

Small Business Success

December 2015



Community
Futures Newsask



Social Media for Small and Micro Businesses

Published in cooperation with [Blue Beetle Books](#)

It wasn't that long ago that few small businesses had a website, then consumers started thinking businesses without websites, weren't bona fide businesses at all. Nowadays most small and even micro-businesses have a website, even if it's a basic brochure style few pages. If you haven't made the leap then I suggest you investigate a low cost website. There's masses of help online, and even free templates so it need cost you very little. A domain name can cost less than \$20 and basic hosting is often offered free by your ISP (Internet Service Provider).

Fast-forward to today and the average consumer is smarter than ever before. Consumers are actively checking us out along with our competition. They can check product and service reviews online, they can buy online without even leaving their homes - and more importantly they can comment on our business, our products and services, and our customer service on social media.

Social media is a reality and it affects every business no matter how small. Even a self-employed tradesperson needs to understand the basics of social media.

Need convincing that social media should be a major component of your marketing activities? Here are some realities.

- Your customers are using social media, they are looking for you, talking about you, reviewing your products, services, customer service and checking out your competition. According to the Pew Research Center, two-thirds of American adults (65%) use social networking sites, up from 7% when the company started tracking social media usage in 2005.
- A whopping 90% of 18-29 year-olds use social media. And it's 77% for those aged 30-49.
- In 2005 2% of consumers 65+ used social media, in 2010 it was 11% and now it's 35%.

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- Hubspot (an inbound marketing and analytics firm) reports that 95% of Millennials, and 87% of Gen X'er's expect brands to have a Facebook presence. And 70% of 45-60 year-olds think brands should, at the very least, have a Facebook page.
- You may think this is an urban thing. Although more city dwellers use social media, people in rural areas are not far behind. While 68% of suburbanites and 64% of urban residents are active on social media, 58% of rural residents are actively using it.
- When it comes to gender, more women (68%) use social media than men (62%).

Social media is not just about dealing with what people say about you online; it's about communicating with your customers and future customers; it's about building a community and being part of other communities; it's about educating people and listening to them. It's about letting them know all about you, your company, the people that work for you, your products, your services, your business philosophy, your integrity and your organizational culture.

There is a saying that it takes a village to raise a child - perhaps today it takes a social media community to grow a business.

Why Shop Local- Buy Local?

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There is a definite trend toward buying local across Canada. One survey states that 72 per cent of Canadians have a desire to support local businesses. Global retail strategy and analytics firm Precima, carried out a survey which showed that 61 per cent of Canadians said purchasing local foods and beverages was important to them, with nearly half reporting they would be willing to pay a 15-30 per cent premium.

Shop Local, or Buy Local, campaigns are being launched in towns and cities across Canada and for good reason. These campaigns help people realize that locally owned and operated businesses:

- Keep money in the local economy - for every \$100 spent, \$46 is recirculated into the local economy.
- Recirculate 2.6 times more revenue back into the local economy than national retail chains.
- Are more likely to support other local businesses - e.g. bookkeepers, accountants, law firms, tradespeople.
- Purchase more local products and goods which provides employment for local artisans, farmers and other manufacturers.
- Bring fewer products in from outside the region resulting in lower greenhouse gas emissions.
- Give five times more money to local sports teams, community events and charitable causes than non-local businesses.



These campaigns educate the community as to the value of supporting locally owned and operated businesses. Buy Local campaigns promote the message to consumers that buying local will have a direct and positive effect on the local economy making their town, or city a better place to live.

Consider launching a campaign in your community a way to not only build your own business, but to also build the economy of your community.

If you'd like to read more about shopping and buying local campaigns, take a look at your September 2015 issue of the Leading Edge, where you will find an article entitled: Should Our Business Join A 'Buy Local' Campaign.

Watch for: Starting A Buy Local Campaign In Your Community in our January 2016 issue - what a great way to start the New Year!

Challenge 4 Communities 2015 WINNERS!

4 Weeks 4 Challenges 4 Winners 4 Prizes

Community Futures Newsask is hosting our 6th Annual "Challenge 4 Communities"

The 2015 Challenge 4 Communities Winners are:

- 1st place: Little Explorers Daycare- Play Ground Development (\$3000)
- 2nd place: James Smith Cree Nation- Sew Many Ways (\$2000)
- 3rd place: North East Outreach Services- White Ribbon Campaign (\$1000)

Newsask Community Futures would like to thank everyone for their participation!

**Challenge 4
Communities
2015**

Cartoon

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“Can we make a billion widgets in one week?”

On behalf of
Community Futures Newsask

We would like to extend
Warmest Holiday Wishes
&
**All the Best for a
Prosperous New Year!!**

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