marketing, socially
(a quick introduction)
• Post content to your Facebook page regularly. Consistent activity helps drive traffic, but most importantly, when others stumble upon your page your business will offer a better first impression.
• Really, really considering using Facebook Live in your Facebook marketing. Videos are given higher priority on Facebook, which means video content is more likely to be seen by your followers.
• If you're serious about getting more likes, more comments, and more shares (engagement) then you will have to spend $$ to "boost" your posts or set up marketing campaigns. Always define your goal before paying for a campaign, so you know what types of results to prepare for.
• Direct Messaging prospective clients/customers through your Facebook page can be very effective. Make sure to tailor your message to the person or business, keep it short, and always be genuine.
• Quality and quantity must go hand in hand. Posts with appealing images or video generally perform better.
• Facebook is powerful because it offers direct access to engage with your audience. Always respond to comments left on your page. And incorporating questions into your posts can also encourage your followers to engage more.
Paying for likes from third-party vendors is generally not recommended. Why? For one, this is strictly prohibited by Facebook. Facebook looks out for fake followers/likes and will remove them from your Page. Secondly, fake Likes don't have any value aside from giving your page more followers. Paid Likes are highly unlikely to engage (like, comment, share) with your Page - which defeats the purpose of having Likes in the first place. If you have many followers but no engagement on your posts, it sends a red flag to your audience and to Facebook.

To utilize the full power of Facebook don't forget to tweak the settings under your page's 'Settings' tab. There you will find different ways to optimize your Page so that it performs better. Things you should consider: getting your Page verified, identifying your target audience, setting up an automated reply message, adding a link to your Page's button, getting a custom username, etc.

Never leave your Page unattended and dormant. It is better to not have a Facebook Page at all than one that has no activity.
Always, always use good quality images/graphics for your posts. There are several free tools available online that can help you add creative flair and professionalism to your content. Try canva.com, pexels.com, pixabay.com for starters.

Use targeted hashtags (at least while your account is growing) for every post. Instagram allows you to use up to 30 hashtags per post, so make it count!

Instagram Stories, like Facebook Live, is a great tool to give your content priority among your followers. Instagram Stories appear at the top of the page, giving users who post there more visibility and valuable "real estate" on Instagram's limited screen space.

Make sure your account is switched to 'Business Profile' so that you may gain valuable insights and metrics from the posts that you make.

Post regularly. Many experts recommend posting at least twice a day.

If your business serves the customer directly (versus business-to-business companies) consider sending direct messages or "@" targeted accounts. As with Facebook messaging, always be genuine and to the point.
• If you're going to pay for followers, make sure you fully understand what your objective is. Paid followers are usually not valuable because they are either from fake accounts or from people that have no idea who you are. Because of these two reasons alone, paid likes typically don't result in more engagement, more business, or more leads.

• Don't use automated inbox messaging. While it is widely popular, automated messages sent to the inbox of your most recent followers are generally not effective. It is the equivalent of unsolicited spam showing up in your email inbox.

• Instagram can be an awesome way to showcase your business and build your brand. But often, solopreneurs make the mistake of intertwining personal life with their business. Before posting another selfie or reposting a funny meme you found, ask yourself if it fits within the context of your business brand.

• Don't pay for automated bots to comment on other people's posts in an attempt to gain more followers. If you leave a message, make sure it comes from you and not an automization tool. Several businesses have suffered because they mistakenly left "inappropriate" comments on someone's post without knowing it.
checklist.

- Does your website incorporate keywords specific to your business' industry and target audience?
- If your business has a physical address, are you listed on Google My Business, Yelp, Google Maps, Bing Pages, Facebook Pages, and other platforms?
- Is your website formatted for mobile devices? Studies show that more than half of all internet browsing takes place from smartphones. If your website is not "mobile-friendly" then you will be penalized by low search rankings and low conversions.
- Have you tested your website's page speed? Slow loading web pages often come from images that are too large, use too many different types of fonts, and other things that have to do with formatting. Slow websites also leads to high bounce rates, i.e., how many people visit your website and leave before doing anything.
- How well integrated are you? Fortunately, most online tools and platforms are designed to work with other applications. For instance, Instagram can work with Facebook, MailChimp can work with EventBrite, YouTube can work with Twitter, and so on.

ARE YOU OPTIMIZED?
checklist.

- Use Buffer or HootSuite to schedule social media posts in advance
- Hire a copywriter to update your website with appropriate keywords, formatting, and flow to better attract customers
- Use a custom business email instead of your personal account. G Suite offers customized email addresses for $5/mo. per account
- Step up your networking skills by joining various trade/membership associations as well as attending events. Despite advances in technology that make communication convenient across the digital landscape, studies show that face-to-face interactions are, hands down, the most effective way of growing your business
- Never stop learning. Take free online courses, join groups on MeetUp.com, or learn at your own pace from YouTube videos and podcasts. Never stop learning about your industry
- Always go the extra-mile for your customers/clients. The easiest way to get new business is through referrals from existing customers. Make yourself irreplaceable by going above and beyond and you can worry less about finding new business
- Build your brand, then build your business. Consumers are more likely to relate to strong brands rather than a business that has no human qualities associated with it
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