

Boost your

Business

FOR LESS!

This guide will give you information about how to spread the word about your business online and in-store!





Online marketing



Have a strong online presence

An online presence is vital, especially as more people are using the Internet to do their shopping and find recommendations. A shop on the high street can be promoted using emails, marketing and social media.

An active and engaging social media presence is absolutely essential. Ask your customer what digital platforms they use and what they would like to see. Then post every single day, whether that's on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter or on your own website. Use images and videos to keep your posts as eye-catching and engaging as possible.

Consumer behaviours are changing

Led by the thoughts and opinions of family and friends, consumers are turning to digital channels to research their purchases before making a decision. As they switch seamlessly between in-store and online shopping, ensure that your social media has the information required to help them.

Be visual

Share pictures, videos and promote special offers - keep your posts fun and informative. Where possible, collect people's email addresses (ensuring you are GDPR compliant) to share discounts, special offers and hopefully encourage them to come back.

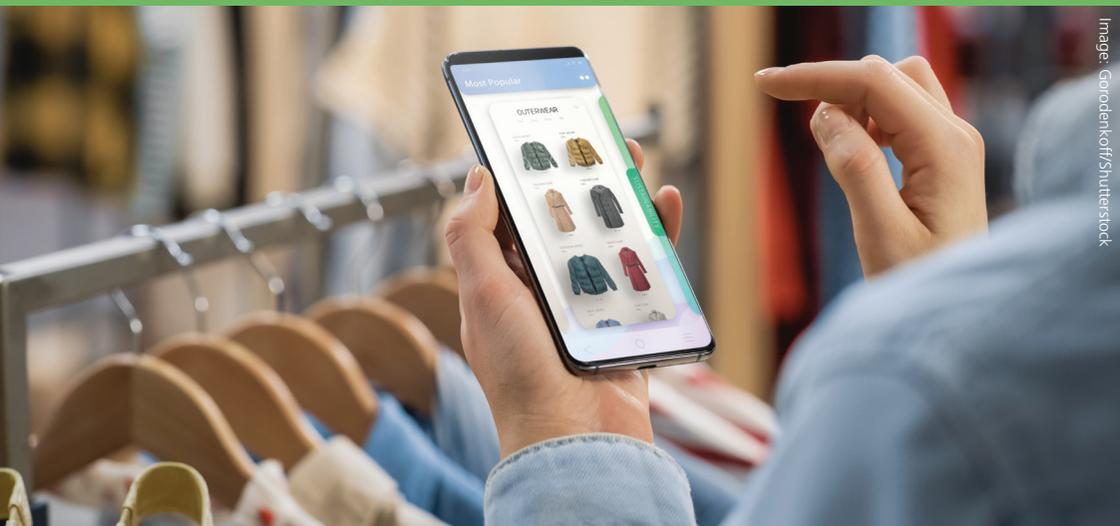
Recommendations are crucial

Encourage your customers to leave reviews, sharing their experiences and photos of your products and shop. Have a review or testimonial section on your website and ensure your business is on review sites such as Tripadvisor.

Improve your online marketing for local searches

Retail units can't survive solely on walk-in customers and word of mouth. What happens when your potential customers search for products and services in their area? With the help of localised digital marketing, your business can appear at the top of their web search results. Ensure you're listed on Google and Facebook and always include details like location, photos, directions and operating hours.

Social media advertising can provide a very affordable alternative to traditional and expensive advertising campaigns - running from as little as just £5 per week while still reaching a large untapped audience. There are often discounts available for paid Facebook or Google ads online and some web hosting services also offer advertising discount codes as part of their membership offering.



Target reviewers to improve footfall and get reviews

Increasingly, looking for that next special purchase starts with a review search. Explicitly targeting this website traffic with promotions specific to review sites can both drive people through the door and prime the customer to have a good experience - potentially resulting in them leaving you an excellent review!

Review sites include: Tripadvisor (which is no longer just for hotels and restaurants), Facebook, Google Reviews, and YELP - search 'review websites' online for more information.

An estimated 60-90% of in-store purchases are influenced by the web, so promoting your discounts online will give you the best chance of enticing your customers inside.

Start a blog to support your products

Starting a blog and actively creating content about any kind of permanent or temporary promotion can give a business a lot more exposure. Instead of just targeting the passer by with catchy signage, a blog will allow new and different demographics to discover more about your business.

What is a blog?

Put simply a blog (short for weblog) is an informal, online journal that focuses on a particular topic. They can include photos and videos, as well as writing and as business owners it gives you the chance to show customers how invested and approachable you are! Search 'How to start a blog' online for more information.

Image: Phunkof/Shutterstock



Use emails to capture customers on the go

The majority of all marketing emails are opened on mobile devices. If you know that your marketing email is most likely to be viewed on a tablet or smartphone, be sure to design it accordingly - always remember to include a clickable next step or call to action.



Building loyal customers

Loyalty programmes

Did you know that customers in loyalty programmes return twice as often?

By creating a loyalty awards programme, for example a coffee stamp or points card, you'll encourage people to come back and build a regular customer base. A loyalty card programme is a great incentive for customers to continuously return to your business.

Use customer surveys to host a raffle

One fun idea is to create a survey for the customer, which on completion automatically gives them the chance to win an invite to a private party with exclusive discounts. This can help create brand loyalty whilst generating a lot of extra income. Even better still, hosting a survey will give you the opportunity to get invaluable customer insight into what you're currently doing and whether this is working.

Hold charity events

Host a charity event and promote the 'spirit of giving' by offering a discount to any customer who makes a donation. This is a great idea to get people through the door while creating some positive media coverage for your business.

Build strong customer relationships

Personal interaction with customers is a great way to establish relationships and encourage long-term customer loyalty. Your marketing can be a natural extension of this, which means you don't always have to be selling. Send out thank you and birthday emails and other relationship building communications to let your customers know you care.

Customer photo competitions

Create a customer photo competition based around your products, allowing your customers to showcase their talents. It will get the customers engaged with your products and generate an album of material for you to use in future marketing campaigns. If you can get customers to post their photos on social media and either tag or include your business details, you can create buzz around your business as well as benefit from some free marketing from happy customers!

Demonstrations and product tutorials

Today many online brands utilise YouTube to promote online tutorials that demonstrate the value of their products. Shops can take advantage of the same idea in the form of lifestyle-focused tutorials, workshops and demos.



Offer delivery promotions

With ever-improving shipping and subscription services like Amazon Prime, many local shops are once again finding they have to 'up their game' to stay in the market.

Local shops can combat this by offering a delivery promotion that alleviates customers' concerns about how they will get their items home. This is particularly important for shops that carry large or bulky items. Promoting a delivery service adds value and combats the risk of losing customers, plus they'll have peace of mind knowing their purchase is being locally delivered and with care.



Addressing consumer scepticism

Throw an event for your community and use it to address a scepticism that your market has. For instance, a boutique shop could set a challenge for people to bring in products bought from chain stores and compare them with the independent retailer's similar products. With the popularity of markets and art & crafts fairs on the rise, customers are increasingly looking in new places for unique and customised items, so make the most of it.

Invite local restaurants and other businesses to come down and sample food, hold a raffle for free products/services and publish a compelling press release that gets the local media interested. Then, give the attendees special vouchers for discounts or waive fees for when they return. It's something online businesses can't do, so it's a golden opportunity!

Take your show on the road

Take your products on tour with a roadshow, attending local events and markets to reach a new audience. Showcasing the fantastic products available right at their doorstep could bring new customers to your door in no time!



Image: Rawpixel.com/Shutterstock

Working with others

Networking

Networking is a fantastic marketing opportunity for small businesses to meet with other like-minded people, share ideas and develop relationships. The regular **Talk of the Town** meetings are a great opportunity for you to network and to hear about all the latest projects, activities and events taking place in the city.

Partner with other local businesses

Most businesses don't realise that some of the best promotions happen when they collaborate with other businesses in their area. Even working with competitors can raise awareness of what's on offer and the benefits of shopping within your area.

Why not pull all the businesses together, no matter what they sell, in support of local events and traditions? Whether it is supporting a local school or celebrating some local history, strength in numbers can pay off. Remember that the relationships you build in the local community with other businesses and the public is what sets you apart.

If you would like any ideas or help to promote your activity, please contact the Oxford City Centre Management team, who would be delighted to help: citycentre@oxford.gov.uk





Improving your image

A strong logo

Having a personalised logo goes a long way when it comes to brand recognition. Think about some of the most easily identified brands you know and create a similarly powerful association with your business by designing the perfect logo. Add your logo ID to your carrier bags and why not pop a business card in, too?

Package your products

Certain products go together, such as shampoo and conditioner, cheese and biscuits, hats and gloves. Package products together to make it easy for the customer to buy both, increasing your revenue and the number of units sold at the same time.

Another idea is to set up displays throughout the shop, showing off how different products can work or be styled together. Promote custom-made gift hampers and provide gift wrapping, ideal for Mother's Day, Father's Day, teacher thank you presents and Freshers gifts.

Creative seasonal merchandising

Tailor your displays depending on the time of year to promote your relevant products and services. Instagrammable displays can be very easy to create so make sure you cover at least the following: Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Easter, Father's Day, Fresher's Week, Alice Day, Halloween and Christmas.

Build up a plan and change your displays at least once a month. Mix it up. Move your display and products around, and design your store layout so that special offers are at the front. Why not try pop-up product displays at your till that change every month?

Boost your business for less

OPTIMISE
searchability

★★★★★

★★★★★

Www

TARGET
reviewers

Online marketing

USE SOCIAL MEDIA
connect with your customers

START A BLOG
share your story



COLLECT FEEDBACK
and act on it

BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS
with customers

Build customer loyalty

OFFER DELIVERY
promotions

HOLD DEMONSTRATIONS
take your show on the road



SHARE IDEAS
strength in numbers

Develop **RELATIONSHIPS**

Work with others

NETWORK get to know people around you

PARTNER with local businesses



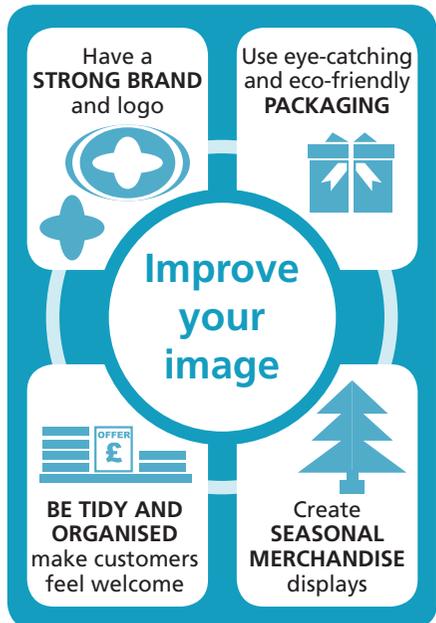
Have a **STRONG BRAND** and logo

Use eye-catching and eco-friendly **PACKAGING**

Improve your image

BE TIDY AND ORGANISED
make customers feel welcome

Create **SEASONAL MERCHANDISE** displays



Final thoughts...

Always review and monitor what works for you. This is an ongoing cycle... the more you try, the more the customers will buy!

DARE TO BE DIFFERENT

Be brave and adventurous

Stand out from the crowd

The City Centre Management Team are here to help you, please contact us at citycentre@oxford.gov.uk



Each Indie Oxford member helps to realise the IO mission to put the local economy on the map and help more people realise the value and impact of local. Membership provides you with access to numerous advantages for a small business. It includes support, i.e. being part of the business community through meet ups, newsletters and Whats App group. Also marketing through a directory and map listing on the website, a decal and/or online sticker and unlimited event listings on the events page. Rosie looks forward to helping you. For more information email rosie@independentoxford.com



For wider business support, visit OxLEPs Business Support tool

which helps signpost the county's businesses to the most appropriate business support, open grant funds, and events. For more information please visit: <https://oxlepbusiness.co.uk/oxlep-business-support-tool>

