

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

August 2026

**Don't Overpay:
How to Avoid
Paying Too Much
for an Agency
to Help You with
Your Marketing**

**Steps to
Increase
Your Social
Media Post
Interaction**

**Freelancer or
Agency?**

*Understanding the
Difference When
Choosing a Social
Media Partner*

**How a Small
Business Can
Benefit from an
Agency Helping
Them with
Google Ads**

**WHY GREAT
LEADERS
ASK BETTER
QUESTIONS**

Infographic:

**Ways to Increase
Your Social Media
Engagement**

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LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

Welcome to the August Issue!

As summer begins to wind down, now is the perfect time to evaluate your marketing efforts and prepare for a strong finish to the year. This month's issue focuses on making smarter marketing decisions, asking better questions, and investing in strategies that create long-term growth.

Inside, you'll discover:

- **How a Small Business Can Benefit from an Agency Helping with Google Ads** – Learn how expert campaign management can help maximize your advertising budget and deliver better results.
- **Don't Overpay for Marketing** – What to look for in a marketing partner and how to avoid paying for services that don't deliver value.
- **Steps to Increase Your Social Media Post Interaction** – Practical tips to encourage more engagement and meaningful conversations with your audience.
- **Freelancer or Agency?** – Understand the key differences and discover which option is the best fit for your business goals.
- **Why Great Leaders Ask Better Questions** – Explore how thoughtful leadership leads to stronger teams, smarter decisions, and continued growth.

We hope this issue inspires you to try something new, strengthen your business, and make the most of the opportunities this summer has to offer. As always, thank you for reading, and if you find value in this issue, please share it with another local business owner. Here's to continued growth!

Don Franklin
Founding Partner

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A Little About Us

When it comes growing your local business, the task is the same – be visible online, stand out from the competition, generate new leads, and convert visitors & leads into customers.

The success of digital marketing relies on your strategy and the way that you implement that strategy. For Local Business Marketing, we use all of the tools at our disposal to make sure that our clients enjoy the online success they deserve.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

August

Black Business Month
Eye Exam Month
Traffic Awareness Month
Sandwich Month

1st - World Lung Cancer Day
1st - Spider-Man Day
1st - Play Outside Day
2nd - Watermelon Day
2nd - International Friendship Day
4th - Chocolate Chip Cookie Day
5th - Oyster Day
7th - International Beer Day
8th - International Cat Day
9th - Book Lovers Day
9th - International Day of Indigenous People
10th - S'mores Day
10th - Spoil Your Dog Day
11th - National Son and Daughter Day

12th - International Youth Day
13th - International Lefthander's Day
13th - Filet Mignon Day
14th - Financial Awareness Day
15th - Relaxation Day
16th - Rum Day
17th - Nonprofit Day
18th - Couple's Day
19th - Potato Day
19th - World Photo Day
20th - Radio Day
20th - Bacon Lovers Day
21st - Senior Citizen's Day
22nd - Eat a Peach Day
24th - Waffle Day
26th - Dog Day
26th - Women's Equality Day
28th - Red Wine Day
31st - Eat Outside Day

September

Suicide Prevention Month
Childhood Cancer Awareness Month
Hispanic Heritage Month
(September 15 – October 15)

Sept. 7 – Labor Day (U.S.)
Sept. 11 – Patriot Day (U.S.)
Sept. 15 – Start of Hispanic Heritage Month
Sept. 22 – First Day of Fall

1st – World Letter Writing Day
4th – National Wildlife Day
5th – World Beard Day
6th – Read a Book Day
7th – Beer Lovers Day
13th – Grandparents Day
8th – World Physical Therapy Day
10th – World Suicide Prevention Day
12th – Video Games Day
12th – Chocolate Milkshake Day
13th – International Chocolate Day

13th – Peanut Day
14th – Eat a Hoagie Day
15th – World Engineers Day
16th – Guacamole Day
17th – Apple Dumpling Day
18th – National Cheeseburger Day
18th – U.S. Air Force Day
19th – Talk Like a Pirate Day
21st – International Day of Peace
21st – World Alzheimer's Day
21st – World Gratitude Day
21st – Miniature Golf Day
22nd – Ice Cream Cone Day
22nd – Family Day
22nd – Hobbit Day
25th – National Lobster Day
27th – Daughters Day
28th – Sons Day
29th – World Heart Day
29th – National Coffee Day
30th – International Podcast Day



How a Small Business Can Benefit from an Agency Helping Them with Google Ads

When most business owners think about Google Ads, the concept seems straightforward. You choose a few keywords, write an advertisement, set a budget, and wait for new customers to arrive.

If only it were that simple.

The reality is that Google Ads has evolved into one of the most sophisticated advertising platforms in the world. Behind every search result is an automated auction that evaluates hundreds of signals in milliseconds.

Bidding strategies, audience targeting, keyword intent,

ad quality, landing page experience, conversion tracking, and artificial intelligence all influence whether an advertisement appears and how much each click ultimately costs. For small business owners already juggling countless responsibilities, keeping pace with that complexity can be a full time job in itself.

Google continues to dominate the search market, processing more than 8.5 billion searches every day worldwide. That represents billions of opportunities for businesses to connect with customers who are actively searching for products and

services.

Unlike many forms of advertising that interrupt consumers, Google Ads reaches people who are already looking for a solution. That intent is what makes search advertising so powerful. When someone searches for "roof repair near me," "family dentist," or "Italian restaurant," they are not casually browsing.

They are expressing immediate interest.

Appearing at that moment can make the difference between earning a new

customer and losing one to a competitor.

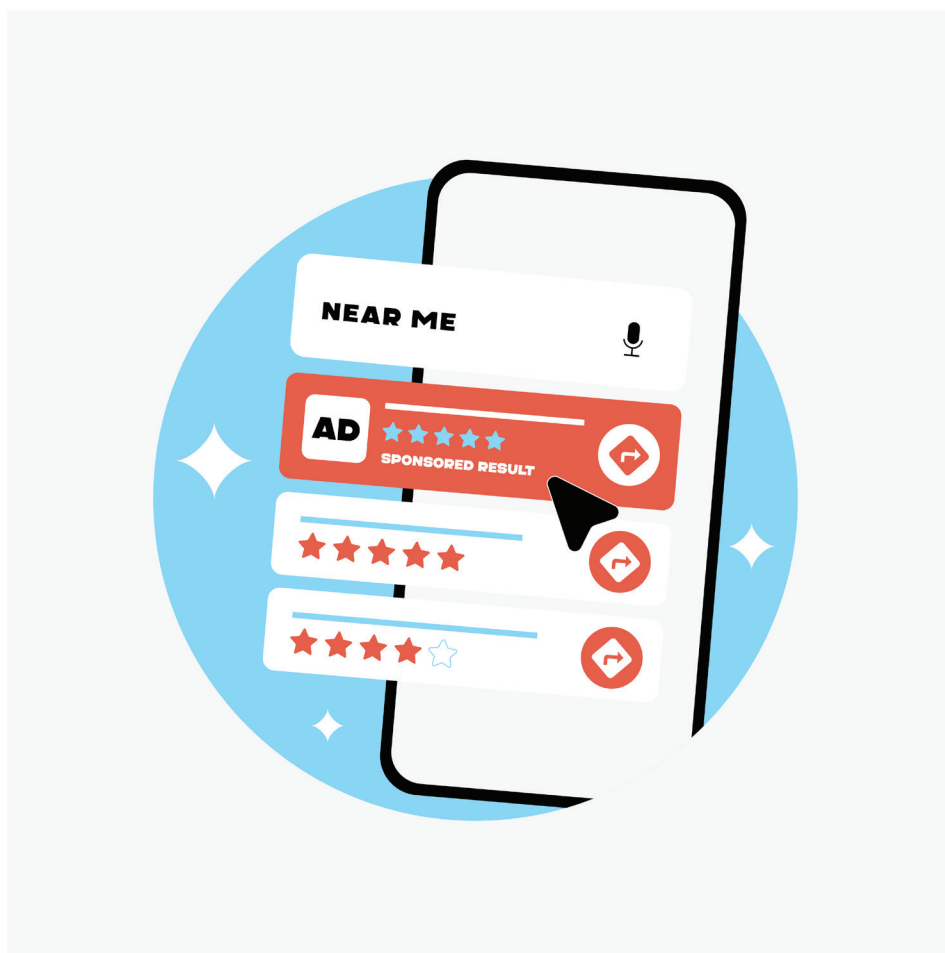
The opportunity is significant, but so is the competition.

Google Ads operates as an auction, and simply having the largest budget does not guarantee success. Google considers factors such as ad relevance, expected click through rate, landing page quality, and overall user experience when determining which advertisements appear. This means that well managed campaigns often outperform larger budgets that lack strategy.

That is one of the primary reasons many small businesses choose to work with experienced agencies. An agency does far more than launch advertisements. It develops a strategy. Before a single campaign goes live, a quality agency evaluates the business itself.

Who is the ideal customer? Which services generate the highest profit? Which geographic areas should be targeted? What keywords indicate someone is ready to buy rather than simply researching?

These decisions influence every aspect of campaign performance. Without this strategic foundation, businesses often spend money attracting the wrong audience or paying for



searches that never become customers. Keyword selection illustrates this perfectly.

Many first time advertisers assume they should target the broadest keywords possible. While that approach may generate more traffic, it often produces lower quality leads and higher advertising costs. Experienced agencies understand search intent.

Someone searching "how to replace a water heater" has very different intentions than someone searching "emergency water heater repair near me." Recognizing those differences allows campaigns to focus budgets on searches that are

far more likely to convert into paying customers.

Negative keywords represent another area where professional management provides substantial value.

Every click costs money. If your advertisements appear for irrelevant searches, your budget disappears quickly.

Agencies continually identify search terms that should be excluded from campaigns. This process prevents wasted spending while improving the overall quality of traffic.

Over time, these optimizations can save businesses hundreds or even thousands of dollars.

Landing pages are another critical component that is frequently overlooked.

Driving visitors to a website is only half the battle. What happens after they click determines whether the advertising investment produces results.

Google evaluates landing page experience as part of its Quality Score calculation, which directly affects advertising costs and visibility. Well designed landing pages that load quickly, answer customer questions, and provide clear calls to action not only improve conversion rates but can also lower the cost per click.

This is where agencies often provide value beyond advertising management itself.

Many offer expertise in website optimization, user experience, and conversion

rate improvement, helping businesses maximize every visitor they pay to attract.

Data is another significant advantage.

Google Ads generates an enormous amount of information. Impressions, click through rates, quality scores, conversions, search terms, audience behavior, device performance, geographic data, and dozens of other metrics are available.

The challenge is knowing what actually matters.

Successful agencies focus on the metrics that directly impact business growth.

How many qualified leads were generated?
What was the cost per lead?
Which campaigns produced the highest return on investment?

Which keywords consistently generated revenue?

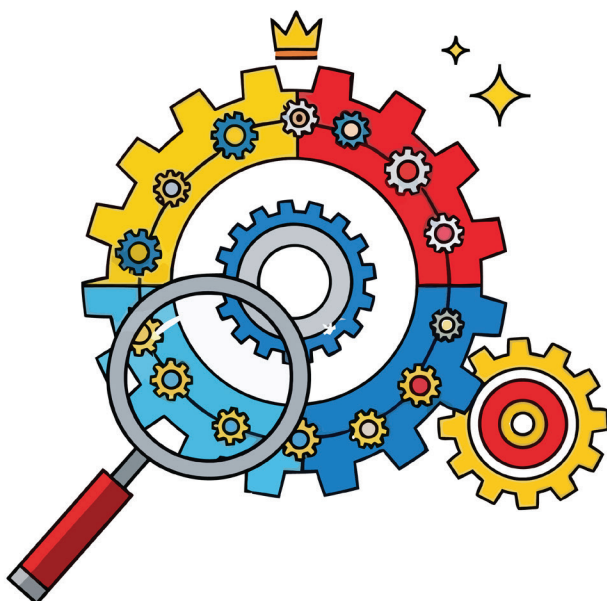
These insights guide future decisions and help businesses invest their advertising dollars more effectively.

Artificial intelligence has also transformed Google Ads in recent years.

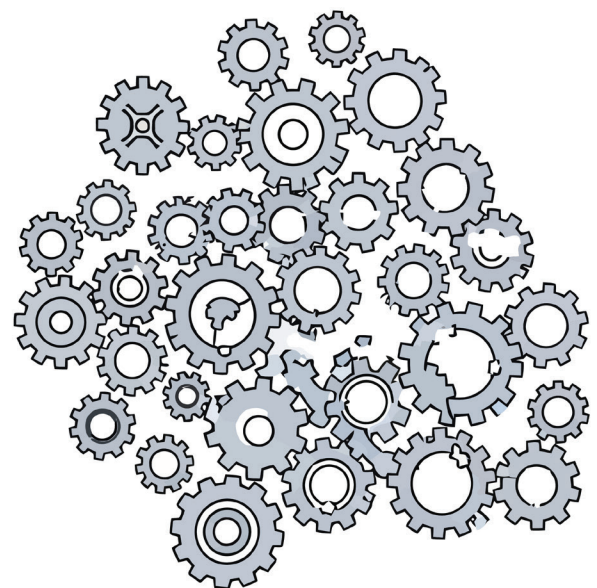
Features such as Smart Bidding, Performance Max campaigns, automated asset generation, and audience expansion have introduced powerful new capabilities. However, automation is not a substitute for strategy.

Artificial intelligence performs best when guided by experienced professionals who understand business objectives, customer behavior, and campaign structure.

Without proper oversight, automation can sometimes



QUALITY



QUANTITY

optimize toward the wrong goals or spend budgets inefficiently. This is another area where agency expertise becomes valuable.

Certified Google Ads professionals spend their careers monitoring platform updates, testing new features, and adapting strategies as Google's algorithms evolve. Business owners rarely have the time to dedicate to that level of ongoing education. Certification itself can also provide additional confidence.

Google Partners and Google Premier Partners have demonstrated expertise through certification exams, campaign performance requirements, and ongoing professional development. While certification alone does not guarantee exceptional service, it does indicate that an agency has invested in understanding Google's advertising platform and maintaining current knowledge.

One of the greatest advantages of working with an experienced agency is objectivity.

Business owners naturally become attached to their own ideas. Agencies bring an outside perspective informed by experience across multiple industries and hundreds of campaigns. They recognize patterns, identify opportunities, and often

recommend improvements that internal teams may overlook.

That perspective can be invaluable.

Perhaps the biggest misconception surrounding agencies is that hiring one simply adds another expense.

In reality, a well managed Google Ads campaign should generate a return that exceeds both the advertising budget and the management fee. According to Google Economic Impact research, businesses earn an average of approximately \$2 in revenue for every \$1 spent on Google Ads, although actual results vary significantly based on industry, competition, and campaign quality. The key phrase is campaign quality.

Poorly managed campaigns can waste thousands of dollars. Strategic campaigns can become one of the most profitable investments a business makes.

Ultimately, Google Ads is not simply about buying clicks.

It is about connecting with the right customer at the exact moment they are searching for what your business offers. Achieving that consistently requires strategy, technical expertise, ongoing optimization, and a deep

understanding of consumer behavior.

For many small businesses, partnering with an experienced agency allows them to focus on what they do best while ensuring their advertising budget is working as efficiently as possible.

Because at the end of the day, success is not measured by how many people clicked on your ad.

It is measured by how many became customers.

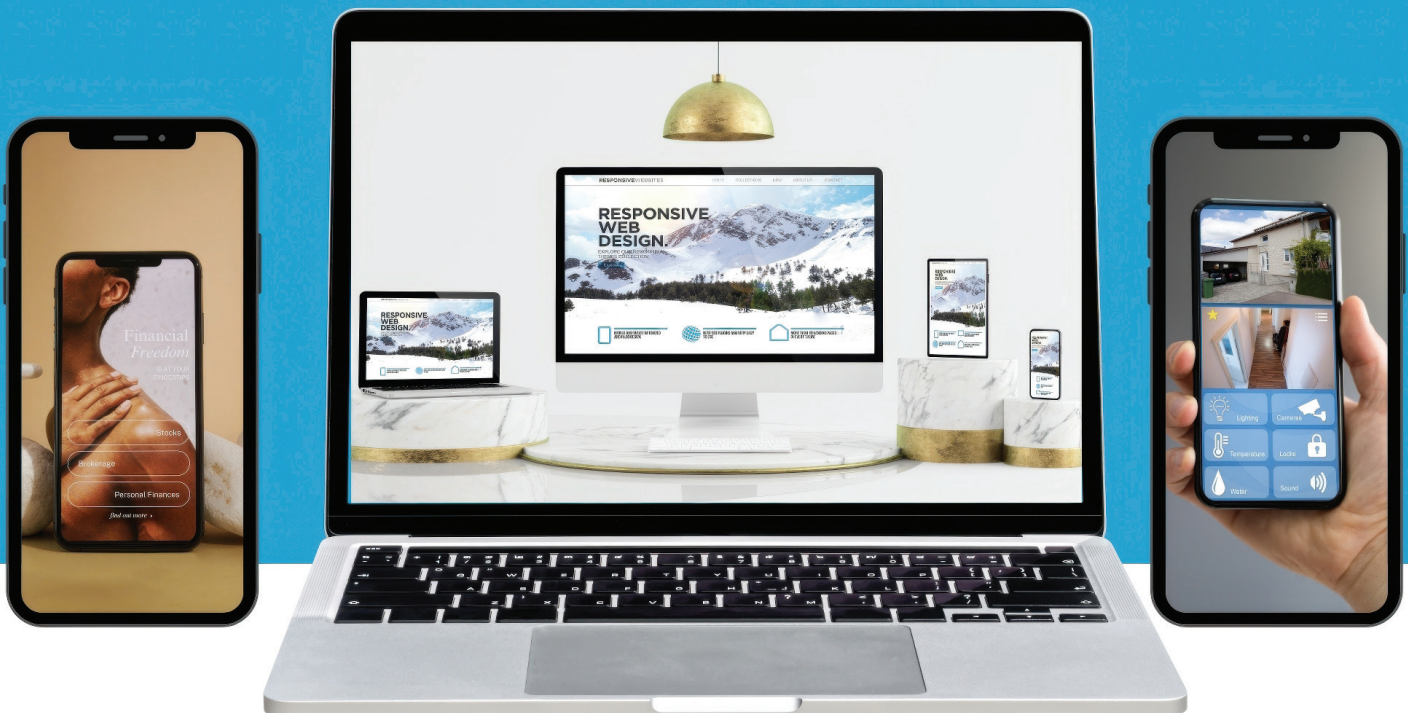
Google Ads remains one of the most effective ways for small businesses to reach customers who are actively searching for their products and services. However, success requires far more than selecting keywords and setting a budget. An experienced marketing agency brings strategic planning, technical expertise, ongoing optimization, and data driven decision making that can improve campaign performance while reducing wasted advertising spend.

For businesses looking to maximize their marketing investment, the right agency can turn Google Ads from a confusing expense into a powerful engine for long term growth.

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Don't Overpay: How to Avoid Paying Too Much for an Agency to Help You with Your Marketing

Hiring a marketing agency should be one of the smartest investments a business owner makes.

The right partner can help generate qualified leads, increase brand awareness, improve customer retention, and accelerate growth. The

wrong partner, however, can drain your budget while delivering little more than attractive reports and vague promises.

For many small business owners, choosing a marketing agency can feel overwhelming. Every

agency claims to be different. Every proposal promises results. Every website showcases impressive case studies and glowing testimonials. Without a clear understanding of what to look for, it can be difficult to separate genuine value from clever salesmanship.

The good news is that paying more does not necessarily mean getting better marketing.

In fact, one of the biggest misconceptions in business is that larger retainers automatically produce stronger results. Marketing is not like buying a luxury vehicle where a higher price generally reflects additional features. The value of marketing lies in strategy, execution, accountability, and measurable outcomes; not simply in the monthly invoice.

This is particularly important when you consider how much businesses are investing in marketing today.

According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, many small businesses allocate 7 to 12 percent of their annual revenue to marketing, with newer companies often investing even more to establish their brand. That makes marketing one of the largest discretionary expenses for many organizations.

When that much money is involved, every dollar should have a purpose.

One of the first warning signs that a business may be overpaying is purchasing services before defining

objectives. It is surprisingly common for agencies to recommend comprehensive marketing packages before fully understanding the client's goals.

Before discussing tactics, every conversation should begin with strategy.

Are you trying to generate more qualified leads?

Increase online sales?

Improve local visibility?

Expand into new markets?

Strengthen customer retention?

Without clearly identifying the destination, it becomes impossible to determine the best route to get there.

Unfortunately, many agencies take the opposite approach. They begin with a list of services rather than a discussion about business goals. The result is often a proposal filled with tactics that may sound impressive but contribute little to solving the client's actual challenges.

Another common mistake is believing that more marketing automatically produces better marketing.

Many small businesses are convinced they need every available service at once.

Search engine optimization, Google Ads, Facebook advertising, LinkedIn campaigns, email marketing, blogging, video production, text message marketing, reputation management, influencer outreach, and podcast sponsorships all become part of the proposal.

The reality is much simpler.

Most businesses do not need everything immediately.

They need the right strategy implemented exceptionally well.

The best agencies prioritize.

They identify which marketing channels will have the greatest impact based on your industry, audience, competition, and budget. Rather than trying to sell every available service, they focus on building momentum where it matters most.

Transparency should also be non-negotiable. Business owners deserve to understand exactly what they are paying for. Deliverables should be clearly outlined.

Reporting should be easy to understand. Timelines should be realistic. If an agency cannot explain its strategy without relying on complicated marketing



that determine whether marketing is actually working.

Another area where businesses often overpay is unnecessary complexity. Some agencies present elaborate strategies involving dozens of software platforms, highly technical reporting dashboards, and complicated marketing funnels.

While sophisticated tools certainly have their place, complexity should never be mistaken for effectiveness.

The best marketing strategies are often surprisingly straightforward.

Reach the right audience.
Deliver the right message.
Measure the results.
Improve continuously.
Everything else should support those core objectives.

Communication is another characteristic that separates great agencies from average ones. The strongest agency relationships resemble partnerships rather than vendor arrangements.

Business owners should hear from their agency regularly, not just when an invoice is due. Strategy discussions should happen consistently. Recommendations should evolve as results are measured.

jargon, that should raise concerns.

Marketing should never feel mysterious.

A good agency educates its clients. It explains why recommendations are being made and how success will be measured. You should never finish a meeting wondering what your agency actually accomplished during the past month. Performance reporting deserves particular attention because it is often where businesses are unintentionally misled.

Modern marketing platforms generate enormous amounts of data. Reports filled with impressions, clicks, reach, engagement, and website traffic can appear impressive. The problem is that these metrics do not necessarily

translate into business growth.

A report showing that your advertisements generated 200,000 impressions sounds encouraging. A report showing those advertisements generated three qualified leads tells a much more meaningful story.

Marketing expert Peter Drucker famously observed, "What gets measured gets managed." The challenge for many businesses is ensuring they are measuring the right things.

The metrics that matter most are those connected to business outcomes. Qualified leads. Phone calls. Appointment requests. Sales. Revenue growth. Customer acquisition costs. Return on advertising investment. These are the numbers

Challenges should be addressed openly rather than avoided. Marketing works best when agencies become an extension of the business rather than an outside supplier.

Business owners should also pay close attention to ownership of digital assets. Unfortunately, some companies discover after years of paying an agency that they do not actually own their website, advertising accounts, analytics, or even their domain name. Transitioning to another agency then becomes unnecessarily complicated.

A reputable agency understands that these assets belong to the client.

The agency manages them. It should never control them. Promises also deserve careful scrutiny.

Marketing is both an art and a science. Experienced professionals can improve visibility, increase qualified traffic, and generate stronger results over time.

What they cannot honestly do is guarantee the number one search ranking in a matter of weeks or promise a specific number of sales regardless of market conditions.

If an offer sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Google itself emphasizes that no one can guarantee a number one ranking because search results are determined by constantly evolving algorithms and competitive factors beyond any agency's control. Ethical marketing professionals focus on sustainable growth rather than unrealistic promises.

Perhaps the most important characteristic of a great agency is its willingness to tell clients what they do not need. That may sound counterintuitive, but it demonstrates confidence and integrity.

An agency that recommends delaying certain services until the business is ready is often acting in the client's best interest. Rather than maximizing monthly revenue, it is maximizing long term success.

That kind of honesty builds trust, and trust is the foundation of every successful agency relationship.

Ultimately, marketing should never feel like writing checks into a black hole. Every recommendation should support a clear objective.

Every campaign should have measurable goals. Every

monthly investment should move the business closer to sustainable growth.

The right agency is not necessarily the cheapest, nor is it the most expensive.

It is the one that understands your business, communicates openly, measures what matters, and treats your marketing budget with the same care it would treat its own.

Marketing is one of the most important investments a small business can make, but it should always be approached with strategy and accountability.

By defining clear business goals, demanding transparency, focusing on meaningful performance metrics, and partnering with an agency that prioritizes results over unnecessary services, business owners can maximize every marketing dollar.

The best agency relationships are not built on flashy presentations or oversized retainers.

They are built on trust, communication, measurable outcomes, and a shared commitment to long term success.

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Steps to Increase Your Social Media Post Interaction



For many small business owners, social media can feel like shouting into a crowded room.

Hours are spent creating graphics, writing captions, filming videos, and scheduling posts, only to receive a handful of likes and little meaningful engagement. It is frustrating, especially when you know your products or services are valuable. The natural response is often to post more frequently or try the latest social media trend in hopes of reaching a larger audience.

The truth is, social media success in 2026 is not determined by how often you post. It is determined by how effectively you connect with your audience.

Every major social media platform has one primary goal: keep users engaged

for as long as possible. The algorithms that determine what people see are designed to reward content that sparks conversations, encourages interaction, and keeps users on the platform. The more people engage with your content, the more likely it is that the platform will continue showing it to others.

This shift has changed the way businesses should think about social media.

Success is no longer measured simply by how many people see your posts. It is measured by how many people stop scrolling, pay attention, and interact.

Research from Sprout Social found that more than 70 percent of consumers feel more connected to brands whose social media content feels authentic and relatable, while nearly two thirds

say they are more likely to purchase from companies they regularly engage with online.

Engagement is no longer just a vanity metric. It has become an important driver of customer relationships and purchasing decisions. One of the biggest reasons posts receive little interaction is that they ask nothing of the audience.

Many businesses use social media as a digital billboard. They announce promotions, share products, and post company updates without inviting participation.

While this type of content has its place, it rarely encourages conversation.

People are naturally drawn to content that invites them to contribute.

A thoughtful question.



A request for an opinion.
A poll.
A simple "Which one would you choose?"

These small invitations transform passive viewers into active participants. Another important factor is the opening of your post.

Social media users make decisions in seconds. If the first sentence fails to capture attention, the rest of the content may never be seen. The strongest posts often begin with a surprising statistic, an interesting question, a relatable observation, or a statement that immediately sparks curiosity.

The goal is not to create clickbait.

The goal is to create curiosity. Visual content also plays a significant role in

engagement.

According to HubSpot's 2025 State of Marketing Report, short form video continues to deliver the highest return on investment of any social media content format, with marketers consistently ranking it as their most effective content type.

Videos naturally capture attention because movement interrupts the scrolling behavior that defines most social media platforms. That does not mean every business needs professional video production.

Some of the highest performing videos are recorded with a smartphone. A behind the scenes look at your business, a quick customer tip, or an employee introducing themselves often performs better than highly polished promotional content because it feels genuine.

Authenticity continues to outperform perfection. Consumers have become remarkably good at recognizing overly scripted content. They want to see the people behind the business. They enjoy learning how products are made, meeting employees, and seeing real customer experiences.

This is one reason behind the growing popularity of user generated content. According to Nielsen, 92 percent of consumers trust recommendations from other people more than traditional advertising.

Sharing customer testimonials, tagged photos, and real success stories not only builds credibility, but often generates significantly higher engagement than branded promotional posts.

Consistency also matters more than many business



owners realize.

Posting five times in one week and then disappearing for the next three weeks makes it difficult for both audiences and algorithms to build familiarity with your content. Social media rewards businesses that show up consistently over time. Consistency does not necessarily mean posting every day.

It means establishing a realistic schedule and maintaining it. Businesses should also remember that engagement is a two way conversation.

One of the fastest ways to increase interaction is by interacting with others. Respond to comments. Reply to direct messages. Thank customers who mention your business. Comment on posts from other local businesses and community organizations.

Social media was designed for conversations, not broadcasts.

The businesses that participate regularly often receive more participation in return.

Timing can also influence performance.

While there is no universal best time to post, publishing content when your audience is most active increases the

likelihood that engagement will happen quickly.

Early engagement often signals to the platform that the content is valuable, which can increase its overall reach.

Most social media platforms provide insights that show when followers are online. These analytics should guide posting schedules rather than guesswork.

Another strategy that many small businesses overlook is strategically boosting their highest-performing posts.

There is a common misconception that paid social media advertising requires a large budget, but that is simply not the case. In many instances, spending \$20 to \$100 to boost a post that is already performing well organically can significantly increase its reach within your local market.

Rather than boosting every post, identify the content that is already generating strong engagement. A post that is receiving comments, shares, and reactions organically has already demonstrated that people find it valuable. Adding a modest advertising budget allows the platform to introduce that content to a much larger audience with similar interests.

Meta's advertising platform also allows businesses to

target very specific audiences based on geography, age, interests, and behaviors.

This means a local restaurant can promote a special to people within a few miles of its location, while a contractor can target homeowners within their service area. Even a relatively small investment can dramatically increase visibility compared to relying solely on organic reach.

Think of boosting as adding fuel to a fire that is already burning. The goal is not to force poor content in front of more people. The goal is to amplify content that has already proven it resonates with your audience.

Another common mistake is focusing too heavily on selling.

Consumers rarely open Instagram, Facebook, or TikTok hoping to see advertisements. They are looking to be entertained, educated, or inspired. A useful rule of thumb is that promotional content should represent only a portion of your overall strategy.

Educational tips.

Behind the scenes moments.

Customer stories.

Community involvement.

Employee spotlights.

These types of posts often generate significantly more engagement because they provide value before asking for anything in return.

Businesses should also pay close attention to the data they collect.

It is easy to become fixated on likes, but other metrics often provide greater insight. Shares indicate that someone found your content valuable enough to recommend it.

Saves suggest that people want to revisit your content later.

Comments reflect conversation.

Direct messages often signal genuine interest.

These forms of engagement are often more valuable than simple reactions because they demonstrate deeper interest.

Perhaps the most important lesson is that successful social media is built on relationships rather than reach.

A post seen by five hundred local customers who regularly engage with your business is often more valuable than one seen by fifty thousand people who will never become customers.

The businesses experiencing the greatest success on social media today are not necessarily the ones chasing viral moments. They are the ones consistently building trust, encouraging conversation, and becoming recognizable voices within their communities.

Interaction is earned over time.

It grows through authenticity.

It strengthens through consistency.

And it flourishes when businesses remember that social media was never intended to be a one way communication channel.

It was always designed to connect people.

Increasing social media interaction requires more than posting frequently.

Businesses that focus on creating authentic content, encouraging conversation, using engaging visuals, responding to their audience, and delivering consistent value consistently outperform those that rely solely on promotional messaging.

In today's digital landscape, the businesses that generate the most engagement are not necessarily the loudest.

They are the ones that create meaningful connections with the people they serve.



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Freelancer or Agency?

Understanding the Difference When Choosing a Social Media Partner



For many small business owners, social media has become one of the most important marketing channels available. It is where customers discover new businesses, research products and services, read reviews, and decide whether a company is worth doing business with.

In fact, according to the 2025 LocaliQ Small Business Marketing Trends Report, more than 90 percent of small businesses use social media as part of their marketing strategy, making it one of the most widely adopted marketing tools available.

The challenge is not deciding whether your business should be active on social media. The challenge is deciding who should manage it.

As businesses grow, many owners reach the point where handling social media themselves is no longer realistic. Between creating content, designing graphics, filming videos, responding to comments, monitoring trends, and analyzing performance, social media can easily become a full time responsibility. That is when many businesses begin weighing two options: hiring a freelancer or partnering with a marketing agency.

Both can be excellent choices.
Both can also be poor choices.

The difference has less to do with the title and far more to do with what your business actually needs.

Freelancers have become an increasingly popular option, particularly for startups and small businesses with limited budgets. They often offer lower monthly costs because they operate independently and have fewer overhead expenses. Many freelancers are exceptionally talented designers, photographers, copywriters, or content creators who can produce high quality work at competitive rates.

For businesses that simply need someone to publish posts consistently or create attractive graphics, a skilled freelancer may be an ideal solution.

The flexibility freelancers offer is another significant



advantage. Many work on short term contracts or project based agreements, allowing businesses to scale services up or down as budgets change. Communication is often direct because clients work with the individual performing the work rather than navigating multiple layers of account management.

That simplicity appeals to many small business owners.

However, social media marketing has become considerably more complex over the past several years. Creating attractive posts is only one piece of a much larger strategy.

Today's successful social media programs often require photography, graphic design, copywriting, video editing, advertising expertise, analytics, search optimization, community management, and a deep understanding of constantly changing platform algorithms. Expecting one individual to master every one of those disciplines can be unrealistic.

That is where agencies often provide an advantage.

Rather than relying on one person's skill set, agencies typically bring together specialists with different areas of expertise. One team member may focus on graphic design. Another writes copy. Another manages paid advertising. Another analyzes campaign performance. The result is a collaborative approach where multiple professionals contribute to the final product.

For businesses seeking comprehensive marketing support, this breadth of experience can be invaluable.

Reliability is another important consideration.

Freelancers, by definition, are individuals. If they become ill, take vacation, experience family emergencies, or decide to change careers, your marketing may temporarily come to a halt. Agencies generally provide greater continuity because

responsibilities are shared among multiple team members. If one employee is unavailable, another can typically step in without significantly disrupting service. For businesses that depend heavily on consistent marketing, this redundancy provides valuable peace of mind. Strategy is another area where agencies often distinguish themselves.

Many freelancers are exceptional content creators. Agencies, however, are more likely to approach social media as one component of a larger marketing strategy. Instead of asking, "What should we post this week?" they begin by asking broader business questions. Who is your ideal customer? What business goals are you trying to achieve?

How does social media support your search engine optimization, email marketing, website traffic, and lead generation?

Those conversations often lead to more integrated and

measurable marketing efforts.

Research from HubSpot has consistently shown that companies using integrated marketing strategies across multiple channels generate significantly better results than businesses relying on isolated tactics. Social media performs best when it works alongside search engine optimization, email marketing, paid advertising, and content marketing rather than operating independently. Scalability also deserves consideration.

As businesses grow, their marketing needs typically become more sophisticated. Video production, paid social advertising, influencer partnerships, advanced reporting, and reputation management may all become priorities. Agencies often have these resources available internally, making it easier to expand services without changing providers.

Freelancers may certainly offer additional services, but many rely on outside contractors when specialized expertise is required. Budget, of course, remains an important factor.

Freelancers generally charge less because their business model is different. Agencies typically charge more because clients are gaining access to an entire team, additional resources, specialized software, strategic planning, and broader expertise.

The decision should not simply be based on price.

It should be based on value. A lower monthly fee that produces little business growth is ultimately more expensive than a larger investment that consistently generates leads and revenue. Communication is another area where business owners should evaluate carefully.

Whether working with a freelancer or an agency, responsiveness matters. You should know who your point of contact is, how often meetings will occur, what reports you will receive, and how success will be measured.

The strongest partnerships are built on transparency, accountability, and regular communication rather than assumptions. It is also important to understand ownership.

Regardless of whom you hire, your business should retain ownership of its social media accounts, creative assets, advertising accounts, and performance data. Unfortunately, some businesses discover after changing providers that they no longer have access to accounts they spent years building. Any reputable freelancer or agency should ensure those assets remain under your ownership.

Perhaps the most overlooked factor in this decision is cultural fit. Social media has become the public voice of a business. The person or team managing it should understand your company's values, personality, customers, and long term objectives. Technical ability

matters, but so does the ability to represent your brand authentically.

A beautiful graphic means very little if it does not sound like your business.

Ultimately, there is no universal answer to the freelancer versus agency debate.

Some businesses thrive with a talented freelancer who becomes an extension of their team. Others benefit from the diverse expertise and strategic resources that an agency provides. The right decision depends on your goals, your budget, your growth plans, and the level of support your business requires.

Rather than asking which option is better, ask which option is better for your business. The answer will often become much clearer.

Choosing between a freelancer and a marketing agency is not simply a budget decision; it is a strategic one. Freelancers often provide flexibility, affordability, and personalized service, while agencies offer broader expertise, greater continuity, and integrated marketing support. By evaluating your business goals, growth plans, and the level of strategy you need, you can select the partner that will deliver the greatest long term value.

The best choice is not necessarily the least expensive or the largest provider. It is the one that understands your business and helps you achieve measurable results.



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WHY GREAT LEADERS ASK BETTER QUESTIONS

Many people assume great leadership is defined by having the right answers. We often picture successful leaders as confident decision makers who possess deep knowledge, solve difficult problems quickly, and provide direction when others are uncertain. While those qualities certainly matter, they overlook one of the most important characteristics shared by exceptional leaders. The best leaders are often the ones who ask the best questions.

Leadership has never been about knowing everything. In today's business environment, that would be impossible. Markets change

rapidly. Technology evolves continuously. Customer expectations shift almost overnight. No individual, regardless of experience, has every answer.

What separates outstanding leaders from average managers is not the size of their knowledge. It is their curiosity.

Great leaders understand that better questions lead to better thinking, better conversations, and ultimately better decisions.

This mindset represents a significant shift from traditional leadership models. Years ago, leaders were often expected to provide

immediate solutions. Authority was associated with certainty. Admitting uncertainty was sometimes viewed as a weakness.

Today's most respected leaders take a different approach.

They recognize that the smartest person in the room is rarely the one doing all the talking. Instead, it is often the one creating an environment where everyone contributes their knowledge and perspective.

This approach is supported by research. A study published in the Harvard Business Review found that asking thoughtful questions

improves collaboration, strengthens relationships, and leads to better decision making because it encourages people to think more deeply rather than simply accept assumptions. Questions create dialogue, and dialogue often produces stronger solutions than one person working alone.

For small business owners, this lesson is especially valuable. Unlike leaders in large corporations, small business owners wear multiple hats. They manage operations, oversee finances, lead employees, serve customers, and make countless decisions every day. The temptation to have all the answers can be overwhelming.

The reality is that trying to solve every problem alone often limits the growth of both the business and the team.

One of the most powerful questions a leader can ask is remarkably simple. "What do you think?" Those four words communicate trust. They tell employees their opinions matter. They encourage ownership rather than dependency. Over time, they help create a culture where people solve problems instead of simply reporting them.

Employees who are invited to think critically become more engaged because they feel

like contributors rather than task managers.

Questions also uncover information that leaders might otherwise miss.

A business owner may believe they fully understand a problem, but employees working closest to customers or daily operations often possess valuable insights. By asking thoughtful questions instead of making immediate assumptions, leaders gain access to perspectives they may never have considered. This is particularly important because assumptions can be expensive.

Many business decisions fail not because leaders lacked intelligence, but because they lacked information. Asking better questions helps uncover blind spots before they become costly mistakes. Curiosity also strengthens innovation.

Some of the world's most successful companies intentionally encourage questioning because innovation rarely begins with certainty. It usually begins with someone asking why something is done a certain way or whether there might be a better approach.

Questions such as, "How could we simplify this process?" or "What problem are our customers still experiencing?" often lead to meaningful improvements.

Innovation is rarely the result of having all the answers. It is usually the result of asking better questions.

Great leaders also use questions to coach rather than control.

When an employee encounters a challenge, it can be tempting to immediately provide the solution. Doing so may solve today's problem, but it often prevents long term growth.

Instead, effective leaders ask questions that guide employees toward discovering solutions themselves.

"What options have you considered?"

"What do you think caused the problem?"

"What would you do differently next time?"

This approach develops confidence, decision making skills, and independence. Leadership becomes less about providing answers and more about developing future leaders.

Questions also improve communication with customers.

Many businesses are eager to explain their products and services before fully understanding what customers actually need. The best sales professionals spend

more time asking questions than delivering presentations.

They ask about challenges.

They ask about goals.

They ask about frustrations.

Only then do they recommend solutions.

Customers appreciate businesses that listen before they speak.

Research from Salesforce consistently shows that customers expect companies to understand their needs and personalize their experiences. That understanding begins with asking thoughtful questions rather than making assumptions.

There is another benefit that is often overlooked. Questions create psychological safety. When leaders ask for ideas, feedback, and differing opinions, they communicate that it is acceptable to think differently. Employees become more willing to share concerns, suggest improvements, and identify potential problems before they become larger issues. Organizations where people feel comfortable speaking up are often more adaptable, more innovative, and more resilient during periods of change.

Of course, not all questions are equally effective.

Questions that begin with “why” can sometimes feel accusatory when asked carelessly.

“Why did this happen?”

“Why wasn’t this finished?”

A small adjustment in wording often changes the entire conversation.

“What obstacles got in the way?”

“How can we improve this process?”

“What support would have helped?”

These questions focus on learning rather than assigning blame.

That distinction matters. The best leaders understand that the purpose of questioning is not interrogation. It is discovery.

Every conversation becomes an opportunity to learn something new, strengthen a relationship, or uncover a better way forward.

Perhaps Albert Einstein expressed this idea best when he famously said, “The important thing is not to stop questioning. Curiosity has its own reason for existing.” That mindset applies just as much to business leadership today as it did to scientific

discovery.

The leaders who continue asking thoughtful questions continue growing.

Their teams continue growing with them.

In a business world that becomes more complex every year, having all the answers is becoming less important than knowing which questions to ask.

The businesses that thrive over the next decade will likely be led by people who embrace curiosity, encourage conversation, and remain committed to learning. Because every breakthrough begins with a question. And every great leader understands that asking the right question is often the first step toward finding the right answer.

Exceptional leadership is built on curiosity as much as confidence. By asking thoughtful questions, leaders create stronger teams, make better decisions, encourage innovation, and build cultures where people feel valued and empowered to contribute.

In today’s rapidly changing business environment, success is less about having all the answers and more about asking the questions that lead everyone toward better solutions.

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ASK QUESTIONS

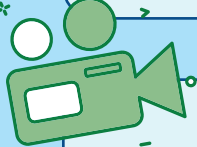
Give your audience a reason to respond.

USER-GENERATED CONTENT

Feature customer photos, testimonials, and reviews. People trust people more than advertisements.

EDUCATE MORE THAN YOU SELL

Helpful tips, how-to videos, FAQs, and industry insights typically outperform sales posts.



USE MORE VIDEO

Short-form videos consistently generate the highest engagement across most platforms.



SHOW THE HUMAN SIDE

Share your team, behind-the-scenes moments, customer stories, and your company culture.

POST CONSISTENTLY

A consistent posting schedule helps both your audience and the algorithm know when to expect your content.

RESPOND QUICKLY

Reply to comments and messages. Social media is meant to be a conversation, not a broadcast.



BE LOCAL

Highlight community events, local partnerships, and neighborhood involvement to connect with nearby customers.



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