GET AHEAD OF YOUR COMPETITION ONLINE

The five most important things you can do to get found online and attract customers into your business!
IT’S TOUGH TO KNOW WHERE TO START!

You’re a business owner, not a marketer. But in today’s ever-evolving world of search engines, social networks and mobile technologies, you have to be both, and so much more.

At Perch, we’ve worked with more than 100,000 local merchants, tracking and assessing their online marketing activities. We see the most effective things that drive new customers to their door. We also see the most common, foundational things that most businesses neglect or aren’t successful at. Simply put: We see what works and we see what doesn’t. And we want to share that knowledge with you!

This guide highlights the key things most businesses simply fail to get right, so use it to give yourself an advantage!

In the following pages, you’ll find simple instructions, helpful tips, and suggestions of tools and products that tackle the problems we discuss. We always offer you a path of DIY improvement, with an indication of timing and costs. Use the handy legend to quickly identify useful resources.

Keep this workbook close by and chip away at the tasks when your busy schedule allows. Once you’ve checked off each item, it’s time to celebrate! Because you’re now well on your way to getting ahead and getting more customers!
HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

Legend

- Your tasks.
- Quick facts and helpful hints.
- Tools and services. Hand-picked to be effective and cost-efficient.
- Learning links. Helpful resources and useful articles.

Note: You’ll see links to learn more about products that we suggest. We know it’s hard to separate the too-good-to-be-true from a quality product and company. With this guide, you don’t have to! You can be certain that we’ve vetted these products on your behalf, setting the bar high and only featuring the best, budget-friendly products, which:

- Solve a problem we highlight
- Are well-reviewed by their customers
- Specialize in helping small businesses
- Are from experienced, stable companies

So, click confidently! All links take you to pages where you can learn more and determine what’s right for you. There’s no wrong path here, and you’re in control!
Get Smart With Customer Reviews
   Task 1: Get More Reviews
   Task 2: Monitor & Respond to Reviews

Get Found By On-The-Go Customers
   Task 1: Make Sure Your Website is Mobile Ready

Own The Listings Landscape
   Task 1: Dress Up Your Most Important Profile Pages
   Task 2: Get Found In More Places

Enhance Your Online Presence
   Task 1: Revisit & Evaluate Your Website

Improve Quality Of Social Media Activity
   Task 1: Build & Grow Your Social Audience
   Task 2: Engage Your Customers
   Task 3: Amplify Your Engagement
GET SMART WITH CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Get more customer reviews to build trust and improve your local ranking.

Word-of-mouth marketing is one of your most effective forms of marketing. As consumers, we trust the recommendations of our friends and family more than any marketing message from a business. In fact, today’s consumers trust online reviews almost as much as personal recommendations.¹

Instead of sitting idly by and hoping that consumers leave great reviews, the smartest local businesses are adopting a new generation of tools for listening to their customers and optimizing their quantity and quality of reviews. Get there first in your market and outpace your competitors!

Reviews are also considered one of the most important ways to boost your Search Engine Optimization (SEO) ranking. More reviews help you move to the top of the highly coveted local search results.⁵

QUICK FACTS

- 90% of consumers say their buying decisions are influenced by reviews.²
- 88% trust online reviews as much as personal recommendations.³
- A one star increase in ratings translates to a 5-9% increase in revenue.⁴

YOUR TASKS

☐ Get More Reviews
☐ Monitor & Respond to Reviews
**Task 1: Get More Reviews**

**Impact:** High  
**Time:** 0-30 Min/Day  
**Cost:** $0 or $30/Mo

What You’ll Do

Solicit more reviews for your business to instill trust and help you move to the top of local search results.

How To Do It

You have three options: simply ask for reviews, use a low cost DIY tool or use a service to generate reviews.

- **Ask For Reviews Manually**
  
  Ask and you shall receive (at least part of the time). When customers are at your business location, find a way to encourage them to leave a review for you. You can do this personally, with in-store signage, on receipts, or via an email newsletter.

- **Use A DIY Tool**
  
  If you’ve ever used OpenTable to make a reservation, you’re familiar with their follow-up methods for soliciting feedback. GetFiveStars created a tool specifically for small businesses that does the same thing. Once set up, their service automatically sends an email to customers asking for feedback on their experience and requesting reviews from your happiest customers. Over time, this approach predictably improves both quantity and quality, while giving you valuable customer feedback.

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WE RECOMMEND USING

GetFiveStars
Use a Service

We know you’re busy, and you may feel that this is a bit over your head, but it’s one of the single smartest things you can invest in right now. If you would like to have a third party do the work for you, we’ve evaluated and selected the following experts based on their quality of service, knowledge and financial stability:

- **For Businesses That Do Not Have a Physical Location**
  
  Customer Lobby specializes in getting reviews for home service providers. When customers complete a transaction, they are automatically asked for a review. They will even interview customers and transcribe the review. The service is $199/month.

  WE RECOMMEND USING
  
  Customer Lobby

- **For Businesses With A Physical Location**
  
  Main Street Hub responds to customer reviews, collects new testimonials, and cross-promotes your business to spread word of mouth and protect your online reputation. The service is bundled with their social media services and starts at $299/month. We know it’s a lot, but they do a lot and our data shows that it’s working.

  WE RECOMMEND USING
  
  Main Street Hub
GET SMART WITH CUSTOMER REVIEWS

Task 2: Monitor & Respond to Reviews
Impact: High    Time: 0-15 Min/Day    Cost: $0 or $299/Mo

What You’ll Do
Monitor reviews to learn what’s working and what’s not for your business. Then respond to strengthen your connection with customers and attempt to turn negative comments into positive messages for other consumers.

QUICK FACTS
33% of negative reviews turn positive when you respond to them.6

How To Do It

Track Reviews for Your Business Across Various Sites

- **Yelp and Google**: Use Perch to receive an email notification every time you have a new review on Yelp and Google.
- **Facebook**: Open your Facebook for Business Page, open the Settings, select Notifications, and turn on notifications for reviews.
- **Other sites**: If there are other important review sites for your business, research to understand if and how to set up notifications. If not, visit your listings on the sites regularly.

WE RECOMMEND USING
Perch

Try It
Respond to Positive Reviews

Make sure you’ve claimed your Yelp or Google listing and get ready to respond. We recommend responding with a simple “Thank you.” In Yelp, you can choose to respond privately to make your response look less repetitive and more personal. You can also do something simple—share positive reviews to your own social networks. Yelp provides a simple utility to do this. Or, to save time and effort, you can use Main Street Hub to monitor and respond for you. It’s one of the most affordable and comprehensive services available for protecting your online reputation.
Respond to Negative Reviews

Always respond publicly to negative reviews. If you don’t respond, it appears that the complaint is valid and that you don’t have plans to make improvements. Don’t be defensive, keep it brief, communicate your regret that the customer experienced a problem and then describe how customers won’t have the same problem in the future. You may never win back the disgruntled customer, but how you respond will tell every other consumer a lot about how you run your business.

A major benefit of the GetFiveStars approach is that it’s designed to get ahead of customer problems before they land on your Yelp page. By asking each customer how you’ve done, the service gives you the opportunity to appease unhappy customers directly — offline and out of view of other customers!

WE RECOMMEND USING
GetFiveStars

LEARN MORE
How To Handle A Bad Review
GET FOUND BY ON-THE-GO CUSTOMERS

More than 50% of consumers are searching for local businesses from their phone. Make sure they can find and read your site.

QUICK FACTS

- 60% of U.S. adults now typically choose smartphones or tablets over PCs to find information before buying products and services offline.\(^7\)
- 52% of smartphone users look for local information in the car or on-the-go.\(^8\)
- 90% of all consumers have used their devices while shopping in-store.\(^9\)

However, research shows that 60% of small business websites are not mobile-friendly.\(^10\) And did you know that Google recently began specifically identifying websites as mobile-friendly (or more often than not, not!)? So, chances are you can get a great head start on most of your competition and avoid getting penalized by Google by making your site mobile friendly.

YOUR TASKS

- Make Sure Your Website Is Mobile Ready
GET FOUND BY ON-THE-GO CUSTOMERS

**Task 1: Make Sure Your Website is Mobile Ready**

**Impact:** High  **Time:** 5 Min  **Cost:** $0-$10/Mo

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**What You’ll Do**

Determine whether your website can be accessed and easily viewed on mobile devices, and make any necessary changes to make it mobile friendly.

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**How To Do It**

- **Check if Your Website is Mobile-Friendly**
  
  Use [Google’s free tool](#) to see if your website can be read without pinching and zooming in, whether links are easily clickable by thumbs, and whether all content can be seen without having to scroll. If your website passes, congrats! Nothing more needs to be done. If there are issues, continue to the next step.

- **Make Any Necessary Changes to Become Mobile-Friendly**
  
  You have a few options: You can make them yourself or work with your web developer. Or as a time-saver, use DudaMobile to add a mobile site to your existing website, which will be automatically shown when users visit via a mobile device. If you don’t have the time or resources to create a brand new mobile site, this is a low cost and simple fix that will serve as an interim step until you’re ready for a larger website redesign project. Doing nothing will leave half of your website visitors frustrated, so a $7 a month service is a smart business move.

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*WE RECOMMEND USING DudaMobile*  

[Learn More](#)
Start Fresh With A New Site That is Mobile-Friendly from Day 1

If you haven’t updated your site in more than two or three years, it’s time to consider a refresh. At less than $10 a month, the most popular website builders—GoDaddy, Weebly, Wix, and Squarespace—provide everything you need to create a desktop and mobile version of your website that not only works great, but looks great too!
OWN THE LISTINGS LANDSCAPE

Let’s face it, if you can’t be found online, it’s like your business doesn’t even exist. And if your business doesn’t exist, your customers will go to the competition.

Consumers are discovering and shopping at businesses in hundreds of ways. You need to have a presence where consumers are searching and shopping. Yet, listing your business on every site and app is time-consuming and can lead to inconsistencies. So, most businesses stop after the most obvious sources.

You don’t have to be another one of those businesses! By taking the right steps to ensure your business gets included in all important directories, and that your information is accurate and consistent, you can capture new customers that your competitors aren’t.

QUICK FACTS

- Only 37% of businesses have claimed a local business listing on one or more search engines.\(^\text{11}\)
- 59% of consumers use Google every month to locate a local business.\(^\text{12}\)
- 50% of local searches do not occur on search engines, but on directories and apps.\(^\text{13}\)
- Address and location are the primary pieces of information sought by local searchers.\(^\text{14}\)

YOUR TASKS

- Dress Up Your Most Important Profile Pages
- Get Found In More Places
Task 1: Dress Up Your Most Important Profile Pages
Impact: High    Time: 1 Hr    Cost: Free

What You’ll Do

Google, Facebook and Yelp all have free profile pages that you need to pay attention to for maximum impact. If you already have profiles on these most important consumer sites, claim and review your information using our helpful tips to make sure the information is up-to-date, consistent, and complete.

Quick Facts

- Consumers spend on average 1.72 hours per day on social networks.¹⁵
- Virtually all Yelp users (98%) have made a purchase at a business they found on Yelp, with nearly 90% doing so within a week.¹⁶

How To Do It

☐ Check Your Listings for Accuracy and Completeness

Review the information on Google, Facebook and Yelp for consistency and completeness. Be sure that your business name, address, phone number and website address are used in exactly the same way on each site. Try your best to complete 100% of your profile, including categories and hours of operation. Remember: The more information you provide, the more often you can match consumers’ search queries.
OWN THE LISTINGS LANDSCAPE

If you haven’t done so already, select or take 3 to 5 new photos that best represent your business. These photos should help customers easily recognize you or show off a unique aspect of your business. Also have your business logo handy. If you need a business logo, or want to refresh your existing one, try 99Designs. It’s a service that creates a new logo for you in an easy and fun way.

**WE RECOMMEND USING**

99Designs

**LEARN MORE**

Optimize Your Google Listing

Optimize Your Yelp Listing

Optimize Your Facebook Listing

Avoid Common Mistakes For Your Business Listings
OWN THE LISTINGS LANDSCAPE

Task 2: Get Found In More Places

Impact: High    Time: 15 Min    Cost: $0-$84/Year

What You’ll Do

Review your business information to see whether it’s used consistently across the web. Determine if your business is missing from the most important local directories and local business aggregators—Axciom, Localeze, Factual, Neustar Localeze and Foursquare. These aggregators make your information available to local business directories, mobile maps, apps, and GPS devices in cars.

Still skeptical? Here’s a fun fact – Foursquare alone has 85,000 developers that create products using their data! Ensuring you’re accurately listed on these sources covers your bases in ways that most of your competitors miss!

How To Do It

☐ Check Your Listings for Accuracy

Use Moz Local, the undisputed leading authority when it comes to local listings. Moz Local offers a free tool that shows where your business is listed and if there are any issues. Simply enter your business name and zip code to see the results for your business.

WE RECOMMEND USING Moz Local
Make Corrections and Update Information

Make corrections where necessary. If you are using the free Moz Local tool, suggested changes are highlighted for you. Make the corrections yourself directly from Moz Local for free or let them take care of it for you for just $84/year. We highly recommend this second option and even use it ourselves! It saves a lot of time and headaches.

Submit Your Business Listing With Moz Local

Moz Local submits your data to the aggregators for you, so that your basic business information is consistent across the web. As we mentioned, it’s a steal at only $84/year and takes just 15 minutes.

If you need help writing a business description that stands out from the crowd, use the handy resource below for help.
 OWN THE LISTINGS LANDSCAPE

Submit to Specialty Directories

List your business with the top directories in your industry and/or location for additional exposure to a motivated audience. These top directories aren’t covered with the aggregators, and include TripAdvisor, HomeAdvisor, Angie’s List, Manta, Zomato/Urbanspoon, OpenTable.

Run a search in Google as if you were a consumer (e.g., “Denver plumber” or “Restaurant in Soho”) and note the directories on the first page. Add or claim your business where it makes sense. Some directories require a fee, and pricing varies by site and industry. Check out Moz’s list of directories by industry and directories by city to see if you’ve missed any.
ENHANCE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Make a great first impression and continue to build a lasting relationship with your customers.

Today’s digital consumer comes with a new set of expectations when they shop online and on their smartphone. They expect to be able to browse and learn about your business visually, and they also expect to be able to reach out to you in new and convenient ways.

If your competitors’ sites are easier to find and use, or simply more exciting, you risk being passed over and ignored. Put your best foot forward—wherever customers find you online. Here are some tips and approaches that we know will make you stand out from the crowd!

YOUR TASKS

☐ Revisit & Evaluate Your Website
ENHANCE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Task 1: Revisit & Evaluate Your Website
Impact: High    Time: Varies    Cost: Varies

What You’ll Do
Review your website to make sure it’s compelling and gives customers the information they are looking for. Step into their shoes and imagine how they would perceive your business if all they knew was what they saw on your site. Ensure your site is in tip-top shape, showcasing your unique offering and environment, and allowing your customers to easily find and connect with you.

How To Do It

☐ Create an Inviting Environment
Just like you do with your physical location, you want to welcome customers into your website. Include professional-looking images and photography. If you’re using Instagram (and you should be, it’s the number one way that we see customers engaging with businesses!), you can easily and affordably add a gallery of Instagram photos on your site with SnapWidget.

☐ Show Off Your Social Side
Link to your social media profiles—Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, LinkedIn, etc.—and invite customers to connect. You should also include these links in your email signature.

WE RECOMMEND USING
SnapWidget

Learn More
ENHANCE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

☐ Make Your Physical Store Easy to Find
Clearly post your business address and directions. Include a map so customers can visualize the area. Add notes about parking options around your business.

☐ Clearly Post Hours of Operation
More than 40% of visitors on local business sites are looking for hours of operation. This number jumps to 54% for mobile visitors. Make it easy for them to find those hours, and be sure to update for holidays or special occasions.

☐ Make Sure All Website Info Is Current
When was the last time you read over the information on your website? If it’s been more than a few months, it’s time to give it some attention. Remove expired promotions, events or other outdated information, and refresh with new announcements or messaging.

☐ Make It Easy to Book Appointments
Busy customers prefer to schedule their appointments online, rather than calling or emailing. By including a scheduling app directly on your site, you allow customers to book when and where it’s most convenient for them. This also frees you up from answering the phone, and allows you to take bookings 24-7. Booker is fast, affordable and seamlessly integrates with your existing site.

WE RECOMMEND USING Booker

Learn More
ENHANCE YOUR ONLINE PRESENCE

Showcase Your Menus, Product or Service Offering

Menus are the number one thing that customers are looking for on restaurant websites. And 45% of local customers are checking to see product availability. Make sure menus, product lists or service offerings are easy to find and access.

Put Your Reviews on Display

It’s time to show off all those positive reviews you worked to get! Add a few choice reviews from real customers, and invite other customers to leave a rating or review by linking to the review sites.

Build Your Email List

Capture email addresses on your website and send special offers, event notifications and exclusive announcements to your list. Include links to your social profiles in these emails as well, and encourage customers to connect. Privy is a simple yet powerful tool that allows you to rapidly grow your email list for little if any cost. You can start with a free plan then grow to fit your unique needs and budget.

WE RECOMMEND USING

Privy

Learn More
IMPROVE QUALITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

Improve your social media activity to increase exposure and sales.

Social is the new word of mouth advertising. It’s the perfect fit for small businesses, because your customers spread your message for you—at low to no cost. Every time your customers like, comment or share, your business is seen by their friends.

Quick Facts

Increased exposure is the #1 benefit that small businesses receive from social media activity.

Many small businesses don’t realize that the activity on your social networks, such as check-ins, audience size and reviews, also contributes to your ranking in local search. More activity helps you move to the top of local search results and helps you get found.

Your Tasks

- Build & Grow Your Social Audience
- Engage Your Customers
- Amplify Your Engagement
Task 1: Build & Grow Your Social Audience
Impact: High    Time: 30 Min    Cost: Starts at $5

What You’ll Do
Build your social audience by inviting friends and customers.

How To Do It

Promote Your Social Media Pages
Promote your social media pages on your website so your customers can find those pages easily. Also add links in your email signature and marketing emails. Finally, invite your customers to your social pages with cards, flyers, pin boards and stickers. You can choose from a variety of custom stickers and signage at Follow Me Sticker for less than $10.
IMPROVE QUALITY OF SOCIAL MEDIA ACTIVITY

 Invite Friends and Family

If you can’t rely on friends and family to like your business, who can you rely on?! In Facebook, it’s quick and easy to invite your personal connections to your Facebook page. Follow the instructions in the link below if you need assistance.

LEARN MORE
How To Invite Friends And Customers To Your Facebook Page

 Invite Customers

Facebook also makes it easy to suggest your business page to customers. Instructions can be found in the article mentioned above.

LEARN MORE
How To Invite Friends And Customers To Your Facebook Page

 Promote Your Page on Facebook

Facebook also allows you to promote your page to the right audience by location, demographics and interest with a few simple clicks and a small budget (starts at only $5).

LEARN MORE
How to Promote Your Facebook Business Page
Track Your Audience Size

Track your audience size across Facebook, Twitter and Instagram in Perch. In the app, it’s shown on the profile screen for your business. You also receive a Performance Report for your business via email once a week.

Task 2: Engage Your Customers

Impact: High    Time: 0-30 Min/Day    Cost: $0 or $299/Mo

What You’ll Do

Write engaging posts to encourage sharing. When posts are shared, you can reach consumers who are not following you directly. Plus, 81% of consumers admitted that their friends’ social media posts influence them during their purchases.20
How To Do It

☐ Post Promotions and Events
Chances are your customers are following you to know what’s happening at your business and to take advantage of any special promotions (happy hours, sales, etc.). However, we recommend that you keep promotional posts to one-third of your total posts as not to annoy or ostracize your customers.

LEARN MORE
The Social Media Rule of Thirds

☐ Post Something Funny
When you post funny comments or images, you’re not only increasing the potential for sharing, you’re also creating positive feelings, which are more memorable, and help to form a sense of unity. A few benefits that can surely help you stand out among competitors! So don’t be afraid to get a little witty or even silly with your posts.

☐ Post Questions
Posting questions is a surefire way to get engagement. Keep the questions simple and open-ended (e.g., “Which do you prefer – Microbrew or Homebrew?” or “If I could be anywhere in the world, it would be ____.”). Relate them to your customers’ values and interests, and stay up on the responses.

LEARN MORE
Engagement Tip: Ask A Question
**Post Pictures**

We typically see the highest engagement with Instagram posts. In Twitter and Facebook, posts with pictures also get the highest engagement. You likely already have a quality camera on you at all times—it’s called your phone. Don’t be shy to use it for candid shots of your business or to celebrate happy customers (with their permission, of course).

**Watch & Learn**

The best way to get ideas is by watching others. Select a few businesses in Perch and follow what they are doing. Perch highlights the most engaging posts for each business, so you can quickly get an idea of what resonates with consumers. You also receive a weekly digest of the most popular posts for your business via email.

**Learn More**

Reach Out With Pictures

**Recommended Using**

Try It
Task 3: Amplify Your Engagement

Impact: High    Time: 15 Min/Day    Cost: Starts at $5

What You’ll Do

Increase your engagement in Facebook with boosts and ads. These are different than promoting your page, which we discussed above. Boosts and ads show your Facebook posts to a wider audience and can be used to drive customers to your website.

Quick Facts

Only about 16% of fans see your posts unless you boost them.22

How To Do It

- Boost Facebook Posts
  
  Boosting posts is the quickest way to get visibility for your posts. Once you post, you’ll see the option for boosting.
WHEW! YOU MADE IT!

We know that it seems like a lot of work, but this is nothing compared to what you already do day in and day out. Running a successful business and providing high-quality products and services to your loyal customers is the hardest job of all. These tasks will only help you become even more successful and rise above your competitors.

You now have the best tips and tools to get the job done in the most cost-efficient and impactful way. So get out there! And don’t forget to have a little fun while you’re at it!
17. http://searchenginewatch.com/sew/study/2343577/google-local-searches-lead-50-of-mobile-users-to-visit-stores-study