

Small Business Online Marketing

Online marketing tells others about a business, helps a business to learn who is interested in its offerings, popularizes the business's brands, communicates with customers, helps support a business's products, and helps owners envision future changes in customers and industries.

But marketing can be expensive. Small businesses need to plan their marketing *carefully*. Doing so requires a conceptual understanding of how marketing can work for each business, and at least some familiarity with a myriad of detailed marketing terminology.

Marketing strategy is not a one size fits all thing. What may work spectacularly well for one business might have disastrous results for another.

Conceptually, owners can ask the question "What does marketing do?" Here's one possible answer:

Marketing catches the interest of people who like to do what your business can help them do.

This answer finds customers who will want the business's products, and at the same time motivates the business to develop additional products and services that its customers will want.

A good marketing plan will organize your efforts. Your plan can include the following:

- From one to many specific strategies
- Continuous adjustment as you learn from experience

- A listing of many measurable goals, large and small, short- and long-term, including fact based assessment of whether each goal has been or will be achieved
- Explanation of how various marketing goals relate to one another and to general goals of the business. (General goals of the business might include helping its customers, helping its employees, compensating its investors, and helping the community.)
- A list of the most profitable recent marketing activities
- Consideration of how to identify, learn about, and serve each customer

Successful Examples

Small enterprises have marketed their products for a long time. Around 2,700 BCE in the Agrarian economy of Egypt, enterprises branded cattle to signal the quality of cattle to be sold or purchased, and to deter theft.

Here are two simple examples of effective online marketing in the twenty-first century. Both of these examples are from the realm of cupcakes:

- Post a short “talking about my business” write-up on a local online forum. You might explain that when you moved into the neighborhood it was difficult to find good cupcakes, so you started a cupcake business.

You can briefly describe your concept and why you’re especially qualified to make cupcakes. Remind readers that they can see and order your eye popping and delicious cupcakes by going directly to your website at xyzcupcakes.com, or by checking out your social media posts. On your website provide a way for readers to ask questions or make suggestions. Follow up to create continuing discussions with your customers.

- Another example is something Melissa Ben-Ishay has done to help her produce and sell cupcakes in New York City. In 2008 at the beginning of her cupcake business, she called local cafes and caterers, asking them if they would like to order some of her unique, colorful cupcakes. She got some orders. She personally delivered the ordered cupcakes.

Eventually, one of her customers, Danny Omari, operator of New York's Café Bari, was so impressed with her cupcakes and attentive service that he partnered with Melissa by letting her make cupcakes in Café Bari's kitchen, replacing use of the tiny kitchen in her home. By 2024 Baked by Melissa grew into operating 14 stores in New York and Massachusetts and delivering its products throughout the United States. Melissa has become a CEO and a social media personality.

To Learn More

To learn more about brands, including the history of cattle branding in ancient Egypt, go to [Brand, Wikipedia](#)

To learn more about Danny Omari, go to [Danny Omari, entrepreneur and operator of Cafe Bari and Happea's](#)

To learn more about goals or objectives, go to [Goal, Wikipedia](#)

To learn more about Melissa Ben-Ishay's cupcake business, go to [Baked by Melissa](#) and [Baked by Melissa, Wikipedia](#)

To learn more about Small Business Marketing, go to [Small Business Marketing, Forbes](#)

To learn more about strategies, go to [Strategy, Wikipedia](#)

To learn more about how to “talk about your business”, go to [6 Tips for Talking About Your Business With Anyone. SCORE Association](#)