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THE SMALL BUSINESS OWNER'S

Cheat Sheet to ~~Surviving~~ ^{THRIVING} Post-Pandemic



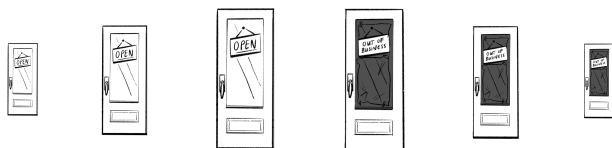
Four Innovative Ways to Keep Your Small Business in the Black

Whether you've recently started a small business or are looking to grow your established business during these turbulent times, you aren't alone in looking for secrets and answers. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, a record number of people in the United States left the workforce in November 2021—**4.5 million and rising**—with many of them starting their own businesses or reinvesting in a business they've been managing.

The COVID-19 pandemic has created an environment of personal reflection and contemplation. People in all walks of life have shifted their priorities, changed their lifestyles, and embraced their passions in ways never before seen. Additionally, world changes have inspired thousands of entrepreneurs (just like you) to start their own business, and there is no sign of slowing down. **New business applications in the United States sky-rocketed to 5.4 million in 2021**, surpassing the previous record set in 2020 of 4.4 million.

The Great Resignation and the pandemic are not only changing how businesses are started, they are also dictating how and if these new businesses are able to weather the changes in consumer behavior and grow. According to statistics from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics, **20 percent of small businesses fail in the first year, with 50 percent closing their doors before their fifth anniversary**.

But beating these odds is very doable. With the right strategy and plan for your business, you won't just survive; your small business can thrive simply by making a few shifts in how you sell, how you market, and how you engage your customers. These shifts in business strategy won't just help you thrive during the pandemic, they will set you up for long-term success long after the world has returned to the New Normal.



Critical technology needs for today's small business

81 percent of consumers are more likely to research a business on the internet before they decide to purchase. For your small business to be successful, you need an online presence and storefront. As thousands of businesses had to close up permanently during the pandemic, many avoided that outcome by focusing their efforts on not only engaging their online community, but allowing their customers to browse and order right from any device or location. To be successful, you need a plan and the right tools to fuel your growth.

Critical Need #1: A professional online storefront.

During the pandemic online orders have increased significantly, the primary reasons being safety and convenience. **Offer the same convenience to your customers by incorporating online shopping into your business plan.** It's the opportune time to reach your audience where they're spending most of their time, and that's online. Small businesses need, at a minimum, a professional storefront that is mobile friendly and rich in search engine optimization (SEO) capabilities to become more findable online. The perception is that setting up an online storefront is complicated, expensive, and requires a team of developers to code and maintain. In truth, it is easier than ever to build and launch an online storefront for your business—one with a rich customer experience, tied into critical backend systems, and generates online sales.

*From setting up a website for browsing, to incorporating online orders and delivery options, **today's modern platforms make the process quick and seamless.***

Critical Need #2: Social Media.

Take advantage of social media and make it an essential part of your business; showcase your brand, products and/or services by creating personalized and engaging content.

Social media is not only a cost-effective way to generate awareness of your small business, but by creating and promoting rich content, you build a brand that is both interesting and memorable—to business traits needed for long-lasting success. The best part is that setting up and managing your social media accounts is a quick and easy process. Depending on your audience and customers, Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and others are effective promotional platforms, allowing you to share written and visual content about your business in creative, compelling ways.

*Use your social accounts to genuinely engage with your customers and **build excitement about your brand.***

And if you're worried about the cost of setup and ongoing management, setup is free and there are extremely low cost solutions to manage your social media presence—from personal consultants to college interns to companies with a range of service options.

Critical Need #3: Email Marketing.

Although texting and other forms of communication are commonplace, nothing is more pervasive in business and personal use than email. Email marketing allows your business to deepen your customer relationships by building a stronger connection, promoting exclusive offers and specials, and dramatically increasing customer loyalty and repeat business. Building your email list is straightforward and requires almost no technical know-how. Adding a branded opt-in pop-up form to your website provides your visitors a quick and convenient way to share contact information and subscribe to your email list to receive promotional offers, newsletters, free ebooks and other useful material, making it a powerful tool for audience growth.

PROTIP **It's important to set expectations with your customer base about the frequency and content of your email communications.** Your customers are more likely to open your emails if they know what's coming and when. If you have regular promotions, ever-changing prices to your products, or even a great selection of content to share, then sending out a weekly email is a great approach.



Love and engage your customers— regardless of if or when they buy

Successful businesses large and small all have one thing in common: a relentless and consistent focus on their customers' wants and needs. Businesses that have shown significant growth during the pandemic are those that have taken actions to improve their relationships with their customers.

The **three** most important benefits to fostering customer relationships are:



You'll create advocates.

When a customer feels valued and receives quality products and services, they are much more likely to remain loyal and show support to your brand.



Organic recommendations.

When a customer is happy with the products and/or services from your business, they're more likely to share their experience with others through normal conversation. By building quality relationships, your small business gains an advantage to win new customers through personal recommendations and increase loyalty with current customers.



Build repeat business.

The happier the customer, the more likely they are to spend on your business's products and services. A study by The Harvard Business Review found that customers who had the best past experiences would spend 140 percent more. In short: happy customers equals revenue.



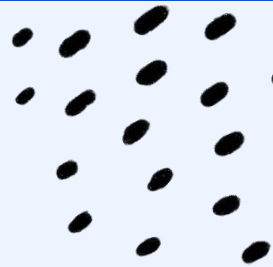
Avoid third-party ordering and delivery apps

Third-party apps allow businesses to start accepting orders for delivery quickly, but these services suffer from two fundamental flaws. Firstly, when customers use third-party apps to place an order, **their brand loyalty goes to the app, not to your business**. This means they might keep ordering from you (which is great), but they aren't ordering through your brand. And most importantly, **to accept delivery orders with a third-party app means you pay them a combination of fees and a percentage of your sales**. Customers who have the ability to order directly through your website means that you, the business owner, are in control and able to retain a much larger percentage of your sales. And contrary to popular belief, creating a mobile-friendly app or website that can accept and process online delivery orders isn't as complicated as one might think... and it's also not cost-prohibitive. [\(Skip to the end to see how easy it is to get up and running\)](#)

Adapt to the Evolving Normal

Changes resulting from the pandemic have caused everyone in some way or another to adapt to the challenges brought by COVID-19. The pandemic has transformed relationships between businesses and customers forever. Contactless delivery and other strict social distancing regulations put in place at the height of the pandemic are now commonplace. [If you are launching a small business, incorporating an online strategy into your business plan is critical to your success, both short and long-term](#). Stay creative and educated about the ways to adjust your marketing strategy in order to thrive rather than simply survive during these unpredictable and turbulent times.

Going into business for yourself is an exciting opportunity which should be embraced. While launching a business has its unique challenges, it's far from impossible. The key to being successful is by incorporating all the tips outlined above into your business plan, as well as adapting to change both during and after the pandemic. Having so many resources and tools readily available at your fingertips puts you in the best possible position to thrive in your business during a pandemic as well as setting you up for long-term success. Remember to determine the "why" of your business, hire the right people, know your limitations, and show that you care. After that, you're on the right path to becoming a successful entrepreneur.



We're thrilled you signed up to receive our ebook and are motivated to grow your business. But we'll let you in on a secret:

We empower small business owners and provide them with the tools to create positive online brand experiences, drive sales, increase customer loyalty, fuel online orders... even delivery. It doesn't take thousands of dollars to put up a fantastic online storefront. Heck, you can ask any of the thousands of small businesses who count on us every day how cost-effective it is to work with us. Or, why not ask us directly? After all, you just read this entire paragraph of 8-point type. Now we both know you're motivated to thrive in this environment.

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