

ISSUE 001 | 2020

Marketing Skills Toolkit

YOUR GUIDE
TO EXECUTING AN
IMPACTFUL MARKETING
STRATEGY

HOW TO DRIVE SALES
AND INCREASE
REVENUE



A comprehensive workbook designed to create long-term sustainability
and establish a foundation for future marketing initiatives

Produced by Downtown Waco Public Improvement District and Startup Waco



Downtown Waco

The Public Improvement District (PID) is an area where property owners pay for extra public services and projects to make downtown welcoming and vibrant. PID funds help keep Downtown Waco clean and safe, and they also contribute to beautification, transportation, parking solutions, marketing and merchant support. City Center Waco provides staff support to the PID.

For more information, call City Center Waco at 254-754-8898 or visit www.citycenterwaco.com/manage.

Startup Waco

Startup Waco is a 501(c)(3) organization formed via cross-sector partnerships that aspire to lead the entrepreneurial support efforts of Central Texas and elevate the region as a hub for business innovation.

For more information, visit startupwaco.com or email info@startupwaco.com



The Marketing Skills Toolkit is a practical guide to basic marketing strategies that will drive sales and increase revenue for downtown Waco businesses. Consider this workbook to be your guide toward long-term sustainability and a foundation for future marketing initiatives. While written to be a stand-alone resource, further coaching and support is always available to any Waco business through Startup Waco.



Welcome to the Marketing Skills Toolkit!

This toolkit was designed to be a practical guide to basic marketing strategies that will drive sales and increase revenue for businesses like yours. Consider this workbook to be your guide toward long-term sustainability and a foundation for future marketing initiatives.

How to Use This Resource

First, take it one step at a time. There's a lot of content in here for you to work through. You may or may not take action on all the initiatives outlined in this guide, and that's 100% okay. Whether you want to go slow and take your time or dive right in, we recommend first completing Part I before jumping ahead. Laying out your brand, key differentiators, and your value proposition and identifying your ideal customer will set the stage for all other marketing strategies, so try to resist the urge to skip ahead.

You Are Not Alone

While written to be a stand-alone resource, further coaching and support is always available to any Waco business through Startup Waco. We also want to give a huge "thank you" to the Public Improvement District, who sponsored the creation of this toolkit. This is all possible because of the PID's commitment to seeing downtown merchants thrive.

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01

“Two things remain irretrievable:
time and a first impression.”

Cynthia Ozick

BUILDING A SOLID FOUNDATION

Let's Get Started 

Let's Talk About Brand Identity

The process of establishing a 'brand' surpasses simply creating an appealing logo with corresponding colors and fonts. While each of these elements play a critical role in making up your brand identity, the real crux of a brand lies in the process of defining who you are – beyond simply how you look.

Authenticity

Consumers are faced with seemingly unending choices; being seen as 'authentic' by your customers has never been more critical. As you build your brand, each pillar must come across as real, believable, and authentic. If you can nail the authenticity piece, you will set yourself apart from the competition.

Being seen as 'authentic' has never been more critical.

Brand Purpose | What is your why?

As a business owner, your brand is often an extension of yourself. So ask yourself, why are you here? Answer the writing prompts below.

1. What drives you?

2. What problem are you trying to solve?

3. What need are you hoping to fill?

4. What 'lights you up' about your business?

5. When do you feel the most 'alive' at work?

6. What makes you uniquely qualified to what you do? (Think qualifications, personal experience, raw talent, family tradition, certifications, etc.)

7. What impact are you hoping to make?

Brand Attributes | What characterizes your brand?

In order to establish your brand attributes or the characteristics that make up your brand identity, let's start with an adjective exercise:

Bring to mind some of your favorite brands out in the marketplace.

If nothing comes to mind, think about prominent brands like Nike, Whole Foods, Coca Cola, Apple, and American Express. What characteristics would you assign to some of your favorite brands?

When you think about how you want your customer to perceive your product or service, what adjectives come to mind?

After someone purchases your product or service, how do you want them to feel?

What characteristics do you NOT want to be associated with your brand?

Look back at your lists of adjectives. Are there any overlaps? Do certain words resonate or stand out more than others? Try to determine some common themes, and write your brand attributes here:

Some example attributes could be: High Quality, Friendly, Exclusive, Over-the-top, Fun, Cutting-Edge, Trustworthy, or Consistent.

 **PRO TIP**

The best brand attributes come from a place of authenticity. Would your friends and family describe your brand this way? It's okay if you need to grow into these attributes somewhat. We'll get more into how you will embody these attributes later in the toolkit.



Today you are you, that
is truer than true. There
is no one alive who is
youer than you.

Dr. Suess

Key Differentiators | What makes you special?

To distinguish yourself from the competition, you need to identify what makes you different and clearly explain why a potential customer should choose your business over a competitor. Let's begin by answering the following writing prompts:

1. What do your current, most loyal customers value in your product or service?

2. When you get repeat business, why do they keep coming back for more?

3. What are you offering that can't be found elsewhere in Waco? In Texas?

(Think small things and big things. Maybe it's your sense of style and the vibe in your physical space. Maybe it's a small twist or a different approach you take to something common and familiar. Maybe it's a unique product that you invented or designed that simply can't be found elsewhere. Dig deep and write down everything that applies.)



A satisfied customer
is the best business
strategy of all.

Michael LeBoeuf

Ideal Customer | Who aligns best with my brand?

To boost sales and increase revenue, you need to expand your customer base and tighten your sales cycle. The best way to do that is to identify and deeply understand your ideal customer. The more you sell to the right person, and the less time you waste trying to win over someone who does not align with your brand attributes and crave your key differentiators, the faster you will see growth.

1. Describe your current customer base.

Try breaking them into a few categories (e.g. young professionals, couples on a date night, working moms, veterans, restaurant suppliers, etc.) Do you primarily sell directly to consumers (individual people)? Or do you sell to other businesses? Maybe a mix of both? Whatever customer mix you currently have, include them in the categories below:

CATEGORY 1

CATEGORY 2

CATEGORY 3

CATEGORY 4

CATEGORY 5

2. Now, think about your ideal customer. *Your ideal customer will always...*

- Happily Pay For What You Offer
- Appreciate What You Do For Them
- Be Easy to Communicate With
- Keep Coming Back

3. Circle the categories you listed before that match your idea of an 'ideal customer.' Then cross out any categories listed above that do not match your idea of an 'ideal customer.' *(Don't worry, we aren't going to get rid of them. We just aren't going to work as hard to sell to them)*

4. For each category you circled, let's get to know this group a bit better. Ask yourself the following questions for each category that fits your idea of an ideal customer:

Demographics. *Describe their demographic profile: age, gender, occupation, socio-economic status, physical location, and other distinguishing characteristics.*

Psychographics. *What do they value? What are their fears? What are their aspirations? What problems do your product/service solve?*

Roadblocks. *What current roadblocks exist, if any, that keep this group from purchasing 1. More frequently, 2. In higher quantities, 3. Recommending you to others who are like them.*

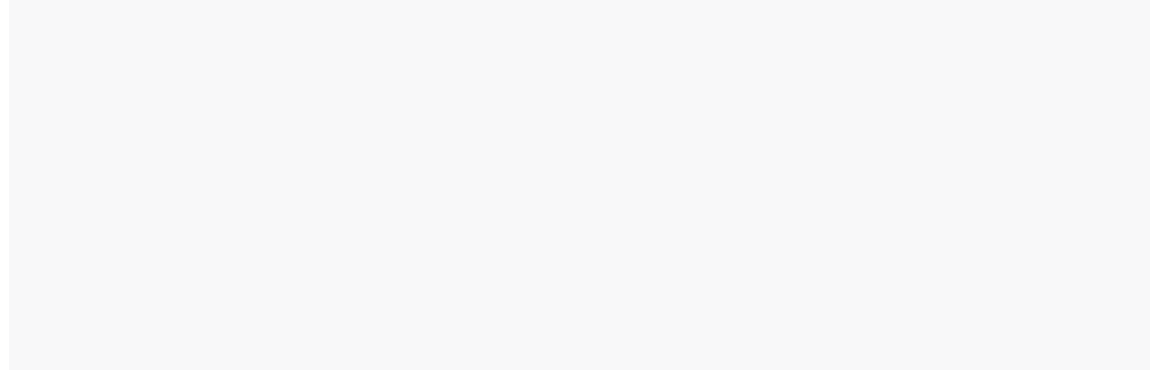
 **PRO TIP**

If you don't know the answers to these questions, you should consider creating a survey — either through email or simply have conversations with customers as they come into your business — and ask them. You will be surprised how willing people are to talk to you and provide feedback.

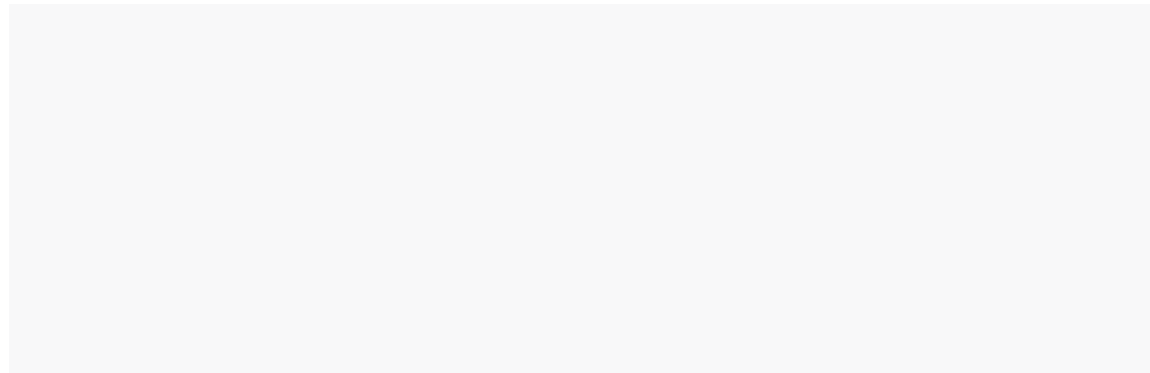
CATEGORY **1****Demographics****Psychographics****Roadblocks**

CATEGORY **2**

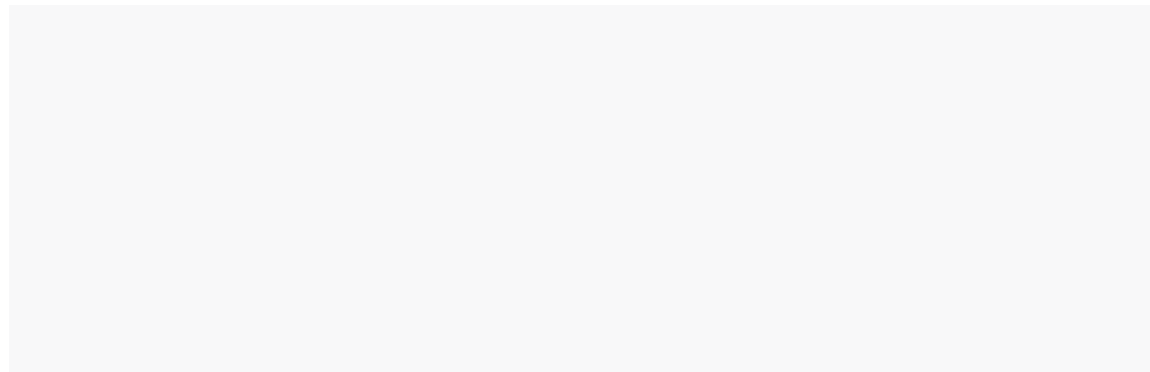
Demographics



Psychographics

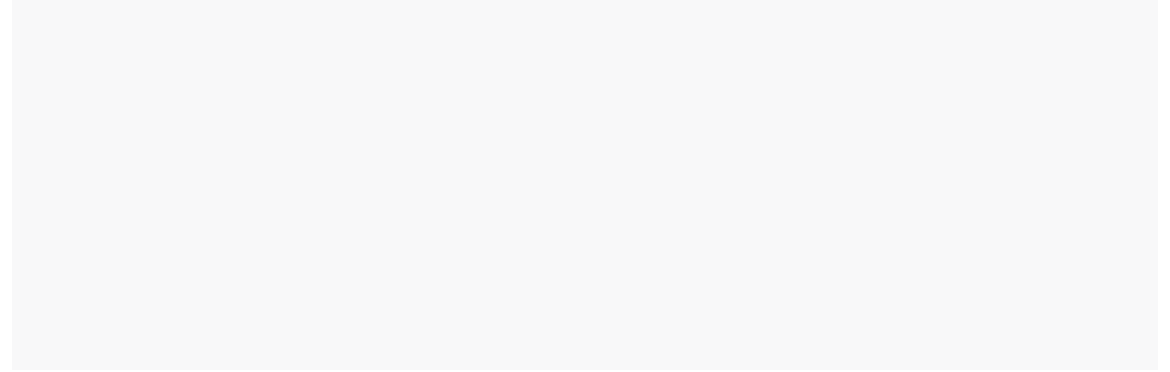


Roadblocks

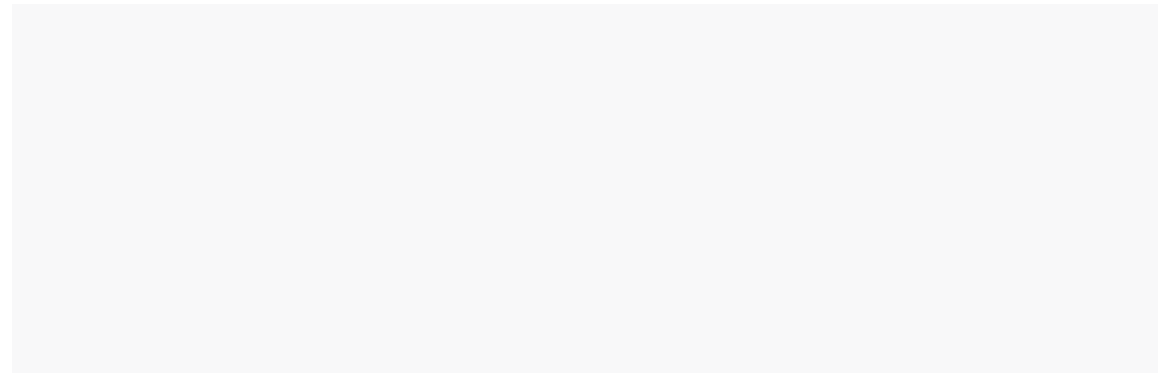


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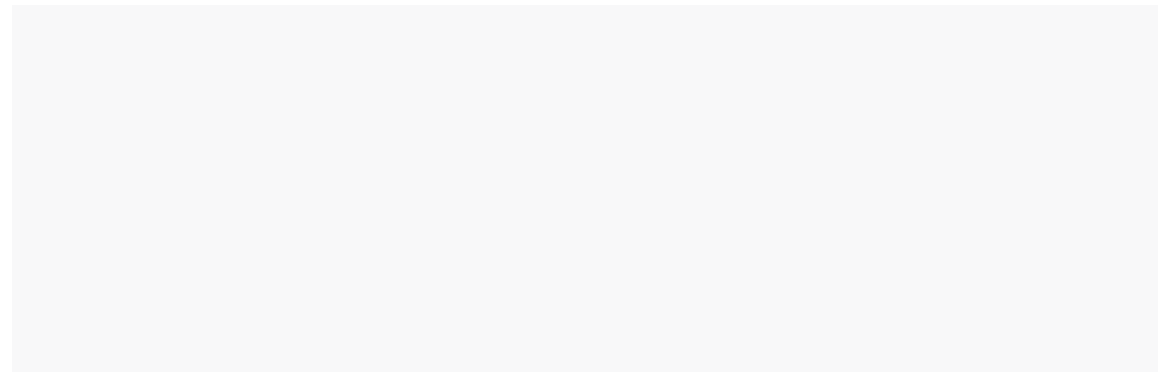
Demographics



Psychographics

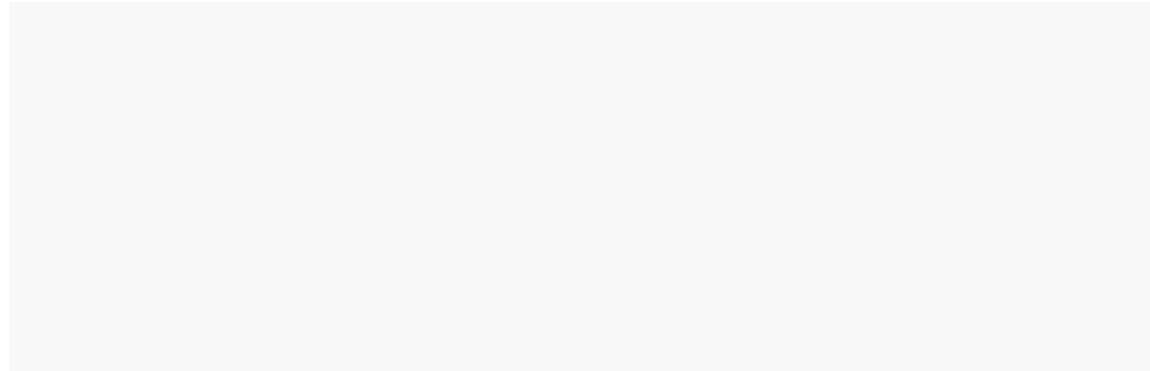


Roadblocks

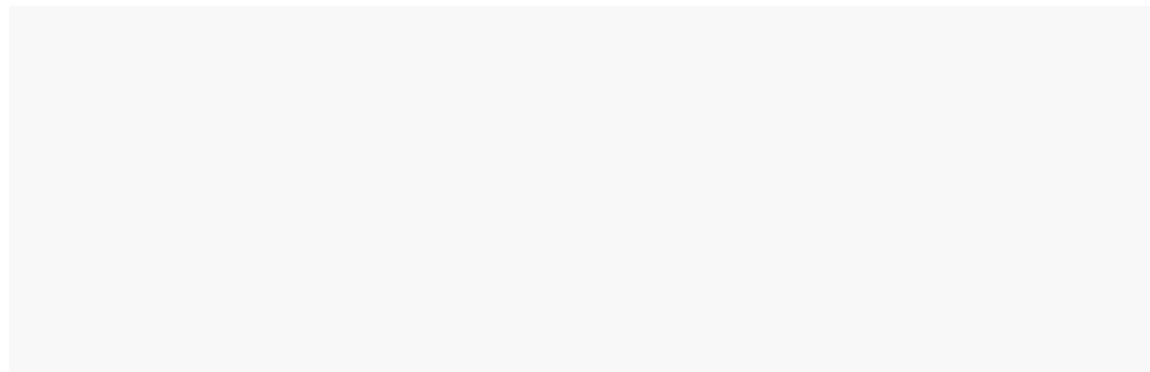


CATEGORY 4

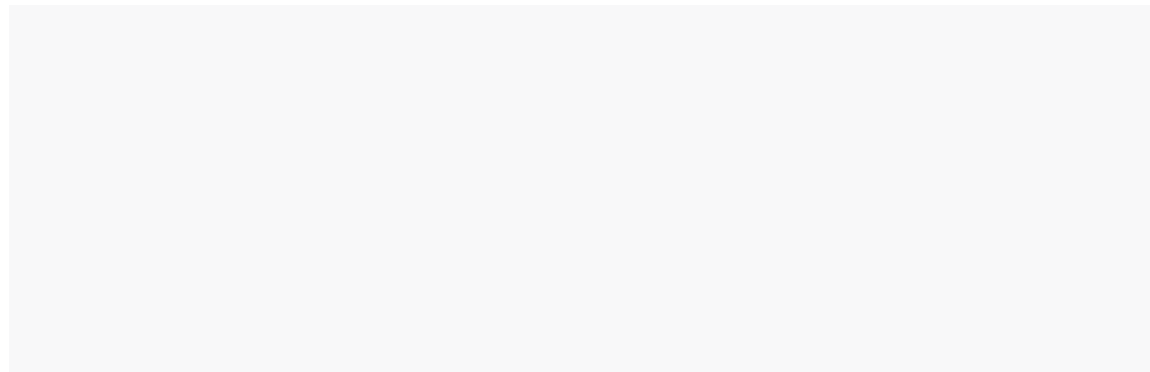
Demographics



Psychographics

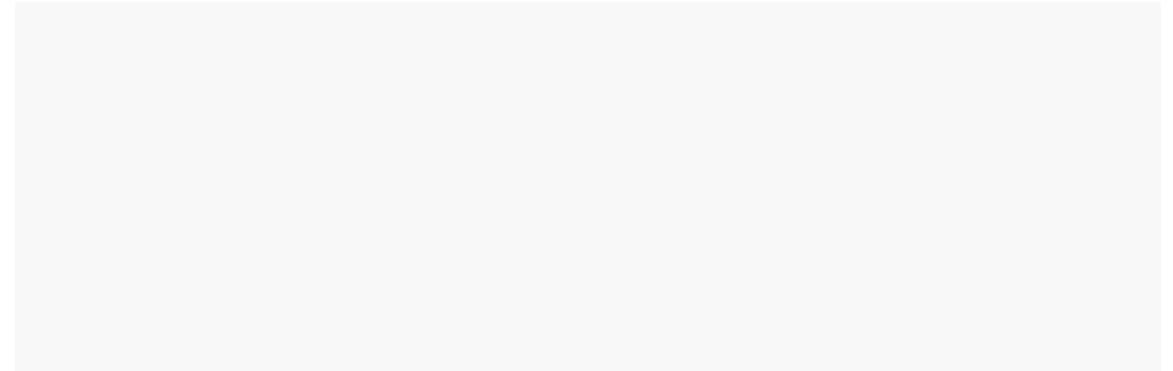


Roadblocks

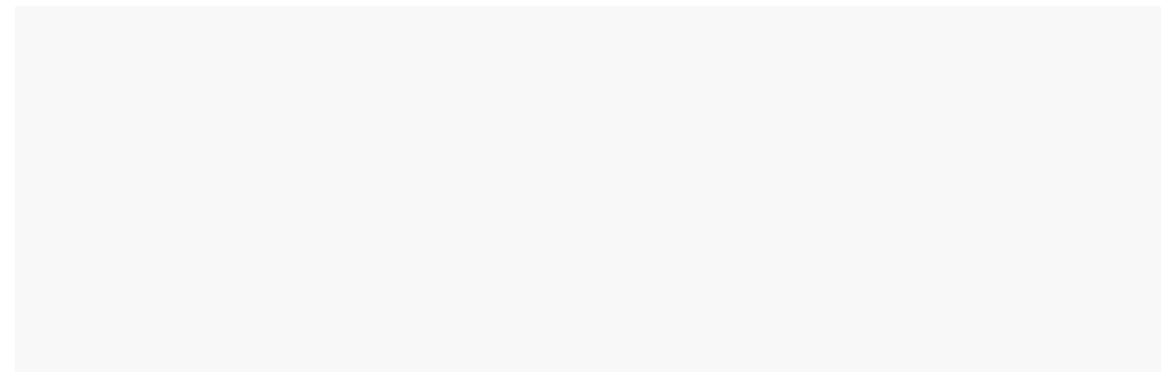


CATEGORY 5

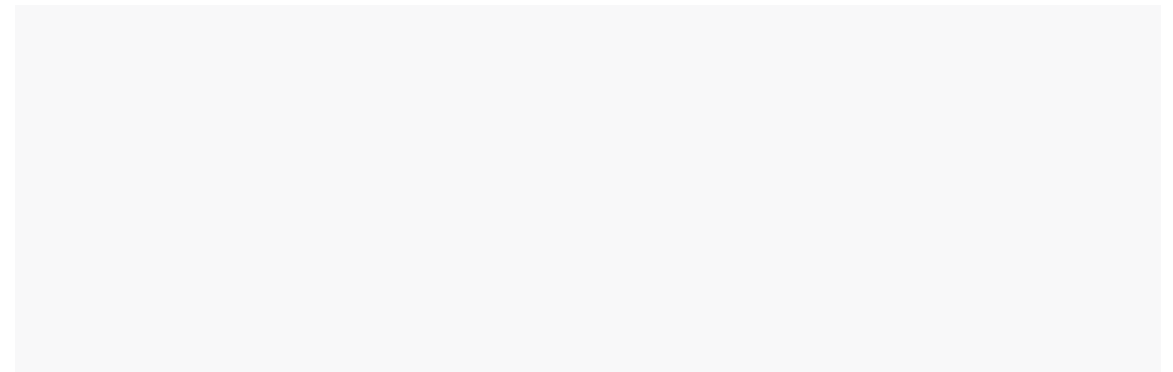
Demographics



Psychographics



Roadblocks



What are some common or overlapping characteristics of your ideal customer groups? What do they have in common?

How are they different?

Notes:



Branding is what
people say about you
when you're not in
the room.

Jeff Bezos

Brand Positioning Statement + Value Proposition

Now that we've done an extensive inventory on your brand attributes, key differentiators, and your ideal customer, it's time to write some important statements that will help guide you as you move into the execution phase of this toolkit.

Your **positioning statement** is your business' "why" – and what differentiates your brand from your competitors. Your **value proposition** focuses on the benefits your customers receive by using your products or services and touches on the emotional impact of your brand.

Brand Positioning Statement Examples

Sapphire Ventures

"Startups—whether enterprise or consumer-focused—face similar challenges when they get to the expansion and later stages. They need the support of experienced, focused, and deep-pocketed investors who can help them stay competitive for the long haul. That's where we come in."

MailChimp

"Mailchimp is an all-in-one Marketing Platform for small businesses. We empower millions of customers around the world to start and grow their businesses with our smart marketing technology, award-winning support, and inspiring content."

Brand Positioning Statement | Template

When You Want to Compare Yourself To A Competitor:

For that need ,

Target Customer/Audience Need Your Product Addresses Your Product/Service

is a that .

Define Product Category How Does Your Product Solve Your Customer's Need in a Sentence?

Unlike , our product .

Competitor How Is Your Product Different From the Competition?

When You Want To Focus On Your Customers:

For , , is the

Target Customer/Audience Your Product/Service Define Product/Service

that will

Problem Your Product Solves For Your Customer

so they can .

Benefit Your Product Brings to Your Customer

Now it's time to write your own value proposition. This is where all your work on key differentiators comes in. Think about:

- What VALUE your business brings to your customers.
- How you make their lives easier, better, or even happier.
- When in doubt, keep it simple.

You can use the following template as a guide.

For

Your Target Customer

Who

Statement of Need or Opportunity

Our

Product/Service Name

Is

Product Category

That

Statement of Benefit

My Value Proposition:

Value Proposition Examples

Slack

"Be more productive at work with less effort."

Dollar Shave Club

"A great shave for a few bucks a month."

Stripe

"Web and mobile payments, built for developers."

Notes:

02

“Vision without execution is just hallucination.”

Henry Ford

LEVEL UP THE PLAYING FIELD

Let's Get Started



Good Marketing Drives Sales

The best way to make marketing work for you is to ensure it pays for itself. If your marketing dollars don't support your sales strategy and grow your brand, you won't see your investment return.

How do you build a marketing strategy to drive sales? Let's get into it.

Sales Cycle | What are your marketing tactics?

Let's start by thinking about your sales cycle. The following questions will help guide you when deciding what marketing tactics will prove most effective.

1. How fast is your sales cycle? (circle the answer that best applies)

- a. A few minutes or less
- b. Less than 24 hrs
- c. 1-3 days
- d. Less than a week
- e. 7-14 days
- f. Less than a month
- g. 30+ days

How to Calculate Your Average Sales Cycle Length

$$\frac{\begin{array}{l} \# \text{ of Days to Close Deal A} \\ + \text{ Deal B} + \text{ Deal C} \end{array}}{\text{Total Number of Deals}} = \text{Average Sales Cycle Length}$$

2. My business is primarily

- Business to business (you sell directly to other businesses)
- Business to consumer (you sell directly to consumers/individuals)
- Both B2B + B2C

 **PRO TIP**

If you sell to BOTH other businesses and consumers, you will need to develop two different marketing strategies. There will be some overlap, but it will help to think of them as separate audiences with different, specific needs.

3. Where do purchases happen? (Circle all that apply)

- Online (i.e. your website and social channels)
- Physical location (i.e. POS)
- In-person or virtual meetings (i.e. strong relationship building component)
- Over the phone (i.e. sales calls)

 **PRO TIP**

If you rely heavily on repeat business through strong relationship building + have a slower sales cycle, long-form content (such as blogs and white papers) are typically worth the investment. However, if you have a short sales cycle and rely on in-person sales at a cash wrap, you need to drive foot traffic. This is where having a stellar content strategy supported by digital advertising efforts comes into play.

Define Your Sales Goals

Determining exactly how you will measure success begins with goal setting. Define some sales goals by filling out the section below.

In terms of sales, a record breaking quarter for me would look like
 number of sales, generating approximately
 amount of revenue.

A highly favorable, but realistic, quarter for me would look like
 of sales, generating approximately amount of revenue.

How much would I be willing to invest in order to reach my realistic target?

\$

How much would I be willing to invest in order to reach my record-breaking target?

\$



Content is king.

Bill Gates

What do social media captions, blogs, ad copy, videos, email marketing, websites, and nearly every other marketing tactic you can think of have in common? **Content.**

There is a big gap between spammy, sales-heavy content that drives potential customers away (think 'unsubscribe'), and content that converts (think 'retweet'). In this section, you will learn some hacks that will help drive sales by harnessing the power of effective content.

How to Get the Message Harnessing the Power of Content Marketing

What is content marketing?

Content Marketing uses videos, blogs, captions, SEO, and emails to create interest in your brand.

What ways are you currently using content marketing (whether effectively or ineffectively)? Circle every single place a customer could potentially see your content.

- a. Website
- b. Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or LinkedIn
- c. Google Ads
- d. Printed Collateral (i.e. Business cards, Flyers, Signs, Posters, Brochures, etc.)
- e. Videos
- f. Email Newsletters
- g. Podcasts
- h.
- i.
- j.



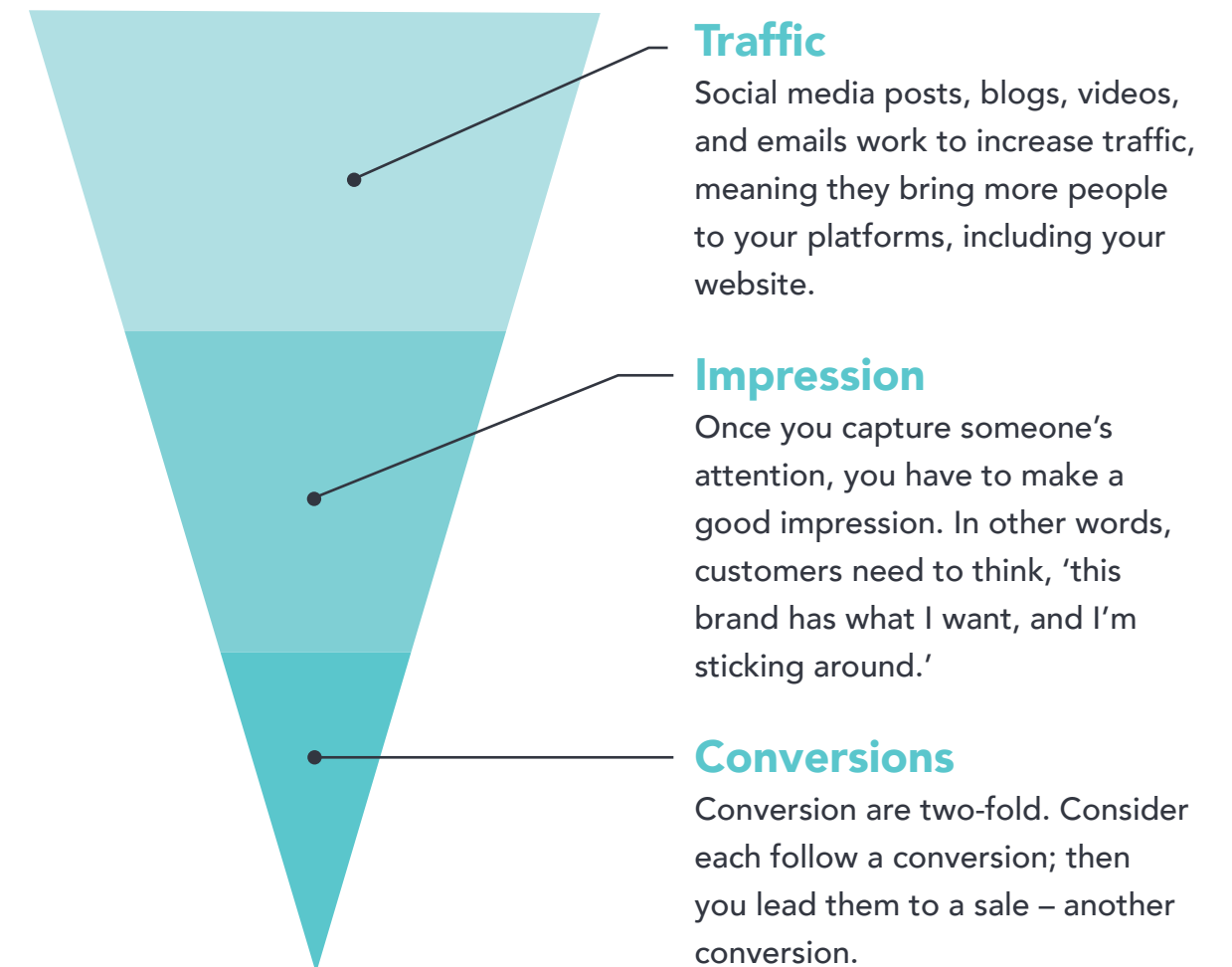
No matter what you do, your job is to tell your story.

Gary Vaynerchuk

Content That Converts

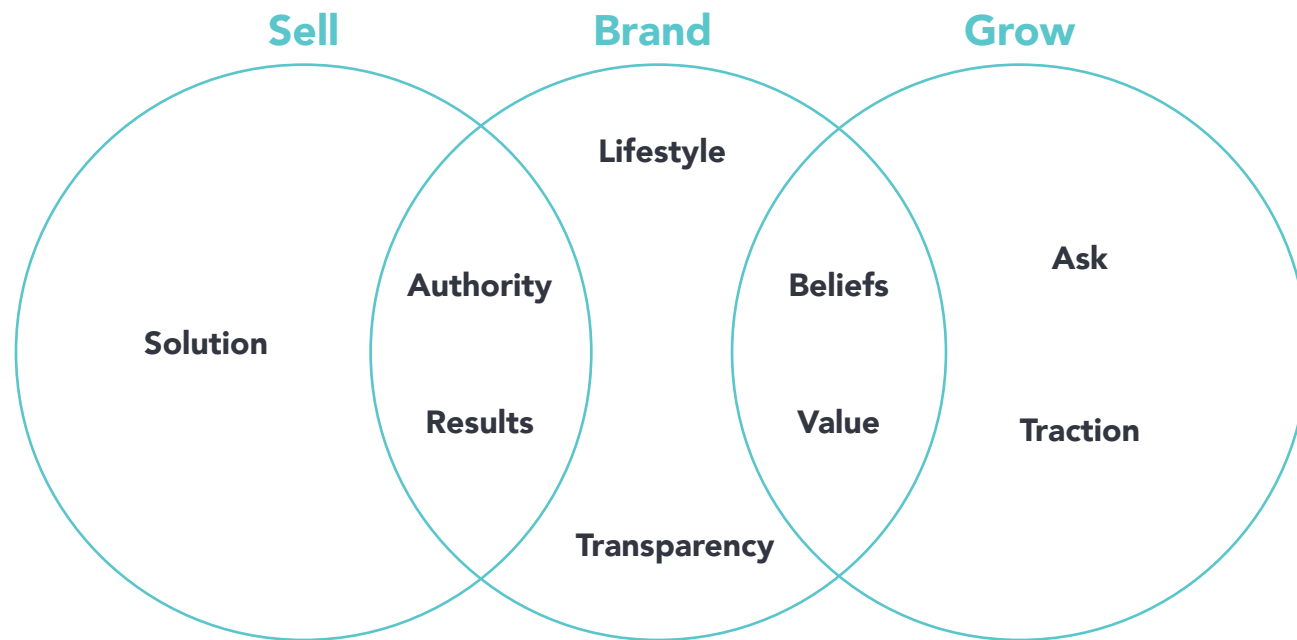
Winning at the content game means walking a fine line of balance. Unless you are a professional writer or content creator, it can feel impossible and incredibly overwhelming to come up with powerful content consistently, but with a few hacks, anyone can launch a successful content strategy.

1. Understanding the Traffic/Impression/Conversion triangle:



How do you move customers through the triangle? Develop meaningful content.

To keep it simple, let's break effective content into three buckets: Content that **Sells**, Content that causes you to **Grow**, and Content that will **Build Your Brand**.



★ PRO TIP

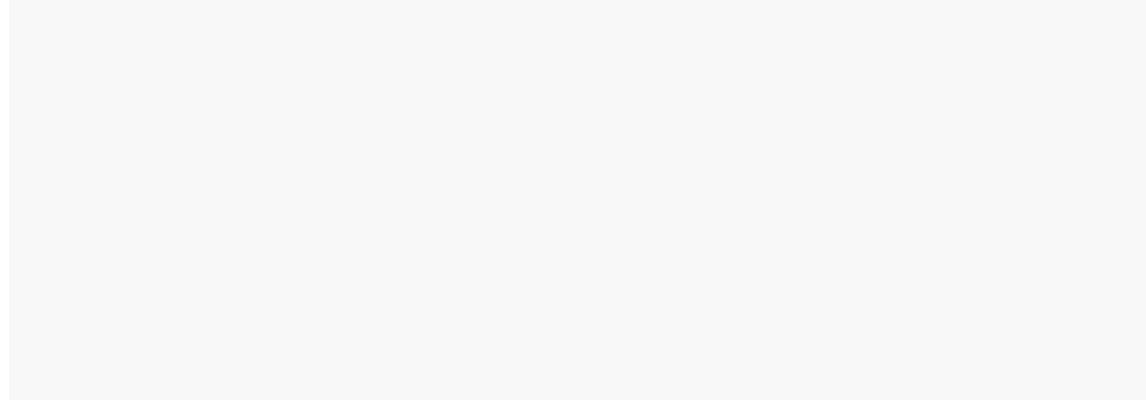
Own the 20% rule. You need to serve your audience 80% of the time and sell only 20% of the time. Serving means adding value. The more you serve, the more your audience will come back for more, and the more likely they are to trust you when you ask them to opt-in through a purchase. Think about the insight you can offer, tips you can provide, and information you can share. What can you give away for free? To get the creativity flowing, think about what questions you always get from customers. Think about what you wish everyone knew about your product or service and write informative and helpful content. What problem does your product or service solve? These are all great starting points for long-form and short-form content creation.

1. Solution | What problem does your product or service solve?

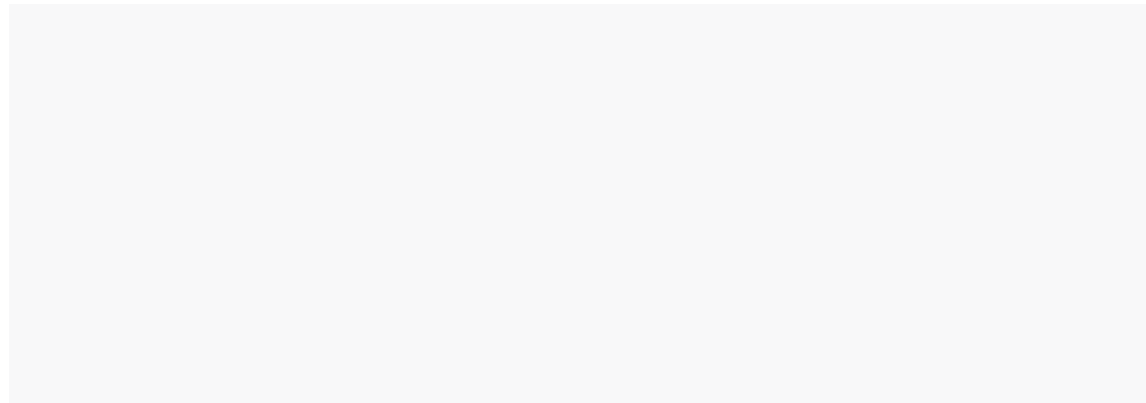
2. Authority | Where do you have unique insight or 'authority' to take up this space? Years of experience, family heritage/tradition, certifications, and education all qualify!

3. Results | How have you helped clients in the past? Tell their stories! This is where you will want to use testimonials, 5-star reviews, and positive customer feedback. Telling their stories will only help you to tell yours.

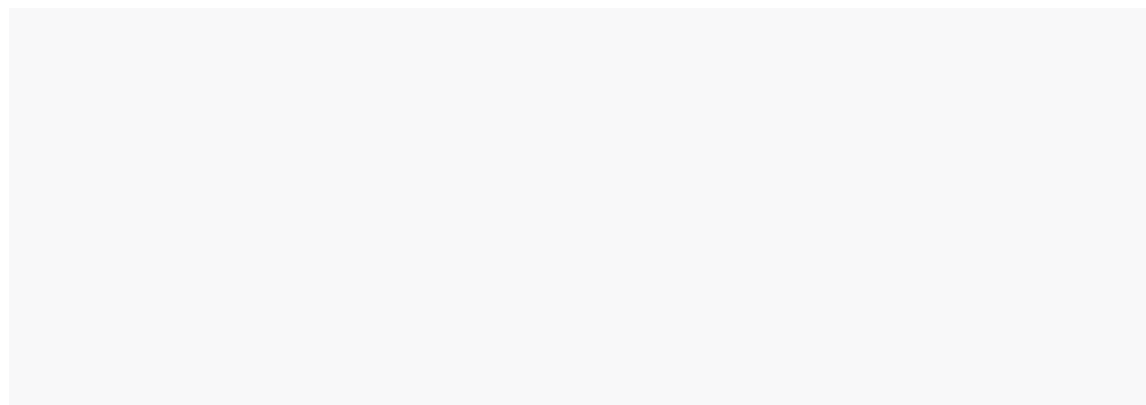
4. Lifestyle | How does your product or service fit into a broader lifestyle?



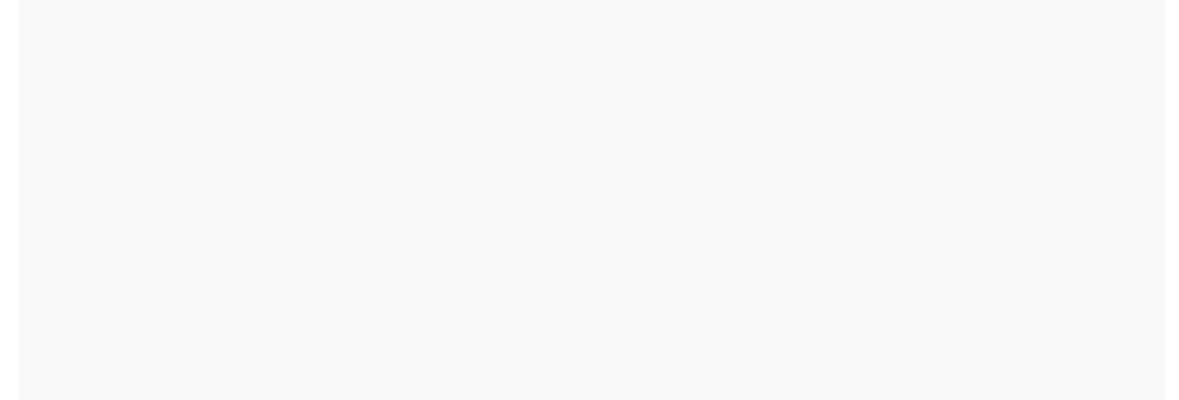
5. Transparency | Get real with your customers. Show behind the scenes footage, tell stories of failure, or talk about anything relatable.



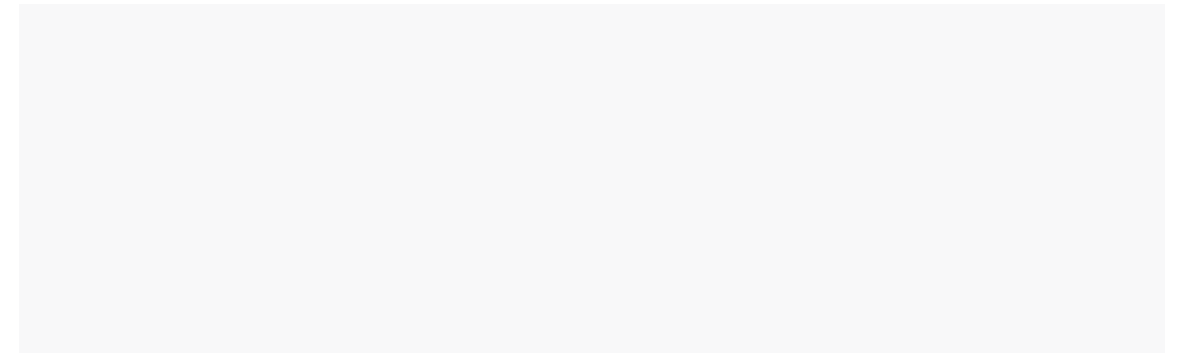
6. Results | What are the core beliefs that define you and your brand?



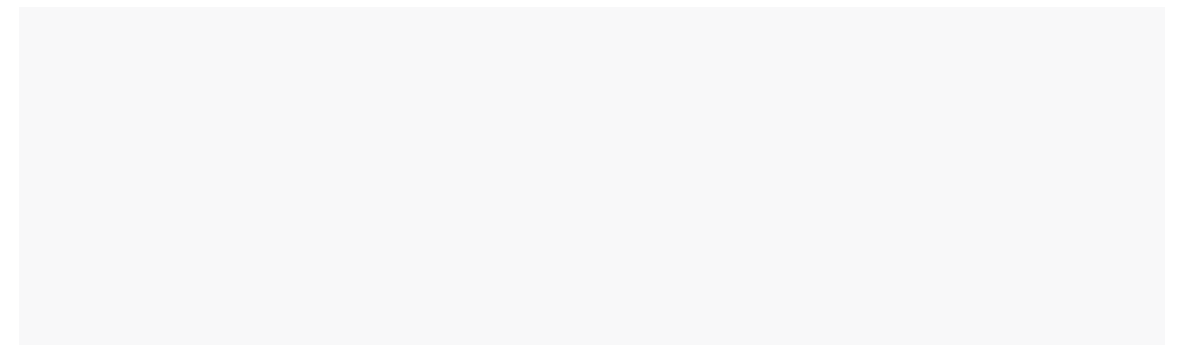
7. Values | What do you value?



8. Ask | Ask questions! Get people to engage. Does this relate to you? What can I teach you? What do you want to know about me? Micro commitment: Tag someone who needs to hear this!



9. Traction | Use like-minded businesses and other collaborators to help amplify your message. Consider doing cross-promotions with other accounts that could drive traffic to your site/account. Be sure that you're partnering with others who share your ideal customer profile.



Define your 5 Stamps

Before we can start building out content to be placed in either the growth, selling, or brand building categories, we need to drill deeper into your 5 stamps. These are predefined categories that will help you push through creativity blocks and ensure you're staying on-brand at all times.

Examples: Are you a vegan? Do you only buy vintage clothing? Do you love mac-n-cheese? Are you obsessed with a particular travel destination? Do you speak multiple languages? These can be as silly or as serious as you like, but just make sure they are authentic to you.

STAMP 1

STAMP 2

STAMP 3

STAMP 4

STAMP 5

If you're struggling to come up with 5, back up to our section on brand attributes and key differentiators. These previously defined characteristics and values should influence your 5 stamps. Once you have your 5 stamps outlined, consider them touchstones that will become essential when developing content. You don't have to constantly talk about them, but they should be rotated into your content semi-regularly. These will help define your unique brand voice and personality.

Notes:

Notes section with a grid of dots for writing.



The best marketing
doesn't feel like
marketing.

Tom Fishburne

Marketing Channels

Let's cover some of the most commonly used marketing channels. We'll go over what they do, how they should be used, and some tips and tricks to get you started.

Social Media

Let's start with the one everyone loves to hate: social media.

Organic vs. Paid

Organic content: Social media can be divided into two categories, one of which is the organic content that you post natively on your channels or plan through a scheduling tool. This kind of content is subject to the algorithm's power—that always evolving, extremely complicated system that governs the platform. Instagram is particularly notorious for messing with their algorithm, forcing businesses to consistently evolve how they approach organic content. Ultimately, the algorithm's purpose is to determine what type of posts perform the best. It prioritizes accounts and content that consistently gain a lot of engagement (i.e. likes, comments, shares, saves). There is no way to guarantee that someone will see your social media post, but the best way to maximize your visibility is to follow the recommended 'quick wins' in the next section.

Boosting: One of the best ways to hack the algorithm is to consider putting some dollars behind your posts. This can be as simple as boosting a post on Facebook or Instagram. This process is a lot like using an accelerant to start a fire in that you will speed up and increase the intensity of one particular post. This approach works well when you want to make sure your followers are aware of an event, know about an upcoming product launch, or you want to increase sales on a product or service. Boosting is simple to do, and you can set your own budget easily within the platform.

Social media ads: You can place ads on any social media platform, including LinkedIn. Navigating these ad platforms can range in complexity but usually requires some expertise. This involves designing a graphic that falls within specific size parameters, loading that creative into the platform, setting demographic and geographic parameters, and defining your budget and timeline.

When to consider placing paid ads: So much can be accomplished through the more simple boosting tool, so consider saving paid ads for when you have a decent amount of budget to spend (minimum of \$500) and have a clear goal in mind. A good recommendation is pulling in someone who has experience running ads to help out. That way, you're more likely to see a return on your investment.

FAQs

1. What types of businesses should focus on executing a solid social media strategy? Nearly every business should have a social media presence, even if you only post once per week. Businesses that should have a heavy social media presence and use it as a robust sales funnel have a DTC (direct-to-consumer) focus.

2. To tweet or not to tweet? Twitter can be a powerful tool for building online communities and growing your influence and reach. If you are a service-based business and LOVE to write and share content, this could be a good platform. However, if you don't already like and use Twitter, it may help you stick with platforms that feel more natural to you.

3. Does anyone even use Facebook anymore? Yes, nearly 3 billion people have Facebook accounts, and while the audience skews older than Instagram, it can still be a powerful platform for you. Some unique features of Facebook that you can leverage include 1. The ability to place ads and boost posts 2. You can create community groups that are exclusive to your best followers and

customers 3. Facebook has excellent tracking tools to provide real insight into how your campaigns are performing. 4. The event feature allows you to solicit interest and RSVPs that you can't do on any other social platform.

4. Can I just post the same content on all the platforms I use? Yes you can, but with some caveats. Instagram is a visually driven platform, so save your cluttered graphics with logos and text for Facebook and LinkedIn. The image needs to be beautiful, and when it can't be beautiful, try to make it feel REAL. Behind the scenes, up close and personal type photos can perform well. You can typically use the same captions across all platforms, but Twitter will limit your characters. Save the longer posts for Facebook and Instagram. You also have to be mindful of links. Instagram won't allow active links within the captions, which is why you always tell people to click the link in your bio. A tool like Linktree helps you keep track of multiple links in one.

5. Are hashtags still a thing? Yes, they are, but not on Facebook. Consistently using hashtags on Instagram can increase your probability of being discovered by people who wouldn't typically find you any other way. The key is consistency. You also need to look for hashtags that have between 10K and 100K posts tagged. That way, your audience size is big, but not so big you will get completely lost in the noise. Ultimately, if you don't want to mess with hashtags, that's fine too. There's no one approach that works all the time. Trial and error can be your best friend in this department.

Social Media Hacks

We all know developing content for social media can be tedious and time-consuming. To get you started, we have compiled some hacks that should hopefully give you some quick wins:

1. Avatar profiling: Identify your target customer and see who he/she follows/ what he/she's into and try to capture their attention by mimicking the type of content/brands they have already said "yes" to.

List 5 accounts that you look up to and/or have a similar ideal customer:

1

2

3

4

5

2. Google Doc brain dump: Spend 1-2 hours/week and write all your content. Then add it to a scheduling app and let it run!

3. Quarterly content shoots: Similar to the brain dump, consider setting up a photoshoot once per quarter where you plan to gather most of your imagery. The frequency is less important than taking several hours and knocking out a batch of images all at once; that way, you can post from anywhere and won't feel the stress of "I have no good images to post!"

4. Constructive interference: 1,000 followers x 11 = 11,000 followers! Create a group of 10 like-minded friends/businesses and like, comment, tag each other so that you can combine your reach and influence.

List 10 fellow business owners who you could approach about being in your 'pod.' Keep in mind, they don't have to be local! They could be anywhere in the world. If you don't have 10, start reaching out to business owners, you want to get to know and see if you can begin building a relationship that can grow. Even if you just have ONE collaborator, that's better than zero.

1 <input type="text"/>	6 <input type="text"/>
2 <input type="text"/>	7 <input type="text"/>
3 <input type="text"/>	8 <input type="text"/>
4 <input type="text"/>	9 <input type="text"/>
5 <input type="text"/>	10 <input type="text"/>

5. Show up and be seen: You have to show up on your social media feed. One of the biggest reasons brands can't grow their following is that they are not willing to be seen by their audience. Turn that camera around and post some pictures of yourself. Re-introduce yourself to new followers, thank the ones that have been there from the beginning, and share from your heart as to why you do what you do. Tell people directly what you value, what you're trying to accomplish with your business, and be authentic.

 **PRO TIP**

Integrate calls-to-action on your social posts. Ask people to 'tag someone below,' 'like this post if...,' 'click the link in our bio.' Those are just a few examples of asking people to take action on your content. Why is this so important? In addition to boosting engagement on your posts, this will get your audience conditioned to saying 'yes' to what you put out there. If they are used to commenting, liking, and tagging, then it won't feel like such a big ask when you push them to make a purchase. Think of it as leaving breadcrumbs. Micro commitments translate into larger commitments down the road.

Email Marketing

When it comes to selling, email marketing is one of the most effective and yet underutilized tools for small businesses. When done well, this tactic will increase traffic, grow and solidify customer loyalty, and create a predictable sales boost. There are many approaches to take when it comes to sending marketing emails, but you can't execute any of them without first building a list. Tell people directly what you value, what you're trying to accomplish with your business, and be authentic.

Ways to build your email list:

- 1** Each time you process a transaction, capture an email address. This is incredibly easy if you have an e-commerce component to your business. If you don't, just ask people to enter their email address as part of the check-out process. This can easily be done through nearly every POS system.
- 2** Offer an incentive for signing up. This can be as simple as "sign up for early accesses to exclusive deals and promotions." If you want to get a bit more aggressive, host a giveaway, or offer a freebie for everyone who signs up for your newsletter (20% off your next purchase, etc.).
- 3** Host a webinar. Online events can be a great way to grow an email list.
- 4** If you're a service-based business, offer a freebie that's unlocked when someone enters their email. (How-to guides, tutorials, really anything that aligns with your brand and highlights your expertise)
- 5** This may seem like a no-brainer, but just ASK. If you want more email subscribers, ask your customers to opt-in. Integrate this ask into your social media content.

Now that you have a list, what do you do with it?

The answer is simple: **Provide Value**. Treat people's email addresses with respect. Don't send an email just to send one...have a clear purpose or goal.

Types of marketing emails: There are hundreds of approaches to email marketing, but below are 3 easy-to-execute suggestions that you may want to consider if you're starting to dip your toe into the world of email marketing.

1 The newsletter: Think story-telling and longer-form content updates. This approach is great if you have the ability to develop meaningful content, such as blogs, white-papers, articles, etc. Not every content piece that you include in a newsletter needs to be long, but you want people to be interested in what you're sharing. The best way to approach an email newsletter is to assign sections that you will consistently include in each issue. Such as... 1. Upcoming events 2. Upcoming sales/promotions 3. Feature an employee or a customer 4. Include an 'owner update' or a 'message from the CEO.'

2 The promotional campaign: This approach works well when you want to lean into your selling cycles. For example, planning an email series around holiday shopping or back-to-school or wedding season can prove incredibly effective. Maybe you want to plan this campaign around your product launches. Either way, start by thinking of how many emails you want to send in a series and then send them in a predictable cadence (once per day, once per week, bi-weekly, etc.) Think "insider tips," "exclusive deals," "preview of what's coming up."

3 Welcome sequence: If you have a new customer or new subscriber, it's worth sending them a welcome email that does a bit of story-telling around your brand. Show them some gratitude for trusting you with their email address and start to build that relationship. It's relatively easy to set-up a series of emails that are triggered when you get a new subscriber. A typical Welcome Sequence would include 1. A welcome email focused on gratitude and story-telling about what they can expect from your brand 2. A more informative follow-up email, such as "how to use our product," or talk about the problem your business is trying to

solve 3. A call to action that focuses on pushing people to your website or asks them to come into your shop. Regardless of the CTA, you want to be clear on how you want your new customers to engage.

Which email marketing tactic do you want to try? (Circle all that apply)

- a. Newsletter
- b. Promotional Campaign
- c. Welcome Sequence

Follow the below prompts to help you outline your email marketing campaign:

1. **How many emails do you want to commit to sending?**
2. **What will be the send cadence?** (once per week, once per month, once per quarter)
3. **Write out the topics/subject matter you'd like to include in these emails:**

4. **What do you hope to accomplish with these emails? (Increase monthly sales by x%? Increase customer loyalty? Increase traffic to your website or your physical space?) Write out your goals below:**

Notes:

Email Marketing Hacks

1. Strong Calls to Action: Make sure that you are driving people to your website or social platform where they can make a purchase or take some other action.

2. Subject Lines: Catchy, funny, interesting, even controversial subject lines increase the likelihood that your email will be opened.

3. Email Platform: Use a trackable platform like MailChimp or Constant Contact. If you have some money to spend, upgrade to Hubspot or Salesforce. This way, you can track open rates and click-through-rates, which will help you determine what works and what doesn't.

4. A/B Testing: Any email platform makes it reasonably simple to test different subject lines to see what's more effective. You can try different send times to see when you get the most open rates.

5. Experiment: Treat your first email campaign as a total experiment. You have to learn about your audience first; then, you can replicate what works and ditch what doesn't.



Domain names and
websites are Internet
real estate.

Marc Ostrofsky

If 2020 has done anything, it's brought into sharp focus the divide between businesses who invested in their digital presence and those which have not. Those who never before relied on a digital front door are now having to swiftly reevaluate their balance between a physical versus digital footprint. In almost every case, that digital footprint includes a website.

The process of establishing your web presence is a complex one, and in no way does this guide intend to be the only resource you'll need when it comes to creating and enhancing your digital footprint. However, there are some things we can demystify and some insight to be offered.

Websites | How do I enhance my digital footprint?

Components of High-Quality Websites

1. They quickly and succinctly communicate the following things:

- Who you are
- What you do
- Why the customer should care
- How to purchase

2. They think about the user experience: you want your customers to go to the cart with confidence and not to your contact page with confusion. Try to put yourself in the customer's shoes. When they land on your site, you need to guide them exactly where you want them to go, and with ease.

3. They follow your brand guidelines: If you don't have a brand or style guide built around your logo, colors, fonts, imagery, etc., it may be worth the investment. You want to keep a clean, simple, consistent look across all your platforms, and that includes your website.

4. They understand SEO and have a plan for organic search rankings.

We'll get more into this later.

5. Have a built-in e-commerce platform: Even if you only sell one thing online, consider offering some way for your customers to make online purchases. This could be apparel and other merchandise with your logo; it could be a whole line of products or consulting services. The best retailers take advantage of the omnichannel world we live in (think: buy online, pick up in-store. Or buy online, return in-store)

6. They have Google Analytics installed: This is how you will track website traffic and learn a lot about how your audience navigates your website.

Does your website meet all 6 of the above criteria? Yes No

Does your current website work for you? Yes No

What would you like to change about your current web presence?

1

2

3

4

How to think about Search Engine Optimization and Search Engine Marketing

SEO and SEM are more than just buzzwords. They are two distinct strategies that can mean all the difference when using your website as a selling tool.

What is SEO?

SEO refers to the process of improving the quality and quantity of website traffic from search engines—Google being the most powerful. SEO targets unpaid, organic traffic rather than direct traffic or paid traffic.

How to boost your organic rankings:

1. Know what keywords you want to rank for. Think about your areas of specialty. When someone searches “best place for coffee in Waco,” do you want to show up? Maybe you only want to show up if they search for “specialty coffee in Waco.” Maybe you are a cleaning business, and you want to show up for words like “maids” + “cleaning service” + “housekeeping.”

2. Then, use a tool like Keywords Everywhere to look up the search volumes for those terms. You may be surprised how little or how often certain keywords are searched. You want to go after terms with a decent amount of search volume but are not overly competitive.

3. Look at how many pages you have on your website. You get to target specific keywords with each page. If you only have a one-page website, you can only go after one keyword phrase. Determine what keyword phrases you’d like to rank for with each page.

4. Get into the back-end of your site, and on each page, there will be a place to enter a meta title and a description. These sections have character limits that need to be followed. Think of the meta title as a headline for that page. The description is a 1-2 sentence description that supports your headline. This is where you integrate your keywords and phrases. Use them in your titles and descriptions.

5. The copy (words and content) on your website pages need to correspond with the titles and descriptions. You can't say, "I want to rank for "vintage boutique" and not use the phrase vintage boutique in your copy. In fact, Google will see this as being misleading and could penalize you.

6. SEO is like equity– it builds over time. Keep in mind, the longer a domain has existed and the more website content you have, the better your rankings will be. If you ever decide to build a whole new website, be sure you pay a professional to appropriately transfer the files. The worst thing you can do is kill the old site and start over from scratch because you will lose all the built-up equity you have with Google.

 **PRO TIP**

Website development sites that promise "built-in SEO" are not going to cut it. You will need to manually enter your meta titles and descriptions based on following the steps outlined in this guide. Another tip: If you are hiring someone to build your website, make sure SEO is added to the contract. Do not assume that a developer will handle this for you automatically. Most developers don't know how to write effective meta titles and descriptions. Copywriters are better suited for this task.

Notes:

A large grid of dotted lines for taking notes, spanning the right side of the page.

What is SEM?

Search Engine Marketing refers to the process of paying a search engine to display ads that target different keywords to boost your rankings.

When should I consider buying Google Ads?

- If your website is in great condition and has the potential to generate a lot of sales. Do not run ads if you can't convert them into sales through an effective website.
- When your main selling problem is an awareness problem: If you know people are out there searching for your products or services, and you have evidence to believe that you could sell more if you captured more search traffic, then consider buying some Google ads.
- When you can spend at least a couple thousand dollars over a minimum of 3 months. If you can't adequately fund the campaign, you may be disappointed with the results.

Feeling Overwhelmed?

If all of this feels overwhelming, and you would prefer to hit the 'easy' button, don't be afraid to consult with a professional. Startup Waco can connect you with a trusted resource that will give you good advice at a price you can afford.

Google My Business Listings

Findability refers to how easy it is for customers to find your site when searching for specific terms. To make your business location more findable, you need to optimize your Google My Business Listing. When I type "breweries in Waco" into my browser, there will be a list of a few business locations that match that description. It's easy to rank in the top 3-4 when there are only 3-4 businesses that match my description, but the more crowded the landscape, the harder it is to rank.

Optimize your GMB

- 1. Claim your business in "Google My business."** This is easy to do if you haven't done it already. If you're not sure how to do this, simply Google it. Google will walk you through the process.
- 2. Ensure your data is accurate:** Your address, phone number, and hours of operation need to be up-to-date at all times.
- 3. Link your website to your listing.**
- 4. Add photos and videos to make your listing look more robust.**
- 5. Solicit 5-star reviews without shame: ask people to rate and review.** Listings with more 5-star reviews will get prioritized by Google and have a higher likelihood of showing up first. No one wants a potential customer to be deferred because of a few negative 1-star reviews.



**A good PR story
is infinitely more
effective than a front
page ad.**

Richard Branson

Public Relations | How do I get started?

Public relations are the strategic interaction you have with others on behalf of your business. In other words, working strategically to encourage others to tell your story and spread your news can have a big impact. Why? Because it feels more organic and grass-roots when a third party, aka media, does the storytelling for you. Having some PR savvy will go a long way when trying to get others to help spread your message or help you promote.

Where should I start?

Begin by building relationships with traditional media, like TV and newspapers, and those who run community boards and other organizations.

Who should you reach out to?

Downtown Waco – Remember, the Downtown Waco website and social media exists to talk about everything going on downtown. You can email or social media DM Downtown Waco about everything from a trunk show you're having to the Valentine's dinner special you are planning. You don't need to be formal with Downtown Waco communications either. You can email and say, Hey there, I just got in a new line of sweaters that I'd like to spotlight, could you do a post about those? Staff is usually happy to oblige with a post or adding it to their calendar of events.

Additional calendars which are typically eager to help promote community events:

- Official Waco App/Waco Convention & Visitors Bureau: Carla Pendergraft, CarlaP@wacotx.gov
- Waco Tribune-Herald: Event calendar, goingson@wacotrib.com
- Act Locally Waco: Ashley Thornton, ashley@actlocallywaco.org
actlocallywaco.org
- Wacoan: Michelle Johnson, michelle@wacoan.com
- KWBU Radio: Brodie Bashaw, brodie_bashaw@baylor.edu
- 94.5 The Beat: www.centexbeat.com/community-events
- KWTX: kwtx.com/calendar
- KBTX: kbtx.com/community

Contacting the media: Do you think you're launching or doing something unique that needs to be in the newspaper or on the news?

The Waco Tribune-Herald

An email to the Waco Tribune-Herald business reporter Mike Copeland mcopeland@wacotrib.com is a good place to start. Your "news release" email doesn't have to be fancy. Start with pleasantries and then move straight into what you are asking for. Ex: I'm writing to see if you'd like to write an article or brief about

Consider what might make your item article worthy

- Is it the first-ever?
- Are you doing something no one else is doing?
- Is there some great story behind it?
- Are you serving the community in some significant way?

Example: a new line of sweaters might not be article material. But a new line of sweaters that are being made by a local mother and daughter who are donating proceeds to a women and children's shelter might be a great story.

What to Include:

Include the pertinent information: WHAT, WHO, WHERE, WHEN, WHY. You can add quotes from people involved in the story, but that is not a must-have when reaching out to the newspaper. They are unlikely to print your news release because they write their own pieces.

The trick is to get them interested.

Also, take into account whether what you are emailing about might be good for pictures. Newspapers often run something called "wild art," which is just pictures with a detailed caption but not a whole article. Maybe your news item would make great wild art.

TV Stations

Some of the local TV stations have news shows that focus on local goings-on, and they often like to showcase new businesses or businesses doing something unique or for the community. A news release to TV can be a bit more formal, as they might use material from it. Here are some news contacts:

- KCEN: news@kcentv.com
- KWTX/KBTX: news@kwtx.com
- KWKT: news@kwkt.com
- KXXV: newsroom@kxxv.com

Notes:

“Marketing without data is like driving with your eyes closed.”

Dan Zarrella

KEEPING THINGS ON TRACK

Let's Get Started 

Begin With the End in Mind

Before you can track campaign performance, you need to establish what goals you're trying to achieve.

One of the simplest, most effective goal setting models can be summed up in the following acronym: **SMART**.

How to Track Your ROI



Smart goals are **specific, measurable, attainable, relevant, and time-based**.

Specific: We are not looking for wide-ranging, high-level goals. We want them to be detailed and distinct.

Measurable: Your goals need to be trackable. Whether you're trying to increase sales, grow followers or email subscribers, you need to first establish a baseline and track the outcome.

Attainable: You want your goals to stretch you, but ultimately they need to be realistic. Don't set a goal you know you cannot reach.

Relevant: Make sure your goal connects back to your overall business plan and strategy.

Time-Based: Each goal should have a deadline or a timeframe attached to it.

Here are some examples of different goals you may consider setting for any upcoming marketing campaigns you plan to launch:

Goal #1: Grow my email list by 100 new subscribers over the next 3 weeks.

Goal #2: Increase online sales by \$1,000 each month for the next 3 months.

Goal #3: Establish an active feedback loop between my company/organization and my customers/constituents by the end of Q1, 2021, through the implementation of a survey tool.

Now it's your turn. Outline a few goals you'd like to achieve through any upcoming marketing campaigns or initiatives.

GOAL 1

GOAL 2

GOAL 3

The Metrics System

Measuring campaign performance means you need to get into the weeds a little bit and learn how to pull certain metrics out of various platforms. BUT data doesn't always paint the full picture or tell an accurate story unless you know how to interpret it. Below are some critical metrics you will need to track to understand how your campaigns are performing consistently.

Social Media Metrics

There are just a few data points you need to be pulling before and after your campaigns to see how they performed:

- Follower growth
- Engagement rate
- Total reach
- Clicks

Facebook's built-in analytics platform is all you will need to track performance on that channel. This is also true for Twitter. However, Instagram is a bit trickier because it only offers data 7 days at a time. Using a publishing platform like Later will help pull the analytics out of the platform and provide you with a report.

First, establish a baseline:

1. Followers: How many followers does your business account currently have on Instagram Facebook Twitter

2. Engagement: Look at your most recent 9-12 posts, total up all the likes you received, then divide by the number of posts. Do the same for the number of comments.

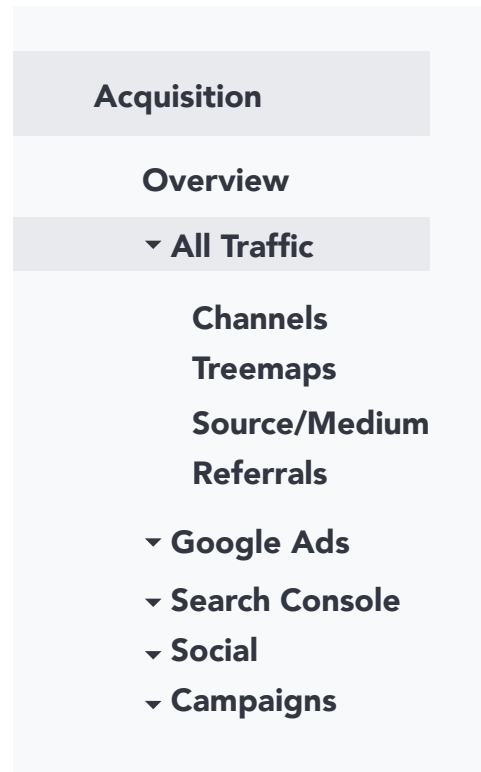
Average likes:

Average comments:

3. Reach: This term simply refers to how many people saw your posts.

Over the past 30 days, my posts reached people.

4. Clicks: the number of link clicks should be easy to find, but it will be quite low if you do not invite your audience to click on anything. Using phrases like "link in bio" or "click below" will help drive traffic to your website.



PRO TIP

To better track how customers are landing on your website, log in to Google Analytics, click on Acquisition, then All Traffic, then Source/Medium. You will be able to see clearly how people are landing onto your website.

Now, you are ready to track performance against those numbers. You will always want to see your followers, engagement rate, and total reach increasing over time.

Email Marketing Metrics

If you use a platform like MailChimp or Constant Contact, these data points are very simple to find and track:

- Open Rate
- Click-through rate

Open rates that get into the 20-40% range are fantastic. Click-through rates that are above 10% are also very strong. Aim for those numbers (or better) every time.

What determines open rate?: compelling subject lines. Keep it short and quippy. Funny, witty, clever, or even shocking subject lines play well when sending emails. They also translate into higher open rates.

What determines click-through rates?: compelling body content and strong calls to action. You want the content to (first of all) be interesting, but don't forget to prompt readers to click to view a product, click to read more, click to discover why, etc. Give your readers a reason to take action.

Track your Email Opens and Clicks:

My last email had an open rate of %

My last email had a click-through rate of %

Website Metrics

Your website has the potential to be one of your most powerful selling tools. But to know if your site is performing as it should, track the following metrics each month, or at least each quarter. To do this, you will need to get familiar with Google Analytics.

- 1. Website Sessions:** This refers to the total number of website visits.
- 2. Users:** This data point may seem similar to website sessions, but the difference here is users visiting your site, not total visits. When somebody visits your site multiple times, only one user is counted. This is critical because it indicates how many people return to your site — your most highly-interested prospects or loyal customers.
- 3. Pageviews:** The pageviews metric shows how many individual pages people visited during their website session. Keep in mind that a single visitor can generate many pageviews, so a high count doesn't necessarily mean many individual visitors.

4. Mobile vs. desktop visitors: More than ever, folks are logging on to web pages via mobile devices. Tracking how many of your visitors come from mobile will help you determine how to structure your site and optimize it appropriately.

5. Traffic sources: In addition to knowing the devices people use, recognizing which sources referred them to your site is equally important. Google Analytics categorizes traffic sources into several categories:

- Direct – from a bookmark or directly typing the URL into the address bar
- Social – from a link on any social media platform
- Referral – from a link from another site
- Email – from an email link
- Organic search – from a link in search engine results
- Paid search – from a paid search ad
- Other – from anywhere else not mentioned above

You should aim for a variety of sources for incoming traffic. If you ever decide to run an ad campaign, you can then see how many more website visits your ads generated.

6. Bounce Rate: This is the percentage of users who land on your website, perform no action, and bail immediately. Google calculates the bounce rate by dividing the number of single-page sessions by all sessions. A high bounce rate means your website isn't appealing enough to make people want to stick around and browse. Aim to have a bounce rate below 40%.

Where do I put all my data?

Start by creating a Google Sheet or a spreadsheet in Microsoft Excel. Start tracking the same few numbers each month and compare. You don't have to be a statistician or a data nerd or even a marketing expert to determine whether or not your social channels are growing, your emails are being opened, and your website traffic is increasing. Just start somewhere and try to be consistent.

Waco, Waco... That's my hometown!

Unique ways to think about Downtown Waco

Doing business downtown has its perks because there are a number of things that draw people downtown, and you can take advantage of that traffic.

First of all, we recommend you loosely keep up with a few CALENDARS:

Waco ISD – example: The first day back at school is a great time to remind parents to take a moment for themselves and enjoy a coffee downtown or some shopping, unfettered by kiddos that were at home all summer.

Baylor University, MCC, TSTC – Perhaps in the Spring, you want to start sharing about the great college graduation gifts that can be found at your business. Or maybe your business wants to offer new grads a discount.

Waco Convention Center – During normal years (non-pandemic times), the Convention Center at University Parks and Washington has a packed calendar of conferences and conventions which bring in folks from all over the state. Do you know what convention-goers like to do? Shop, eat, have fun. The Waco Convention Center calendar, <https://wacocc.com/calendar/>, is public and can help you keep up with who's in town to determine what merchandise, meals, or services you might want to push.

Downtown Waco – downtownwacotx.com keeps a calendar of events and keeps up with downtown events on the Downtown Waco Facebook event page. Through these event calendars, you'll know when there are festivals or even smaller special events at your neighboring businesses.

Next, remember, there is strength in numbers!

Team up with your neighboring businesses to do fun things together. Share the mental and logistical load of planning promotions. A good example of this is the Uptown Stroll, a winter holiday event that uptown shops used to encourage folks to wander from one business to the next and featured holiday fun and sales.

Become an ambassador to downtown.

You have invested in Downtown Waco by putting your business here, so embrace your ownership and authority. Tell people how to get around traffic snarls on their way into downtown. Give them pro-tips on where to park. Tell them your favorite spots to eat, stroll, or just sit and rest a minute. Share with people what you love about your neighborhood and entice them to experience it themselves.

If you have any questions about downtown, please reach out to City Center Waco, 254-754-8898 or info@citycenterwaco.com.

Congratulations!

You have completed the Marketing Skills Toolkit! However, your journey does not need to end here. If you want support with any of the topics and tools discussed in this workbook, please contact Startup Waco. Their team is standing by to assist you with whatever you need. Email: Info@startupwaco.com

Stay in touch by subscribing to the Startup Waco
Newsletter and following their social media channels:
[@startupwaco](#)

Notes:



Special Thanks and Acknowledgements

This toolkit was created through a collaboration between Startup Waco and Waco's Downtown Public Improvement District. The toolkit content was written by local marketing expert April Leman, with contributions by Wendy Gragg. The toolkit was designed by Haley Cash from The Starving Artist Creative. A very special thanks to City Center Waco and Downtown Waco for their support and collaboration.