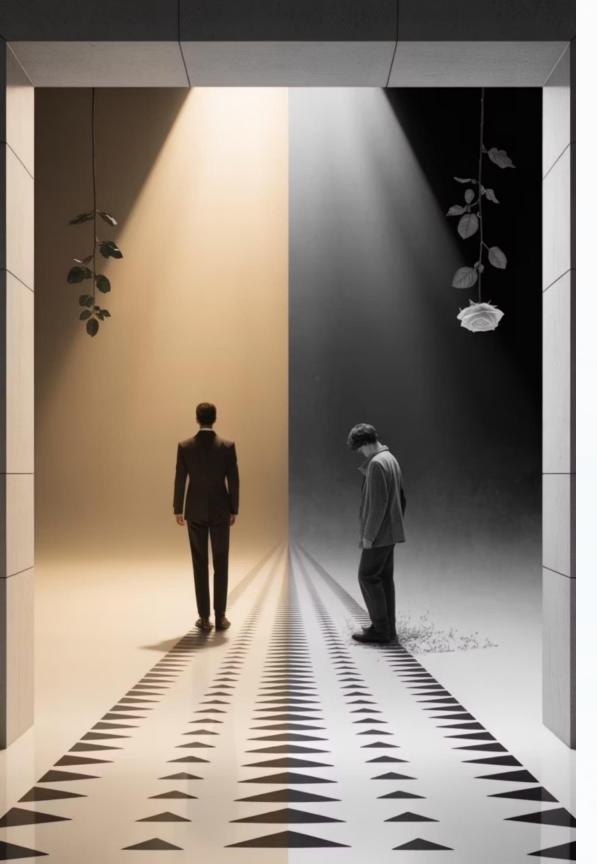
Need to be the CEO, the accountant, the marketer, the salesperson, the customer service rep, and even the janitor. Sometimes all before lunch!

Have asked yourself: "What was I thinking?"

Have had moments when you wonder if the freedom of owning a business is worth the sleepless nights. And all the challenges. Don't worry – you're not alone. Every business owner here has felt the same way.

And that's why we're here today.





The Hard Truth: Success vs. vs. Failure

Starting your own business is a brave step.

But the truth is, many new businesses struggle to last.

So why do some owners do really well, while others, despite all their hard work, don't make it?

What is it makes some businesses succeed and others struggle?.



It's Not Just the Idea







Great products fail fail all the time

Even brilliant business concepts can fail if you don't have the right way to get things done and solve problems.

Some business owners succeed with very little

Many success stories come from business owners who started with almost nothing, but they used every chance they got.

What separates the the survivors? It is is how they think and act.

The way you think as a business owner makes all the difference. and separates those who just get by from those who truly succeed.

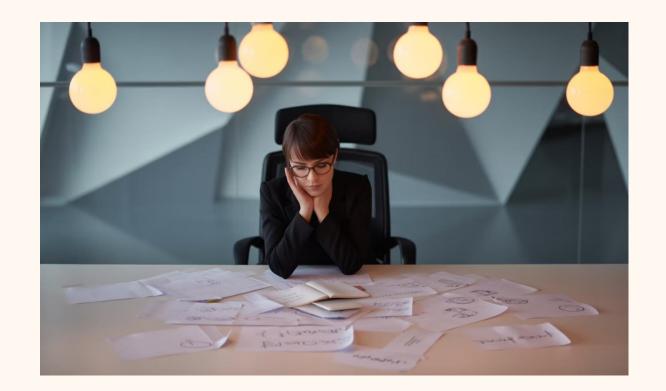
Finding the Answers

Back in 2009, the Entrepreneurial Learning Initiative (ELI) talked to over 2,000 successful business owners and entrepreneurs from all walks of life.

Research shows eight life lessons that consistently appear in successful companies—and in real life

No matter what kind of business you have or what your specific situation is these life lessons can be applied

These research findings became the foundation and basis for what is now the **Ice House Entrepreneurship Program**.





The Ice-House Entrepreneurship Program

This program is designed to help us all develop the mindset to that enables us to become successful.

It focuses on the basic ways of thinking and acting that make businesses successful,

Your mindset enables you to handle challenges and make a real difference.





The 8 Simple Rules for How Entrepreneurs Think

1. Choice

Choose how you react and what you decide.

3. Action

Move forward and start doing things, using what you have.

5. Wealth

Create real value, and that brings in money.

7. Community

Build connections and work with other people.

2. Opportunity.

See chances to do well, even when others just see problems.

4. Knowledge

Learn by trying new things and seeing what happens.

6. Brand

A reputation is built on what you do.

8. Persistence

Stick with it, even when things get tough.

Principle 1: Choice

Taking Responsibility for Your Decisions

- Choose to see limited resources as a chance to find new ways to do things, not a problem.
- Take responsibility for how visible your business is.
- Decide to actively look for partners, instead of waiting for things to happen.

When you own your business decisions, you see challenges as choices. They're not just things that happen to you.





Principle 2: Opportunity

Seeing chances where others see problems



How this applies to your business:

- Find gaps in local services. do people leave town to get? and offer it!
- If you don't get a lot of walk-in customers, use it to give each person a truly personal experience.
- Turn slow seasons into chances for special sales or promotions.

For example: A local business faced tough competition from a big chain. Instead, they focused on being experts, offering custom orders, and even emergency after-hours service.

Every local problem is hiding a special business opportunity.



Principle 3: Action

Use What You Have to Get Started

Start Small, Learn Fast

Don't wait for everything to be perfect.

Start your marketing with what you have.

A simple Facebook page you update regularly is better than having no online presence at all.

Test Your Ideas First

Try out your marketing ideas on a small scale. See how customers react before you spend a lot of money. For example, set up a pop-up booth to see if a second store location is a good idea.

Use Free Tools

There are many free tools that can help you. Use things like Google Business Profile, local business groups, and community networks. They can help you make a big impact without spending money upfront.

Example: Use your smartphone and free editing apps. Take good pictures of your products. Then, create engaging social media posts. This will quickly help more people see what you offer.



Principle 4: Knowledge

Learn by Doing and Trying New Things

For Your Local Business:

- See which sales bring people into your store.
- Just ask your customers what they like and need.
- Try different hours to see when your customers shop.
- Play with prices to find what works best for your local buyers.

Try simple things, These small tests help you find out when people really shop and who your best customers are.

what you learn by actually doing things is often more powerful than just business theories.

entrepreneurial learning initiative



Principle 5: Wealth

How to Attract Money by Being Valuable



Don't just compete on price with big stores. Offer something unique that customers really value. This is how you attract money.

What This Means for Your Business:

Personalized Service

Give customers special attention. This could be remembering what they like or even helping them after hours if they have an emergency.

Local Expertise

Show that you know your town best. Maybe it's knowing how to grow the best plants in your local climate or understanding what foods people in your area prefer.

Become a true part of your community. Build real relationships.

Example: You might try staying open later if that's what your community needs. This adds value that makes customers willing to pay a little more.



Principle 6: Your Brand

How Your Actions Build Your Reputation

Be Consistent

Every time you talk to a customer, it either helps or hurts your brand.

Give good quality and great service and build trust, people will trust you. This builds a good name for you, and others will talk about your business.

Fit Your Community

Make sure your brand matches the values and feel of your town.

When your brand truly reflects your community, local customers will connect with it much more deeply.

Add Your Personal Touch

Your personal reputation and your business's reputation are often linked.

Use the trust you've built as a neighbor to shape your business's identity.

When you always keep these simple promises, you become the top choice for both everyday things and special items.



Principle 7: Community

Building Connections and Working with Others

How This Works in Local Businesses:

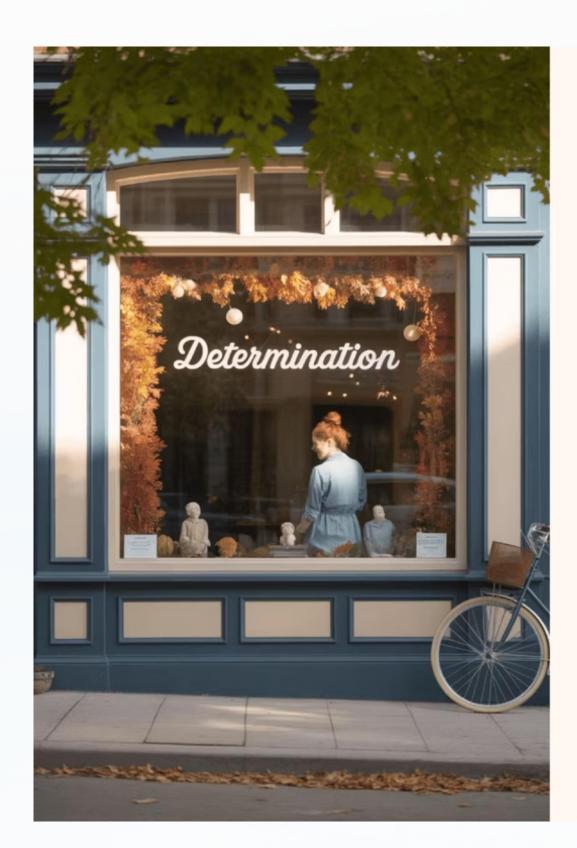
- Team up with other local businesses for joint ads and events.
- Get involved in local groups like business clubs and community organizations.
- Support local causes that fit your business values.
- Hold customer thank-you events to build stronger connections.

Local business partnerships bring more customers and sales to both of you.

Local business connections are about helping each other, not just making sales. When you build trust, you open doors for everyone.







Principle 8: Persistence

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Stick With It When Things Get Tough

Small Business Application:

Set Realistic Milestones

Break your big goals into smaller steps you can actually reach, to help see progress and stay motivated, especially when things are slow.

Adjust Without Abandoning

Be ready to change your plans if your first tries don't work out, and stay focused on what your business is really all about.

Plan For Seasonality

Plan ahead for times when business usually slows down. Think about offering different things, managing your costs, and do marketing even when it's not busy.

Instead of giving up on a new idea or business, stick with your main offerings and events. Add new services slowly. This helps teach the community what you offer and, over time, builds a loyal customer base.

Your Mindset: Is The Key to Success

What People Often Get Wrong

- You're either born an entrepreneur or not.
- All you need is a great idea.
- You need a lot of money to start.
- You have to take huge risks.



Sam Walton's 8 Principles for Walmart Success

From leaving J.C. Penney to founding the world's largest retailer, Sam Walton's journey demonstrates timeless principles that built Walmart into a global empire.

Choice

Left J.C. Penney to run a Ben Franklin store, then founded Walmart in 1962

Action

Opened in Rogers, AR; negotiated hard with suppliers; kept costs fanatically low

Wealth & Value

Everyday Low Prices saved customers money; created thousands of local jobs

Community

Hired locally; tailored assortments by town; shared profits with associates

Opportunity

Serve small towns big retailers ignored; bring big-city prices close to home

Knowledge

Constant benchmarking trips; Saturday meetings; early barcode/data adoption

Brand

Frugal, service-first culture: "Always low prices," friendly greeters, clean aisles

Persistence

Lost his first store lease (Newport); started over and scaled bigger

Today's Health Check

To assess your current business health consider the following questions and metrics.

Choice	Opportunity	Action	Knowledge
Are you offering a unique value proposition that genuinely differentiates you from competitors, or are you just another option in a crowded market?	Are you actively identifying and serving unmet needs or overlooked market segments that larger competitors might be ignoring?	Are your operations lean, agile, and constantly optimized for maximum efficiency and cost-effectiveness?	How effectively are you leveraging data analytics and continuous learning to inform strategic decisions and adapt to market shifts?
Wealth & Value	Brand	Community	Persistence
Are you consistently delivering exceptional value to customers, driving sustainable revenue growth,	Does your current brand clearly communicate your core values and commitment to customer service,	How are you building strong, mutually beneficial relationships with your employees, local communities, and supply chain	How prepared are you to adapt and persevere through challenges, turning setbacks into opportunities for growth and innovation?
	communicity to customer service,	communities and supply chain	for growth and innovation?

- 1) Score each principle as you practice it today (1 = not doing it, 10 = strong & consistent).
- 2) Circle your two lowest scores.
- 3) For each, write ONE thing you will do differently this week



Your Path to Marketing Success

You've now learned the main ideas about business thinking and new ways to solve business problems.

Next we're going to dive into practical, hands-on steps of marketing that will truly help your business succeed.

- What Marketing Really Means
 - Branding on a Budget
- Local Marketing That Works
 - Digital Tools for Success



Marketing vs. Sales:

Marketing: Getting People Interested

Marketing is all about getting people interested in what you offer. It helps you build your brand and attract new customers.

- Gets attention: Marketing helps you find potential customers and keep them interested.
- Looks ahead: It builds your business's good name and lasting relationships with customers.
- What it covers: Think ads, social media, helpful content, and getting people to notice you.

Sales: Turning Interest into Money

Sales is about talking to interested people, closing deals, and turning them into paying customers.

- Makes the sale: Sales means direct talks to convince people and finish a purchase.
- Right now: It's mainly focused on making money now and hitting your goals.
- What it covers: This includes talking directly with customers, making deals, taking orders, and helping customers right after they buy something.

No Marketing = Low Sales, Limited Growth.

Marketing is More Than Just Advertising

Many business owners think marketing is just about expensive ads.

But it's actually much more. And it's easier to do than you think:

- Your good name in the community is marketing.
- How customers feel when they visit your store is marketing.
- How you answer the phone is marketing.
- Your store's look and signs are marketing.
- Joining local events is marketing.
- Every chat about your business is marketing.

Marketing is everything that shapes how potential customers think and feel about your business.



3. Marketing Is Your #1 Job

A solid marketing plan may feel like extra work—but it's the work that creates customers on purpose.

WHY it matters:

- Customers don't find you by accident.
- Clarifies who you serve and why you're different
- Consistency builds trust and repeat visits
- Strong brand increases pricing power
- Keeps pipeline full and smooths slow seasons
- Attracts partners, talent, and referrals on purpose

WHY the OWNER must lead it:

- Sets the promise, pace, and priorities
- Directs what to offer and how to present it
- Ensures marketing reflects company values
- Separates you from look-alike competitors
- Attracts partners, talent, and lenders
- Protects against downturns with a loyal base



If the owner won't own marketing, nobody will.

Let's Start with Marketing Concepts That Works

Take the Mystery Out

Easy marketing steps that work, even if you don't have much time or money. We'll focus on what works best here in our area.

Marketing That's Right for for Our Area and Budget

Marketing ideas made just for small business in limited markets.

Attract the Right Customers

Understand who your best local customers are,
Create messages that really speak to what they need and care about,
Set up ways to keep them coming back for more.



10 Golden Rules of Marketing

1. Strong Branding

Define your unique identity and what makes your business special. A strong brand helps customers recognize and trust you.

2. Clear Communication

Clearly convey your message to the target audience. Effective communication builds relationships and drives engagement.

3. Community Involvement

Actively participate in your local community. Being present and engaged shows you care and builds local goodwill.

4. Teamwork & Collaboration

Foster collaboration within your business. A united team delivers consistent service and positive customer experiences.

5. Online Presence

Establish a strong digital presence. Reach a wider audience and offer convenient access to your products or services.

6. Managed Growth

Plan for sustainable growth, ensuring your business scales without compromising quality or customer service.

7. Regional Opportunity

Focus on developing your market within your specific region, understanding local needs and opportunities.

8. Utilize Resources

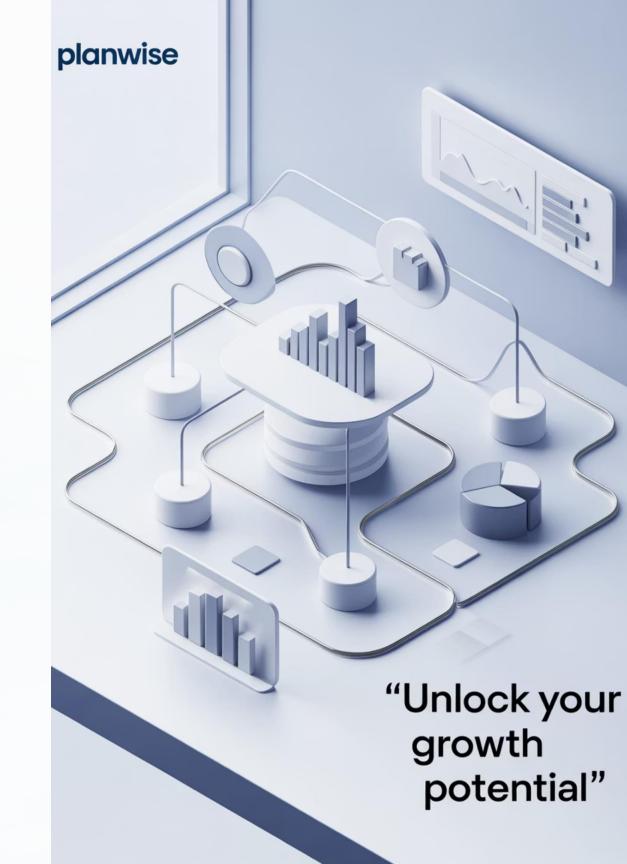
Make the most of available resources, including local partnerships, grants, and affordable digital tools.

9. Set Clear Goals

Define specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound marketing goals to track progress and success.

10. Persistence

Marketing is an ongoing effort. Don't give up when faced with challenges; adapt and keep pushing forward.



Marketing Health Check — 10 Principles

Score each principle 1–10 for how you're doing TODAY.

Calculate your average score

Pick your TWO lowest scores and write one thing you'll do differently THIS WEEK

What evidence will show it worked?"

5. Don't Guess. Learn Your Market.

Market — Where you're playing

- Who are your competitors?
- What your potential customers are buying today (alternatives & price bands)
- Competitors & customers channels already in use and WHY !!

Customer — Who you serve

- Focus on your #1 customer group (who/where)
- Top 3 problems they want solved
- Identify their buying triggers & decision criteria

Values can I bring to my community?

- What beneficial outcomes should you aim to give
- Who will benefit most from those outcomes
- How can I
 communicate to
 those who will
 benefit.



Sources of Informal Learning



- **1. Be Curious** explore and understand the needs of community around you.
- 2. Do Research. Actively seek information from various sources.
- **3. Ask Questions.** through active engagement and clarification.

Be Observant. Actively observe details, patterns, and behaviors.

Gain Experience. Learn from personal experiences

Seek Mentorship. Seek guidance from experienced individuals and peers

Join Online Communities. Participate in forums and communities.

Building Your Brand:

A strong business brand is built on three essential pillars:

How You Look

Your brand's visual identity, including your logo, colors, fonts, and the aesthetic of your physical and digital spaces.

Your Business Vibe

The overall experience and feeling customers get when interacting with your business, from service to community involvement.

What You Say

The clear, consistent messages you communicate about your unique value proposition, special offers, and your business's story.



Consistency is key across all touchpoints:
storefront,
website,
social media,
All print materials.

DIY Branding Tools

You don't need expensive software or fancy design skills to create great-looking materials.

Free or Affordable Resources

- Canva: Design logos, social media posts, and business cards easily with free templates.
- Colors.com: Pick out great color schemes for your brand.
- Google Fonts: Get hundreds of free fonts for all your brand materials.
- Unsplash: Find free, high-quality photos for your website and social media posts.
- Looka: This Al tool helps you make a logo without breaking the bank.



Being part of your community is great for business.

Sponsor Local Events

Small contributions to local fairs, sports teams, or school events can build good relationships and get your business noticed. Make sure to get photos and some recognition!

Host Workshops or Demonstrations

Share what you know by offering free classes to the community. For example, a garden store could teach about planting, or a bakery could show how to make holiday cookies.

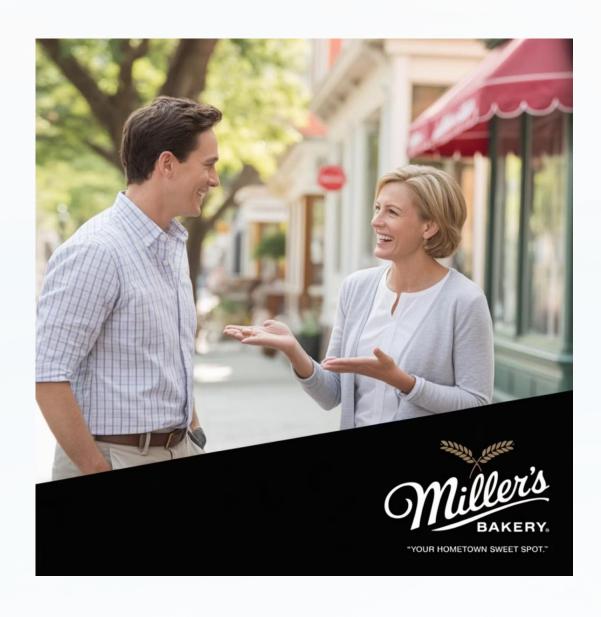
Support Local Causes

Support causes that are important to your community. You can donate products, offer your services, or volunteer with your team.



Word of Mouth: Your Most Powerful Tool

In small towns, good word travels fast. You can use this to help your business grow:



- Find the key people in your community
- Give people something to talk about
- Ask happy customers to spread the word
- Thank your regular customers
- Listen and reply to what people say



Easy & Cheap communication Ideas



Community Boards

Put up good-looking flyers on public bulletin boards. You can find these at places like grocery stores, libraries, and community centers.



Local News Coverage

Tell interesting stories about your business to local newspapers, radio stations, and community websites. They might feature you!



Vehicle Advertising

Use magnetic signs or window stickers on your car. This turns your everyday driving into ads on the go, reaching people wherever you drive.



Free Workshops

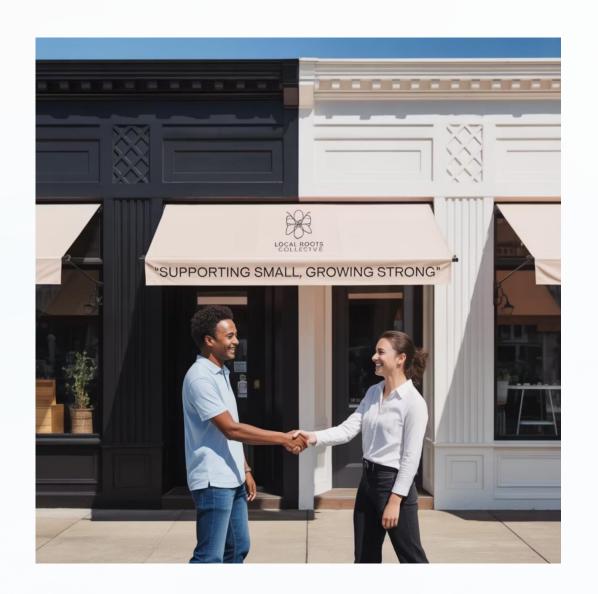
Show what you know by offering free classes or demos. This is a great way to show people how your products or services work.

Work Together With Other Businesses

Team Up, Don't Compete!

Working with other businesses can help you reach more customers without spending a lot of money. Here's how you can team up:

- Offer special deals together: For example, a café could give discounts at your bookstore if customers show their receipt.
- Sell packages of services: You could partner with a related business to offer combined deals that customers will love.
- Share ad costs: Split the bill for ads in local newspapers or on the radio. It saves you both money!
- Host events together: Organize a customer appreciation day or a sidewalk sale with a neighboring business.
- Send customers to each other: Set up a system where you
 recommend customers to businesses that offer services or products
 that go well with yours.



Online Tools You Need to Get Noticed

Even in small markets, more and more customers look for products and businesses online. Having a good online presence can help you reach people nearby and even visitors effectively.



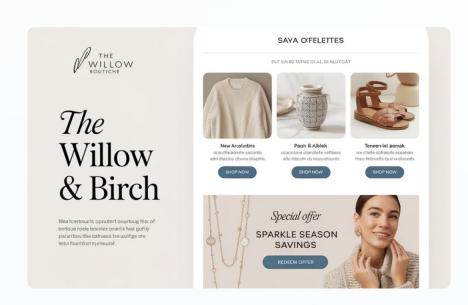
Online Maps & Listings

Make sure your business shows up correctly on Google Maps, Apple Maps, Yelp, and other online places where businesses are listed.



Your Own Website

A simple, mobile-friendly website is like your online shop. It gives key info and makes your business look trustworthy.



Email Updates

Collect email addresses and send regular emails to your customers. This helps you tell them about deals, news, and what's happening.

Social Media That Work for You

Your Google Business Business Profile

This enables people to find you easily on Google Maps and in local searches

- Your correct hours, phone number, and address
- Recent photos of your business
- A full description of what your business does
- Reply to all customer reviews

Your Facebook Page Page

Many people in rural areas still use Facebook a lot.

- Post regularly (2-3 times a week)
- Things that are important to your local area at that time
- Showcase customer photos and testimonials
- Reply quickly to messages

Your Simple Website Website

You don't need a fancy website, but it should have these key things:

- It should work well on phones
- Your contact information on every page
- A clear description of your products or services
- Your location and business hours
- Testimonials



What to Post on Social Media

Behind the Scenes

Show how you make your products or provide your services. Introduce your team. Share your business story. Being real helps people connect with you.

Customer Spotlights

Show off your happy customers (ask them first!). Explain how they use what you offer. Tag them in your posts to reach more people.

Local Events & Seasons

Link your business to things happening in your town, like local events or changing seasons. Connect with what matters to your audience in their daily lives.

Tips & Advice

Share what you know best. Give helpful tips related to your business. This shows you're an expert in your community.

Don't worry about posting every day. It's better to post 2-3 times a week with good quality content.

This works better than posting something quickly just to get it done.



Ready to make things happen?

We've talked about:

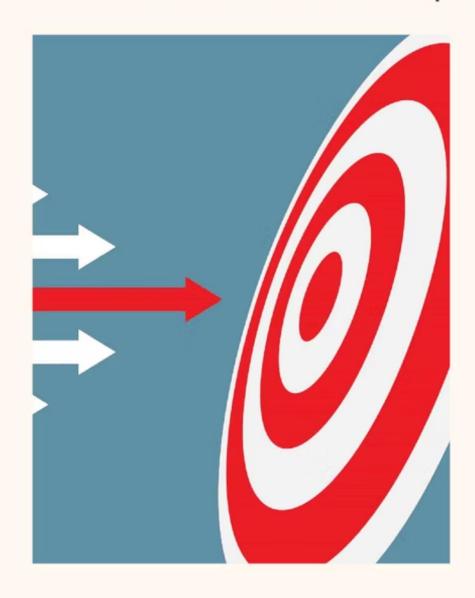
- What makes small businesses special both the tough parts and the good parts.
- Marketing ideas that actually work where you are.
- The way successful business owners think differently.

Now, let's put it all together:

- Even great ideas need a clear path forward.
- That path starts with setting clear goals you can actually measure.
- Goals help you see your progress, stay excited, and celebrate your successes!



Your Path to Success: Simple Goal Setting



Start with Your Big Dream

What does success look like for your business in the big picture?

Break It Into Medium Goals

Now, split that big dream into smaller, easier-to-handle goals.

Set Short-Term Objectives

Next, turn those medium goals into clear, short-term tasks.

Plan Your Actions

Make a clear plan. What steps will you take? When will you do them? What do you need to get them done?

Just Start!

Begin with those small, short-term tasks. Each step, no matter how tiny, moves you closer to your big dream.

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SMART Goals for Small Business Marketing

What Makes a Goal SMART:

S - Specific: Make your goals clear.

Don't just say "get more customers."

Instead, aim to "attract 10 new customers each month through local partners."

or "get 100 new email sign-ups."

to track your progress.

M - Measurable: You need to be able

For example, "boost foot traffic by 25%"

A - Achievable: Make sure your goals goals are realistic.

Think about your money, time, and how big your local market is when you set targets.

R - Relevant: Your goals should fit your business's main aims.

Focus on goals that directly help you make more money or build better customer relationships.

T - Time-bound: Set a clear end date for your goals.

For example, "within 90 days" or "by the end of this quarter."



Marketing Plan for Small Business Success Might Look Like This



First 30 Days: Build Your Foundation

Set up your online presence and network: complete your Google Business Profile, create a basic Facebook page, audit all marketing for consistent branding, and identify three key local contacts to build relationships with.



Next 30 Days (Days 31-60): Get Involved Locally

Boost local visibility: partner with a complementary business, participate/sponsor one community event, start an email list with a signup incentive, and post weekly social content (BTS or customer spotlights) to build local relationships.



Last 30 Days (Days 61-90): Grow & Check Your Progress

Kick off a simple local ad campaign, email your new subscribers, set up basic tracking for visits and sales sources, then review the results and refine your plan each month



Your Turn:

Use the SMART framework to improve the marketing goals in your 30 – 60 - 90 day plan.



Pick one of your current goals and make it SMART by asking these questions:

- Is it Specific enough?
- How will you Measure your success?
- Is it Achievable with your resources?
- Is it Relevant to what your business needs most?
- What's your Time deadline?

Make your goals practical and easy to act on for small businesses.

In summary - Today We have explored

8 Life Lessons for Success

Understanding the core tenets for business growth.

Golden Rules of Marketing

Key strategies for effective marketing within your community.

Online Presence

Exploring the essential components and importance of your digital footprint.

Marketing Plan Development

Steps to create a comprehensive and actionable marketing plan.

Marketing Analysis

Identifying your strengths, challenges, and opportunities in marketing.

Goal Setting Practice

Practical application of setting clear and achievable business goals.

Community Business Presence

Strategies for establishing and strengthening your local business ties.

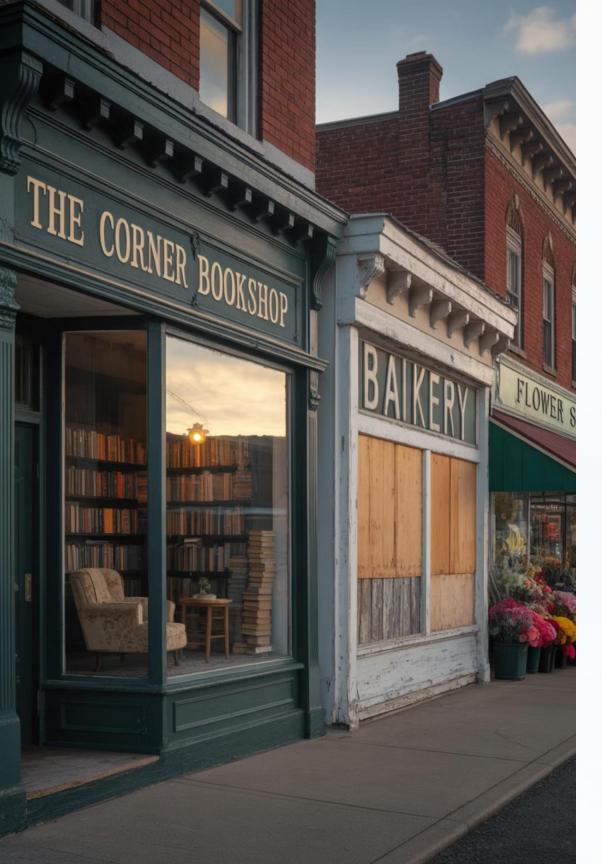
Regional Growth Opportunities

Discovering avenues for expanding your business beyond local borders.

Available Resources

Accessing valuable support and tools for your business journey.





Your Marketing Path

Your Strengths

- You have strong ties with your community.
- You build personal relationships with your customers.
- You're the local expert at what you
- Pare's often less competition in your specific area.

Your Challenges

- You might have fewer local customers.
- Your marketing budget may be small.
- It can be hard to find marketing experts nearby.
- You might face limits with internet or tech.

Your **Opportunities**

- community events are great ways to promote your business.
- You can team up with other local businesses to cross-promote.
- Use the internet to reach customers far beyond your town.
- Attract tourists and visitors from nearby areas.

A Marketing Quick Start Assignment and Weekly Check List

Complete These 5 Actions This Week:

01	02		03
Claim Your Google Business Profile	 Audit Your Current Marketing (20 minutes) List all current marketing activities (signage, Web Site, word-of-mouth, social media, etc.) Rate each on effectiveness (1-5 scale) Identify and address your biggest gap 		Identify 3 Community Connectors
(30 minutes)			(15 minutes)
 Go to business.google.com Add complete business information, hours, and 3-5 photos Respond to any existing reviews 			 Write down 3 people who influence opinions in your town Plan how you'll connect with each one.
04		05	
Set Up Simple Tracking		Choose Your First Partnership	
(15 minutes)		(10 minutes)	
Create a simple "How did you hear about us?" systemStart a basic notebook for tracking daily foot traffic		 Identify one complementary business for potential cross-promotion Plan your approach for reaching out to them and do it 	

Bonus Challenge:

Post one behind-the-scenes photo on social media this week with a caption about what makes your business special.

Repeat Every Week, Of Every Month, Of Every Year



Key Takeaways

Our journey explored the essential mindset and practical strategies for small business marketing success in rural settings. Here's a brief recap:

Entrepreneurial Mindset

- Choice: Own your path.
- Opportunity: Find and create value.
- Action: Take initiative and execute.
- Knowledge: Learn by doing.
- Wealth: Build value beyond profit.
- **Brand:** Define your unique identity.
- Community: Connect locally.
- Persistence: Fail forwards, preserver and be patient

Practical Marketing Strategies

- Local Targeting: Reach nearby customers.
- Partnerships: Collaborate with others.
- Increased Visibility: Go to your customers.
- Leverage Resources: Use free programs.
- **Story:** Share your journey and impact.
- Get On Line: Create a presence

Remember: You've Got This!

Your local roots are your greatest strength."

Treat every handshake as a contract,

Make every customer a neighbor,

Share every success story as a community celebration.

Your personal touch will always be your superpower!





Your business is about building relationships, fostering community, and offering an authentic experience.

Embrace yourspirit, leverage your connections, every small step forward creates a ripple effect.

Build a presence, keep pushing, keep connecting, and make your vision flourish right where you are.