

Going Organic

A Small Business Guide to Effective
Organic Digital Marketing





Think of Businesses as Plants Your small business is like a house plant.

With the right amount of resources and effort, it can sprout into something beautiful. Without the proper attention and care, it will shrivel up. Like a plant, a small business cannot thrive in conditions that are forced upon it—conditions that aren't healthy or natural.

Some businesses are more resilient to changes—like a dependable succulent. Other businesses are like orchids and need constant care to bloom. Like house plants, every small business has unique needs, but can still benefit from a few important tips.

OK—what do we really mean with this plant metaphor? Why does this matter to your business?

Why This Matters to Your Business

Small business owners are faced with bigger obstacles than more-established companies. Often, entrepreneurs try to be successful in any way possible. This includes paid marketing like digital banner ads.

While these inorganic strategies can work, they can also be costly. For small businesses, starting with organic marketing solutions can be a more effective place to start. These natural strategies are often more sustainable than paid—not to mention the main cost is your time.

Start blooming your business the natural way with these areas of digital marketing, and discover the power of organic marketing for your small business.

Website



Effective organic digital marketing begins with a [good small business website](#).

Think of your website as the soil your house plant grows in. Without a solid foundation, your plant will have no place to lay down its roots. In the same way, your website is the hub of your marketing efforts—it's the place where the rest of your marketing should point back to.

✓ WEBSITE CHECKLIST

- Make sure that your web address matches your business brand. It should be easy to spell and remember. That will increase the chances people will actually land there.
- Check that your website host is reliable. Website load speeds are crucial for a good user experience. And who hosts your website greatly impacts the site performance.
- Grab a content management system (CMS) for your website. That will ensure that you can update the site easily when needed. We highly recommend WordPress.
- Focus the site structure and messaging around your target audience. What are they looking for when they land on your site? Optimize for them, not yourself.

Don't forget to include a clear and compelling call to action consistently across the website. Usually that's a first step toward doing business with you, such as: schedule a consultation call, get a free estimate, or contact us.



Your website is one of the few digital marketing channels that you fully own and control. That's what makes it so important. It's equally as important that you make the site function well and send a clear message to anyone who visits it.



Online Content

The phrase “content is king” is a marketing cliché, but it’s also true.

Fresh website content is a key ingredient to [improving your organic Google search rankings](#). Google’s algorithm is constantly changing, but quality online content—especially in the form of blog posts and podcast episodes—will nearly always be valuable.

✓ ONLINE CONTENT CHECKLIST

- Brainstorm keywords** for your target audience. Think from your customers’ perspective. Imagine how they would search for your products and services.
- List these keywords and phrases. Find out the search popularity for each keyword with **Google’s Keyword Planner**. Take note of the highest-trafficked and most relevant terms to your audience.
- Consistently create website content with these keywords in mind. That could mean **blogging, podcasting**, or creating quality online video content.
- Remember to incorporate these in the meta description, page titles, ALT text, and the web page URL.



Even as you keep these keywords in mind, ***your main focus is always high-quality content that users will read and share with their friends.*** Good online content builds trust, provides your audience with value, and establishes you as a thought leader in your industry.





Backlinks

Backlinks (also known as “inbound links”) are hyperlinks to your website from an external site. Search engines like Google consider these links to be like votes on the value of your web content.

Essentially, the more backlinks your site has, the better—especially from high-quality websites that also have a healthy number of backlinks.

✓ BACKLINKS CHECKLIST

- Review the list of the service providers you use. Ask them to link to your website. This will give you some strong backlinks from service providers who know your business.
- Consider any professional organizations your company is a part of—like chambers of commerce or business associations. These may have local directories that your small business could be listed in, along with a handy link.
- Look for references of your business in online publications or other websites—this could even be on review websites like Yelp, Clutch, TrustPilot, or Glassdoor.
- If you find a mention that doesn't link back to your site, contact the website's editor and ask them to include a link.
- Paying for backlinks is highly discouraged, especially because this can negatively impact your website's PageRank—thus undermining your marketing efforts.
- While paying for backlinks is discouraged, partnering with relevant businesses to cross-promote one another is fair game. Just make sure they're somehow related to your business—Google does actually care about that.



These efforts may take time, but they will help build your backlink profile and enhance your search engine ranking in the long run.

Not to mention, increase the likelihood that your website might be discovered naturally by more users. message to anyone who visits it.

Social Media



Social media is often the first organic marketing tool small businesses think about. However, effective social media is more than setting up an account and waiting for people to show up. Don't take the **Field of Dreams approach**—if you build it, that doesn't mean they'll come.

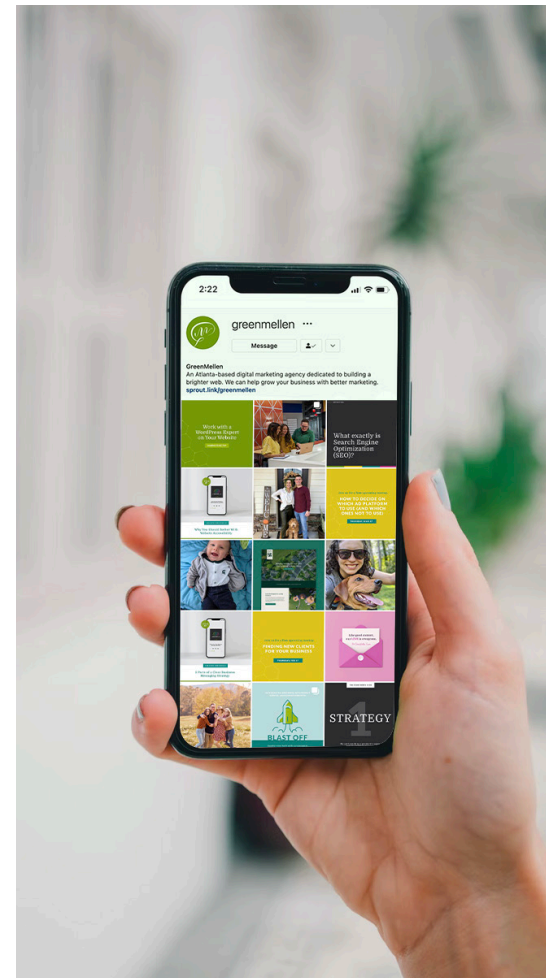
Take some time to align your social media platforms with the rest of your organic marketing efforts. No doubt that social media can be a powerful medium, but getting to that point takes intentionality and focus.

✓ SOCIAL MEDIA CHECKLIST

- Pick the right channels. Don't try to be on every social media platform—you don't have the time. Find out where your audience is and start there.
- Ensure your accounts are set up to be consistent with your brand. Use the same name and logo across any of the social platforms that your business is on.
- Post content, but don't forget to engage with other accounts. It's important to consistently share posts. But don't neglect to comment and share what other related businesses are doing on social media, too.
- Follow your competitors and learn from what they're doing. Schedule time every week to log in and listen to what's happening on your social platform of choice.



As much as we would like it to be, social media is not an organic marketing silver bullet. **Just like anything else, it takes investing time to be effective.** Take the time to find out what works and what doesn't.



Email Marketing



People are exposed to so many brands and businesses online every day, it's easy for them to be overwhelmed with all of the marketing messages. One place that's still valuable real estate is a person's [email inbox](#).

Why This Is Important

That's why it's important for you to capture their email address to build a strong [email marketing campaign](#). Effective email marketing helps you reach people in a place with less competition and start building trust.

[Collecting emails](#) can be done more passively with online newsletter capture forms on your website. Or you can take a more active approach by offering valuable content in exchange for an email address. That could include discount codes or downloadable resources (like this one!).



As you collect their email addresses, continue to deliver value to your customers. This is your opportunity to build brand loyalty and gradually build toward a sale. Remember, they can [unsubscribe from your list at any time](#), so give them a reason to stick around.





Online Reviews

Even with all of our digital tools and technology, word of mouth is still the most effective form of marketing. Maintaining a good business with outstanding products and customer service is the main way that you can influence word of mouth.

However, there is one online equivalent to word of mouth that you can help to influence—online reviews. Despite its importance, too many small businesses ignore the power of online reviews.

✓ ONLINE REVIEWS CHECKLIST

- Take some time to locate your business on as many online review sites as you can: Google My Business, Facebook, Yelp, and even more industry-specific listings.
- Most of these sites allow you to claim your listing. This allows you to keep your business information updated—including your location, phone number, and website.
- Use your other marketing channels—social media, email, and print materials—to encourage happy customers to leave reviews on these sites.
- Respond to all of the reviews you can—both positive and negative. Thank the positive reviews and see if you can resolve the negative feedback.



Online reviews are more than just a way to get backlinks, they're a crucial part of online reputation management. Neglect the value of online reviews at your own peril.





Get Started with Organic Marketing Today

Like cultivating a garden or a house plant, organic marketing takes work and patience.

You have to put in time and sweat on a daily basis. There may not be immediate results, but remember that you're allowing your plant to grow deep roots that will last in the long run.

These small organic efforts add up over time. It's a misconception that marketing has to be expensive to be effective. When done right, organic marketing is usually even more effective than paid advertising efforts. Combining them together makes them both even stronger.

Plant the seed of organic marketing for your small business today and watch it flourish into the blooming business of your dreams tomorrow.

How can GreenMellen help your business grow with organic marketing?

Ready to start with organic marketing, but don't have the time? Or perhaps you're just not sure where to get started? [GreenMellen can help.](#)

Our team can help you with any of the marketing tactics mentioned in this resource—from search engine optimization to email marketing, and blogging to social media management. We're ready to help build a marketing plan that meets your needs.

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