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# Digital Marketing Tips for Small Businesses

Go digital. Learn the fundamentals of social media, email, and text-based marketing with Dave Charest, Director of Small Business Success at Constant Contact.

By **Dave Charest, Director of Small Business Success, Constant Contact** Published on **04 July 2023**

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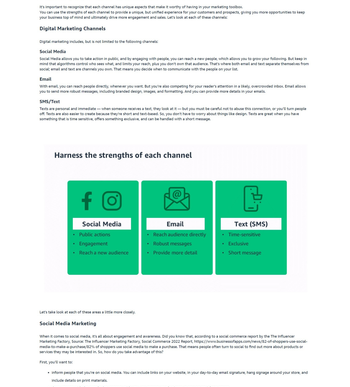
We've partnered with Dave Charest, Director of Small Business Success at Constant Contact to help you learn how to use social media, email, and text marketing to attract and retain a strong and loyal customer base. Get tips and additional resources below, as well as access to a special offer.




## Digital Marketing for Small Business Session Overview

In this Amazon Business Small Business Summit 2023 session, Dave will inform you how to take advantage of the word of mouth that now happens online by building great relationships with your customers and prospects. More specifically, he's going to cover how to use social media, email, and text marketing to attract and retain a strong and loyal customer base. Read the transcript from Dave's session below:

It's important to recognize that each channel has unique aspects that make it worthy of having in your marketing toolbox.
You can use the strengths of each channel to provide a unique, but unified experience for your customers and prospects, giving you more opportunities to keep your business top of mind and ultimately drive more engagement and sales. Let's look at each of these channels:

## Digital Marketing Channels

Digital marketing includes, but is not limited to the following channels:

### Social Media

Social Media allows you to take action in public and by engaging with people, you can reach a new people, which allows you to grow your following. But keep in mind that algorithms control who sees and reacts to your content, and they also restrict your reach. That's where both email and text separate themselves from social; email and text are channels you own. That means you decide when to communicate with the people on your list.

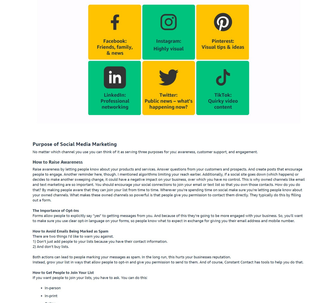
### Email

With email, you can reach people directly, whenever you want. But you're also competing for your reader's attention in a busy, overcrowded inbox. Email allows you to send more robust messages, including branded design, images, and formatting. And you can provide more details in your emails.

### SMS/Text

Texts are personal and immediate — when someone receives a text, they look at it — but you must be careful not to abuse this connection, or you'll turn people off. Texts are limited to 160 characters, so you have to be brief and to the point. Texts also limit the types of things you can do. Texts are great when you have something that is time sensitive, offers something exclusive, and can be handled with a short message.

## Harness the strengths of each channel




Let's take look at each of these areas a little more closely:

### Social Media Marketing

When it comes to social media, it's all about engagement and awareness. Did you know that, according to a social commerce report by the The Influencer Marketing Factory, Source: The Influencer Marketing Factory, Social Commerce 2022 Report, https://influencermarketingfactory.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/02/2022-Influencer-Marketing-Factory-Social-Commerce-Report.pdf, 60% of shoppers use social media to make a purchase,92% of shoppers use social media to make a purchase. That means people often turn to social to find out more about products or services they may be interested in. So, how do you take advantage of this?

First, you'll want to:

- Inform people that you're on social media. You can include links on your website, in your day-to-day email signature, have signage around your store, and include details on print materials.
- And, engage with the people that connect with you, you expose your business to new potential customers.

Now there are a ton of social media options, and as a small business owner, you probably don't have time to post great content on all these channels unless you have a dedicated social media person. Even then, the opportunity cost means choosing one or two channels where your customers are active and getting a deep understanding of how to engage and succeed on those channels. That way, you're not spreading yourself too thin and you have the resources you're trying to do too much.
It's also important to note that every social channel has its own personality. So, to get the best results from a specific channel, you'll want to modify the things you're posting to best suit the channel.

Let's take a closer look at some of the major platforms.

**Facebook**
On Facebook you're competing with friends, family, and news. So, your content needs to work in that space.

**Instagram**
Instagram, for example, is a highly visual network. You can also have people what's happening with your business with engaging photos and videos.

**Pinterest**
Pinterest allows you to create virtual boards with tips and ideas to engage people. And if you use content from your own website, it's one of the few social platforms that still drives a good amount of traffic.

**LinkedIn**
LinkedIn, whether you're using a personal and business page, is more of a professional network and works great in the business-to-business space.

**Twitter**
Twitter works like a public news feed of what's happening now. So, it's great for timely information about the world at large.

**TikTok**
TikTok loves quirky video content this is educational and entertaining.

## Match your approach to the social channel




### Purpose of Social Media Marketing

No matter which channel you use you can think of it as serving three purposes for you: awareness, customer support, and engagement.

**How to Raise Awareness:**
Raise awareness by letting people know about your products and services, answer questions from your customers and prospects. And create posts that encourage people to engage, another reminder here, though, I mentioned algorithms limiting your reach earlier. Additionally, if a social site goes down (which happens) or decides to make another sweeping change, it could have a negative impact on your business, even which you have no control. This is why owned channels like email and text are so important. They're channels you own and control, and you're not at the mercy of a social media platform. That's not to say that you shouldn't be on that) By making people aware that they can join your list from time to time. Whenever you're spending time on social make sure you're letting people know about your owned channels. What makes these owned channels so powerful is that people give you permission to contact them directly. They typically do this by filling out a form.

**The Importance of Opt-ins**
Forms allow people to opt-in, "yes" to getting messages from you. And because of this they're going to be more engaged with your business. So, you'll want to make sure you use clear opt-in language on your forms, so people know what to expect in exchange for giving you their email address and mobile number.

**How to Avoid Emails Being Marked as Spam**
There are two things I'd like to warn you against.
1) Buying email lists for your lists because you have their contact information.
2) And don't buy lists.

Both actions can lead to people marking your messages as spam. In the long run, this hurts your businesses reputation.
Instead, grow your list in ways that allow people to opt-in and give you permission to send to them. And of course, Constant Contact has tools to help you do that.

**How to Get People to Join Your List**
If you want people to join your lists, you have to ask. You can do this:

- In person
- In print
- Online

You'll find you can grow your lists faster when you provide something of value in exchange for their contact information. What does that mean? We asked consumers the main reasons why they subscribe to lists. And they told us:

- They'd sign up to receive promotions and discounts.
- For exclusive content like an e-book, a guide, or a list of tips to do something.
- They'll join to show support for your business or organization.

Focus on giving people a reason to subscribe.

### Email Marketing Basics

So, what happens once they subscribe? Let's start with email. Email is all about deepening those relationships to drive business. According to Constant Contact's Small Business Icon Report [Source: Constant Contact Small Business Icon Report 2021], Emails from small businesses are the most helpful communications to consumers and they're making a purchase decision. I like that you can start simple and get more advanced with email as you go along to get better results. So, how do you start?

**Two Types of Emails: Promotional and Non-Promotional**
You want to include two types of emails in your strategy. A combination of promotional and non-promotional emails to drive sales and build relationships. The reality is most everyone is busy by all the time, so a mix of sales-driven and informational emails works nicely here to keep your business top of mind.

**Email Content: 3 Questions to Answer**
What should you in these emails? Regardless of the type of email you're sending, you're essentially trying to answer three questions. And in doing so you'll end up hitting an email designed to drive action, whether that's engagement or sales. You can improve your emails by thinking of email copy like this:

**Headline**
What are you offering?
A headline grabs the reader's attention

**Message**
How will it help the reader?
A message body gives them more detail

**Call to Action (CTA)**
What should they do next?
And a call to action to make it clear you want them to do.

**How Often Should You Send Emails?**
The answer is... it depends. Ultimately, you need to determine YOUR best send frequency. Every business is different, so you'll want to consider your audience. It's also important to consider the expectations you're setting when people sign up. So, if you let people know you'll be sending a daily email when they signed up, they expect a daily email. If you're unsure what to do, send at least once a month to keep your business in mind.

**Promotional Email Considerations**
Here's another thing to consider for promotional emails if you're running a sale or special offer, it's good to consider giving people multiple opportunities to take up the offer. So, when it comes to promotional emails, think about using a three-email series:

- Announce your offer
- Remind them
- Send a last-chance reminder

Overall, you'll want to try different things to see what works for you.

## Want them to join your list? Just ask!




**SMS/Text Marketing**
Texts really shine when you use them for exclusive and timely messages.
Did you know that 98% of texts are read, and 90% are read within 3 minutes of being up for texts. [Source: Attentive SMS Marketing Consumer Trends Report 2021].
Adding texts, otherwise known as SMS, gives you the option of not only connecting with people in a channel that many prefer but it also gives you immediacy, in that when most people receive a text, they look at it right away.

To get the most from this channel, use texts to:

- Be exclusive—offer things here you may not offer in other places.
- Bring value—In this case, we've got a great example on the screen from a salon with hairstyle ideas.
- Be conversational—make it feel like you're talking directly to them.

Let's discuss some examples of ways your business or organization might use text messaging.

**Retail Text Messaging**
In retail, you may use text for:

- Sales or information on coupons/discounts
- You can send abandoned cart reminders.
- You can even let people know when something comes back in stock

**B2B Text Messaging**
If you're in the business-to-business world, you can use SMS too.
Some examples here include:

- Event announcements and reminders
- Details on scheduling a consultation or a review
- Announce a new service

**Non-Profit Text Messaging**
For nonprofits, texts are great for:

- Volunteer opportunities
- Fundraising
- Communications related to events

### Digital Marketing Using Social Media, Email, and Text Messaging

Now how do you bring it all together to create a positive customer experience? One thing you'll want to think about is using these channels to support one another. For example, you can use social media to grow your email list and then use email to drive ultimate engagement. Ensure that topic is more detail in an email, and then you could call attention to something pressing related to the campaign in a text. When you use this cross-channel approach, it's likely to have a greater impact on your overall results. Ultimately, the actions you take on social, email, and text are all about keeping your business top of mind and increasing your word of mouth.




So, when people find their way to your store, whether it's in person at your store or your website or any place where they may interact with you, you want to provide a great experience. Then you want to entice them to stay connected with you so you can engage with them again and bring them back to you. And when this engagement happens online, this drives social visibility because their connections see those engagements, which allows you to increase your exposure and connect with new prospects, bring them to your store, and continue the cycle. This is how you use social, email, and text to attract and retain a strong and loyal customer base.

### Explore these additional digital marketing posts from Constant Contact:

- Creating Your Email and SMS Contact Lists
  Learn what you should and shouldn't do to grow your Digital Contacts Lists for your Small Business
- Introduction to Social Media Marketing
  Find which social media channels to use to reach your audience and what types of content to post.
- Text Message Marketing for Small Business
  Want to use text/sms messages as marketing tool? Find out how to get started in this post.

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### Amazon Business Small Business Summit

Check out other small business sessions presented at the Amazon Business Small Business Summit 2023 and Amazon Business Small Business Summit 2022.

## About Dave Charest

*Dave Charest is Director of Small Business Success at Constant Contact, the online marketing leader trusted by millions of small businesses to provide email, web, social media, text and event marketing tools. In his role, Dave acts as an educator and an advocate for small business leaders, marketing professionals, and nonprofits by providing them with practical marketing advice that can help them achieve their goals. He is a dynamic leader, speaker, mentor, and award-winning marketer who strives to inspire small businesses by simplifying the complex world of online marketing.*