

Successfully Sell To Small Businesses

How to gain market share, drive engagement, and deepen loyalty with small business owners



SMART SIMPLE MARKETING

SUCCESSFULLY SELL TO SMALL BUSINESSES

Brought To You By:
Smart Simple Marketing



SMART SIMPLE MARKETING

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ABOUT SMART SIMPLE MARKETING

We are the content marketing agency you should call on when you're looking to drive engagement and increase loyalty with small business owners, women- or minority-owned businesses.

Because we are a certified minority-owned, woman-owned firm, we're able to infuse an unparalleled sense of enthusiasm, energy and passion into helping small businesses to succeed.

Here's what that has meant to our clients, in their own words:

- **Oracle** says... "with a spark of brilliancy... you captured our attention... and you thrived in getting results in unfamiliar territory"
- **Google** says... "you know the small business community, how to provide excellent customer service, and know how to make the unknown a reality"
- **Dun & Bradstreet** says... "your expertise and knowledge base is impressive" and we love your "intelligence and enthusiasm for the small business community"
- **Verizon Wireless** says... "thank you for helping us stay top of mind for our customers and prospects by building a means for ongoing communication"
- **Constant Contact** says... "you played a major part in growing our presence and recognition in the San Francisco Bay Area as well as assisting innumerable small businesses to succeed"

Contact us today to discuss which of our high-impact, quick turnaround, revenue-boosting solutions is the next best step for you.

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How to Successfully Sell to Small Business Owners and Meet Your Goals

As a busy marketing professional tasked with selling to small businesses, you know that figuring out where to begin can be more than a challenge – it can be an intimidating and daunting problem.

If you've never owned a small business and don't regularly talk to small business owners, figuring out how to effectively market to them can feel like a confusing mystery.

If you've been given the task of marketing to small businesses, it's likely that...

- You have a budget to create new campaigns for this market, but **you need to demonstrate a decent ROI on the money you spend.**
- You know that content marketing is an effective strategy but aren't sure how to tailor it toward the small business market.
- **You've never owned a small business** yourself and are therefore distanced from the daily and long-term problems that face small business owners.

In order to successfully sell to the small business market, you need to understand:

- How small business owners think;
- How they make purchasing decisions; and
- How their business operations differ from those of larger companies.

This insights paper will give you definitive, actionable methods for developing marketing strategies specifically geared toward the small business market.

In this insights paper, you will learn:

- 1 Why small business owners think differently** than other consumers, especially when it comes to making purchasing decisions.
- 2 How to speak the language of small business owners** and appeal to them on an individual level (even if you're marketing to thousands).
- 3 How to position your products and services** to solve small business pain points, both today and long term.
- 4 How to create robust, engaging marketing campaigns** that will appeal to small business owners through education-based selling and value-based positioning.
- 5 Three (3) cost-effective small business marketing campaigns** that will help you connect with customers and increase your sales.





Understanding the Small Business Mindset





The 5-Day Marketing Plan

Regardless of size or revenue, small business owners think differently than consumers who collect a paycheck.

Why?

Because nothing in small business is set in stone.

“Small business owners would love to have a three-year and five-year plan, but the reality is we often have a one-week plan and it’s a rough draft. We don’t respond well to future ROI messages or value received over time because mostly we’re usually looking to fix something right now. Talk to me about the pain I have today, fix the problem that will get me immediate relief and then we can talk about the future.”

John Jantsch, Small Business Expert,
Duct Tape Marketing¹

Instead of 5-year plans and annual marketing budgets, small businesses are primarily focused on engaging new customers, generating enough revenue to cover their operating costs, and most importantly, making a profit.

This makes small business owners...

- Budget sensitive
- Focused on today, not tomorrow
- Hesitant to make big purchases

As John Jantsch asserts, small business owners want results right now, not next year.

The Value of a Dollar

Since revenue is never guaranteed, small business owners are price-sensitive.

However, that doesn't mean they'll sacrifice value just to get the lowest price possible.

“If you can demonstrate that you're going to be here whenever and however I need you, that switching to your solution isn't going to be painful, and that this time it's going to be different, I'll pay a premium.”

John Jantsch

Small business owners want to save money, of course, but they also realize that partnering with a reliable vendor and benefiting from a great product or service is better for their bottom line long term.

Small Business Buying Habits

A purchasing manager at a large corporation thinks about how their buying decisions impact large departments and projects.

A small business owner, on the other hand, weighs each buying decision extremely carefully, as making a wrong move could easily mean a major setback for their business. At every stage of the small business life cycle, purchasing decisions must be made with the utmost care in order to protect the entrepreneur and their investments.

When it comes to making purchases, small business owners....

- Are not always quick to make a purchase, even if they really want the product. Sometimes the cash simply isn't there.
- Need payment options and flexibility in order to commit to making a purchase.
- Need to be shown the value in making a purchase right now and over time.

The truth is that **small businesses aren't interested in your product or service - unless, of course, it can solve that problem they've been losing sleep over for months.**

In trying to understand the small business mind, remember that in the small business world, nothing is guaranteed. That fact alone can cause a lot of fear, so your job in selling to small businesses is to **ease those fears by providing real value, not just snazzy technology.**





Learning to Speak the Language of Small Business Owners



Not only do small business owners think differently; they speak differently too. Learning to speak their language is key if you want to increase your sales and gain long-term, loyal customers.

Learning the language of small business is also important for developing relationships with small business owners.

“You’ll usually be dealing with a single person – the owner – when you work with small businesses. It’s very rare in other industries to have access to the person who has power over the entire enterprise, so make the most of this special feature and build a relationship. If you become more than just an expense to the owner; if you’re dependable, understanding, and flexible, you’ll likely be in a position for a long-term relationship.”

Andrew Gazdecki, CEO of Businessapps.com²

So, how can you begin to nurture a long-lasting and profitable relationship with your prospective small business customer? By avoiding the following common mistakes when speaking with small business owners and entrepreneurs.

Top 3 Language Mistakes Big Businesses Don’t Know They’re Making

1 Referring to a small business as an acronym

When targeting small businesses, you may be focused specifically on...

- Small office/home office (SOHO)
- Small and mid-sized (or medium-sized) businesses (SMBs)
- Small and medium enterprises (SMEs)
- Minority-owned businesses (MBEs)
- Woman-owned businesses (WBEs)

The list of small business acronyms goes on and on and is comprised of **titles that most small businesses never use when describing themselves.**

“When marketing to small business owners and managers, use the labels they use.”

writes Rex Hammock of SmallBusiness.com.³

Small business owners don’t think of themselves as “SMBs” or “WBEs,” which means that those terms should never enter the conversation when speaking with them. They think of themselves as a business owner or an entrepreneur and should be addressed as such.

Which leads us to the second most common language mistake...

2 Speaking with a “group mentality”

You may be targeting thousands of small business owners around the world, but to the one small business owner weighing whether or not to invest in your product or pay off some nagging debt, they only care about their individual business and their problems.

When crafting your communications, remember you’re usually talking to an individual. That individual (most likely the owner of the company), likely holds 100% of the purchasing power, so take the time to truly personalize your marketing message for them and only them.

If the small business owner feels that you are personally interested in helping them succeed and are approaching them from a place of partnership, they’ll be much more interested in what you have to say.

Small businesses are not created equal.

For example, in a recent study⁴ conducted by email marketing automation giant Infusionsoft, small business owners were broken up into four distinct groups:

- **Strivers**

Entrepreneurial beginners struggling to implement basic concepts

- **Customizers**

Business owners with some systems in place who are unsure of how to use technology to automate those systems

- **Maximizers**

Tech-savvy business owners constantly on the lookout for better, faster, more streamlined technology

- **Supporters**

Small business loyalists who prefer to work with other small business owners



In the study conducted by Infusionsoft, each of these groups was found to have different budgets, needs, wants, and goals, especially when it came to marketing technology.

In communicating with small business owners, it’s clear that a **Striver** needs to hear a different marketing message than a **Maximizer**.

Remember that each small business owner is an individual with individual needs. Tailor your marketing efforts to address those needs, and you’ll create a strong lead that may

3 Focusing on Features Alone

Your technology, product or service likely has a long list of impressive features you can use to dazzle your small business prospects and impress them with your prowess.

The problem?

Most small business owners don't care about fancy terminology. Nor do they have the time to review a laundry list of features.



Use simple, direct language. We emphasized this in an idea we took to Oracle, having recognized a challenge they were facing with communicating to small businesses. This led to us creating a custom video-based training program using clear, simple terminology to walk small businesses step-by-step through how to best position themselves to work with Oracle.

“Small business owners are focused on 15 things at once, and have little time for distractions. They don't have time for a long sales pitch, not even 10 minutes. If you get their attention, you'll have a minute or two to keep it.”

Matt Heinz of Radius.com, a data-based marketing platform for B2B marketers⁵

When you only have a minute or two to grab your prospect's attention, it's crucial that you **demonstrate how your product or service will help the small business owner....**

1

Win new customers

2

Decrease expenses

3

Save time

When speaking to prospective small business customers, remember to:

1

Steer clear of acronyms.

2

Identify the prospect as a Striver, Customizer, Maximizer or Supporter. Communicate with them as an individual and focus on their needs.

3

Skip the features and instead focus on clear, concise benefits.

Where can you connect with new prospects?

You'll find great value in offering marketing workshops and events by partnering with local influencers. You can reach thousands of entrepreneurs and small business owners this way.

Concise, educational presentations that address common pain points will help to position your brand as a helpful resource that small businesses need to pay attention to. Collaborating with an influencer also gives your brand a powerful 3rd party endorsement that builds trust and credibility with your target audience.

A close-up photograph of a hand moving a light-colored wooden chess piece on a checkered board. The hand is positioned on the left side of the frame, with fingers gripping the top of the piece. The chessboard is in the foreground, and other pieces are visible in the background, slightly out of focus. The lighting is dramatic, highlighting the texture of the wood and the skin.

How to Position Your Products and Services to Solve Specific Pain Points



Now that you have a better understanding of how small business owners think and speak, it's time to position your product to solve their most urgent problem.

Most small business owners face a number of challenges at any one time.

Some of the most common problems include:

- Lack of time
- Lack of customers
- An abundance of ideas but no clue where to start

However, the number one problem facing almost every small business owner is the money problem.

Meet your sales and revenue goals by solving their biggest problems

Remember the Customizer group in the Infusionsoft study?

They were the small business owners who had already developed marketing systems, but needed help optimizing those systems with technology.

49% of small business owners in the Customizers group spent just \$1,000/month or less on marketing.⁷

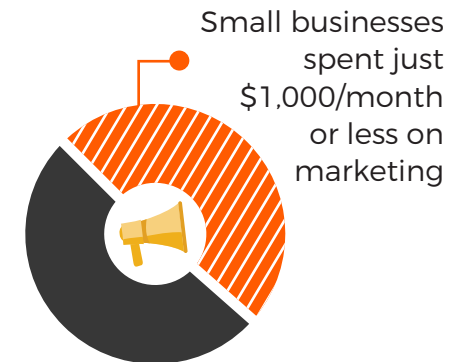
Are nearly 50% of small businesses in this untapped market simply strapped for cash?

Not necessarily, according to Gazdecki.

Small business owners understand that the products and services you offer are integral to their success. They're aware that you may very well be offering the exact solution they need to solve their most pressing problem.

But they need to be convinced that investing in your product will mitigate the risk of parting with their hard-earned money.

Here are **5 proven methods** for helping small business owners overcome risk-aversion and take a chance on your product or service:



5 Ways to Ease Fears, Solve Problems, and Close the Sale

1. Demonstrate undeniable growth

A small business owner needs to be sure that your product will solve their most immediate problem, but also that it will help them grow in the future. Focus on immediate pain relief, but also demonstrate how your product or service will serve them over time.

You want to **position your product or service as the resource they need to increase revenue, save time, decrease effort and create more time freedom.**

Turn their attention to the overall value of the product and how it will not only grow their business but also make their lives easier.

Your goal should be to show small business owners the value of investing in your products and services. Whenever possible, let them know their anticipated ROI. This helps them make strategic investment decisions with their limited resources.



Google partnered with us to create and launch the Accelerate with Google Academy program, designed to help African-American owned and Latinx-owned small businesses use Google tools and digital marketing to get more customers. We collaborated with the Business Inclusion team to create and promote a **web-based educational program for over 600 small business owners, resulting in over \$5M in economic impact** for participating small businesses and their local communities.



2. Speak to specific challenges

Small business owners never have enough time, money or customers.

- In what specific ways can your product save them time, save them money, and increase their business?
- Don't forget to think like a small business owner and speak their language when addressing these specific pain points.
- Paint a picture of a "brave new world" where your product has worked its magic and made their lives and business that much better.
- Share specific case studies of businesses similar to theirs and walk them from problem to solution.
- Help your target audience to focus their efforts and solve problems.



One of our small business clients, a seasoned business coach, needed to gather all of her scattered ideas and pinpoint her ideal client. As a result of our work with her, she was able to tailor her products and services to target her desired audience. As a result, our client was able to quickly close her next contract, worth \$90,000.

“Good marketing paints a picture of your new shiny world once you've bought the product or engaged the service.”

John Jantsch, Founder of Duct Tape Marketing

How will your service continue to enhance small business operations once this "new shiny world" has been created?

3. Stop selling

Small business owners don't want to feel like they're "being sold." Position yourself as a partner who can help them reach their goals and grow their business.

4. Stay in touch beyond the sale

Andrew Gazdecki is the mastermind behind BiznessApps.com, a website that helps small business owners create mobile apps. According to Andrew, small business marketing is really relationship marketing.

You don't call your best friend only when you need help moving, so why contact a small business owner only when you're looking for a sale?

- Stay in touch consistently, even when – no, especially when – you're not selling anything.
- Remind the small business owner of who you are and the different ways you can help them.
- Contact the prospective customer based on their preferred method of communication. Matt Heinz of Radius.com recommends getting to know your customer's work habits in order to foster better communication and lasting relationships.

5. Focus on education and training

Think of yourself as a small business success teacher.

Educate your prospective customer about technologies, techniques, and success paths with which they're unfamiliar (or may have forgotten).

For example, you may be able to teach them....

- How to access new leads and untapped markets
- How to cut costs and streamline their current systems
- Why their competition has an edge (and how they can use their competitors' best practices in their own business)
- How to measure the results of their efforts against their goals to save time, money and make smarter decisions going forward. Success breeds success.





Implementation:

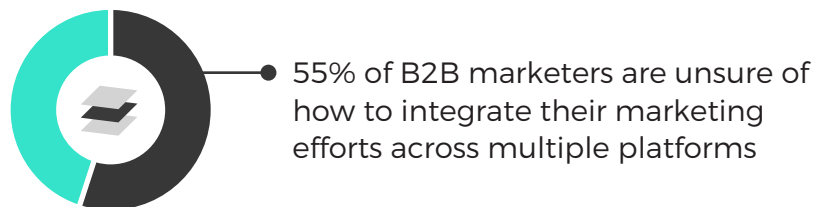
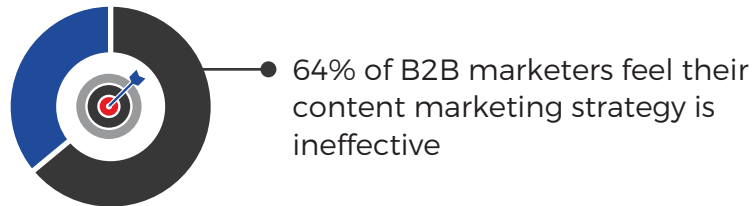
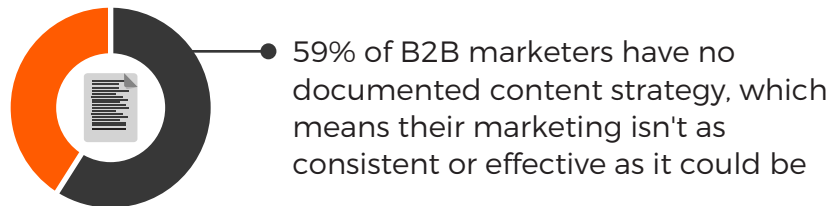
The Top 3 Most Effective
Marketing Campaigns For
Selling To Small Businesses



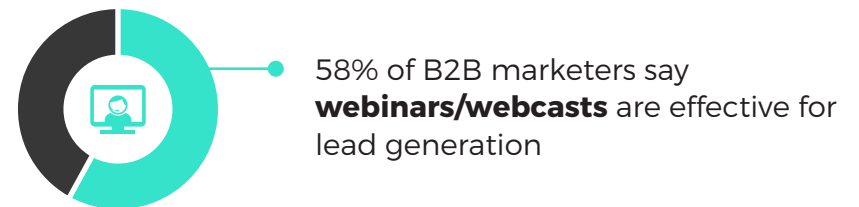
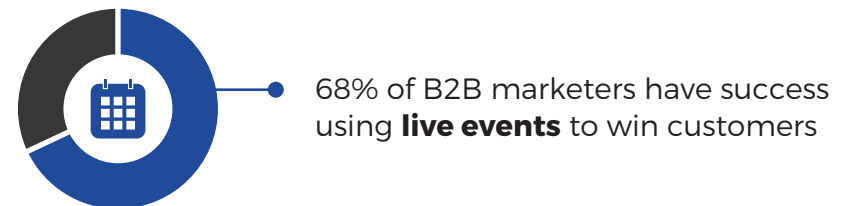
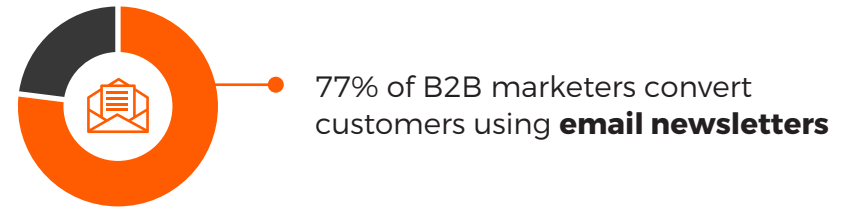
Now that you have some clarity about how to most effectively sell to small business owners, let's take a look at how to create an engaging sales message using content marketing.

Creating engaging content to share across multiple online platforms continues to be a challenge for most marketers.

According to numerous studies conducted by the Content Marketing Institute⁸, most B2B marketers remain unclear about how to win small business customers using a content marketing strategy.



While there are endless content marketing options to choose from, the 2017 study conducted by the Content Marketing Institute indicates that there are 3 content marketing strategies that have proven to be most effective for B2B marketers:



The numbers don't lie - email newsletters, live events, and webinars are 3 of the most effective B2B content marketing strategies.

Here's how to incorporate these 3 techniques into your marketing strategy.

Live Events

It's clear that building strong relationships is the key to succeeding in small business sales.

It's also clear that small business owners are extremely busy and won't respond well to unsolicited offers and cold calls.

Holding a live event allows you to get your product or service in front of your target market while giving them a feel for your company and brand.

Live events breed immediate trust and give the customer a chance to ask questions and feel better about taking a risk with your product.

Keep in mind that your live event doesn't have to include hundreds of people. In fact, smaller events tend to yield higher conversion because you're able to offer more personalized attention to attendees.



You can introduce your brand to more customers and potential partners by producing live events for specific audiences.

Constant Contact needed to grow their presence and recognition in the San Francisco Bay Area. We leveraged our network of partners and influencers to bring a range of small business expertise to the table. As part of our joint efforts, we discussed opportunities to collaborate and co-host events sponsored by Constant Contact, the partner and Smart Simple Marketing.

Our events are directed toward smaller audiences. We teach them how to use digital marketing to attract more customers while saving time and money. The before, during and after event logistics are easier to manage, and in just 3 years, **we've empowered 7,736 small business owners to use digital marketing tools to meet their goals.**

Also, your live event doesn't necessarily have to be a grand keynote speech or high-level lecture in front of potential buyers.

Instead, it could be....

- A networking breakfast or lunch
- An event where you give away free samples or trials of your product
- A holiday-themed or seasonal event focused on solving a specific problem small businesses face
- An "open house" where customers can peek behind the scenes of your business
- A "customer feedback" event where you pick your customers' brains and offer special deals and discounts

Webinars

Think of a webinar as a “Live Event Lite.”

Hosting a live webinar will offer many of the benefits of a live event while catering to a larger web-based audience. Webinars...

- Give you the opportunity to speak to small business owners about your products and services while giving them the option to watch your presentation live or as a recording.
- Provide key trainings and how-to sessions related to your product or industry
- Build trust as customers get to know your face and voice online
- Connect customers with industry thought leaders by hosting webinars that feature special guests
- Access a global customer base and exponentially increase your market reach

In a study conducted by GoToWebinar, 40% of attendees said they frequently attended training-based webinars while only 5% frequently attended product demonstration webinars.⁹

This means that the type of webinar you host is just as important as the webinar itself. By strategically creating content for your webinar in the form of a how-to training session, you'll build trust with previously cold leads who will be ready to purchase one of your solutions by the time the webinar is over.



Case Studies:

How to Use Virtual Events to Drive Engagement, Generate Leads and Increase Sales



One virtual conference we organized, entitled Email Marketing Simplified (EMS), offered a powerful opportunity for enterprise companies to **reach over 1,000 small business decision-makers in a more cost-effective manner**, providing direct engagement and maximum exposure to a buying audience.

Attendees of the 3-day live, international, 3D virtual conference and expo experienced a real trade show feel by:

- Attending keynotes and featured speaker sessions with hand-selected leading industry experts in the “Main Auditorium”
- Chatting in real-time with sponsors and exhibitors, exchanging product information and viewing video demonstrations in the virtual “Exhibit Hall”
- Obtaining valuable, downloadable gifts from sponsors
- Connecting with colleagues and developing new relationships in the virtual “Networking Lounge”
- Interacting with other participants through instant messaging and business card exchange
- Participating in LIVE Q&A sessions
- Downloading best practice content, presentations-to-go and other time-saving tools

In order to monetize the time and effort spent producing a webinar, be sure to include a strong Call to Action (CTA) or special offer at the end of your webinar.

Education-focused webinars help to position your brand as “small business experts” and cultivate new relationships.



Our 5-part, “Busy Entrepreneur’s Guide to Business Success” webinar series for Verizon Wireless shared best practices on marketing, time management, technology, and accessing capital with hundreds of multicultural small businesses.

The series generated 21,851 overall impressions. Participants were given specific tips for using Verizon’s products to manage their businesses more effectively on the go, which increased awareness of the products and services Verizon Wireless offers to help small businesses be more productive and save money.

The email campaigns used to promote the Verizon webinar series almost **doubled the number of subscribers and increased sales leads by 40%**.

A foundation for ongoing communications with prospective customers was built by following up the series with an email newsletter that featured success stories and helpful information that **doubled email open and click-through rates within weeks**.



Email Newsletters

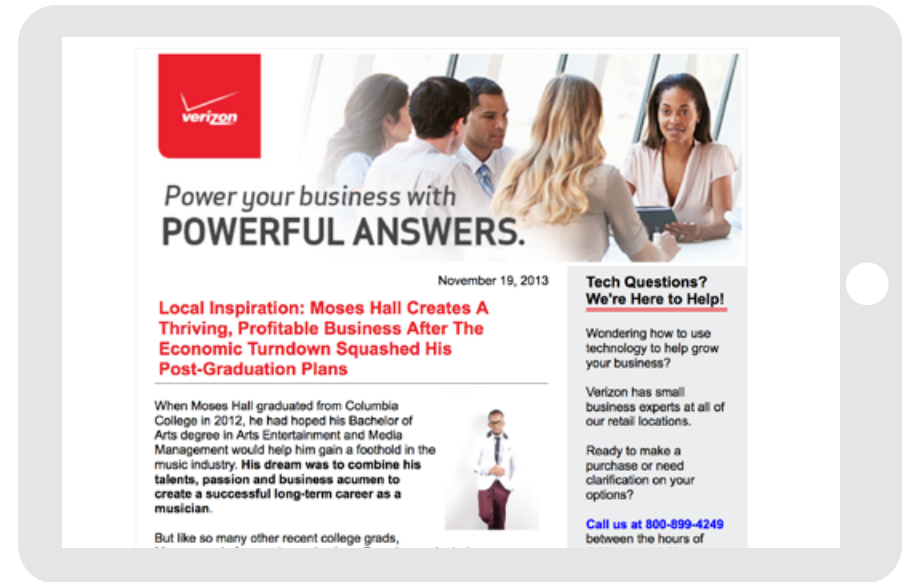
Speaking of email newsletters, keep in mind... small business sales are based on relationships, and relationships are based on consistent communication.

Email newsletters give you the opportunity to consistently connect with your customer base and prospective clients. Email newsletters will allow you to...

- Stay in touch with your current and prospective customers
- Nurture prospects through your sales funnel
- Increase sales by remaining on your customer's radar when they're ready to buy

Effective email newsletters must be...

- Delivered consistently at least once per month (ideally more frequently, like every two weeks)
- Be focused on education as opposed to sales
- Observe the 80/20 rule (80% beneficial content, 20% sales offers)



Newsletters should be designed and written in a style that speaks to your target market. Some businesses do well with magazine-style email newsletters, while others experience high conversions using single or hybrid-style designs.

Keep in mind that consistently sending email newsletters opens the door to other email communications. Once your customers are used to receiving an educational newsletter from you, they'll be much more likely to open and click on announcements, press releases, and sales emails.

Finally, email newsletters are a great way to reward customer loyalty. Free gifts and giveaways to newsletter readers will increase engagement, promote social shares, and encourage customers to continue opening your emails and remain on your email list.



Your Small Business Sales Strategy

In this insights paper, you've learned:

- 1 How to solve your small business clients' biggest problems
- 2 How to think and speak like a small business owner
- 3 The major pain points every small business owner is facing
- 4 How to position your products and services to address specific small business problems
- 5 How to sell to small business owners using the 3 proven methods of live events, webinars, and email marketing

You're now primed and ready to begin marketing to small business owners on their terms to meet your goals.

Next steps...

Complimentary Sounding Board Session

Schedule Your Call Today!

Even the sharpest knife can't carve it's own handle. If you'd like for us to be sounding board for you, let's schedule a time to talk.

This call will help you:

- Determine which marketing strategy is best for your target market
- Determine how to improve your overall marketing strategy and effectively sell to small business owners
- Discover successful ways to incorporate webinars, live events and email newsletters into your marketing plan to meet your sales goals
- Find effective solutions for promoting your live event, webinar or email newsletter
- Identify the first steps you need to take to begin converting small business owners into paying customers today

To book your
**FREE Sounding
Board Session,**

visit

smartsimplemarketing.com/contact

or call **510.601.0470**

today.

References and Further Reading

¹ 5 Things You Must Do To Sell To a Small Business Owner

² 6 Things to Focus On When Selling to Small Business Owners

³ Tips for Marketers Targeting Small Businesses

⁴ 4 Types of Small Business Technology Buyers

⁵ Small Business Marketing - 10 Ways to Improve Your Results

⁶ 6 Things to Focus On When Selling to Small Business Owners

⁷ 4 Types of Small Business Technology Buyers

⁸ B2B Content Marketing - 2016 Benchmarks, Budgets and Trends - North America

⁹ Missed Opportunities: Why Webinar Attendees Leave

Contact Us

We help companies gain market share, drive engagement and deepen loyalty with small businesses, women and minorities.

With more than 11 years of experience, we've worked with small businesses and organizations in 79 different industries, including researching and creating over 10,000 pieces of original content.

Contact us today to discuss which of our high-impact, quick turnaround, revenue-boosting solutions is the next best step for you.

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