

Top 5 Free or Low-Cost Ways to Get Your Online Presence in Order

Based on a webinar presented by [Alison K Consulting](#) in partnership with Digital Nova Scotia

A strong online presence is key to keeping your current customers engaged and attracting new customers to your business. There is plenty of low-hanging fruit to be had in getting your online presence in order. These are five ways you can improve your business's digital profile without a big budget.

1. Newsletters

Newsletters help you stay top of mind for your customers. It's easy to track what interests your customers based on the links they click on in your newsletter, and you can use audience segmentation to target specific readers.

Get Started

1. Set up your newsletter in the selected platform (ie: MailChimp)
2. Create a page on your website just for newsletter signups.
3. Send out personal, positive content
4. Promote newsletter on social media – encourage people to sign up!
5. Setup tags and audience segments so you can target your readers with relevant content.

CONTENT IDEAS DURING COVID-19 PANDEMIC:

- behind the scenes videos/photos
- staff profiles
- useful tips to help during this time, resources such as virtual tours or classes
- retrospective of past events

2. Google My Business

A free Google My Business listing provides visibility on the world's largest search engine and maps. It is simple to manage and makes it easy for customers to post reviews. It's also a great source of insights about how customers are searching for and finding your business, and whether they visited your site, looked at directions or viewed photos.

INCLUDE IN YOUR LISTING:

- Contact information
- Products
- Offers and events
- Photos

Get Started

1. Create or claim your business listing on Google My Business using a Gmail account.
2. Fill in the details about your business (Google will call, email or send a postcard to confirm).
3. Complete your Google My Business listing, including business profile and photos.
4. Ask your customers to post reviews.
5. Review insights to inform your marketing strategy
6. Update hours or mark yourself as temporarily closed during COVID-10.
7. Create posts about events, services or offers.

3. Website Auditing

A website audit will help ensure your site is meeting the needs of you and your customers. It can be done for free, and there are no skills required. It can help you refine your goals for your website and identify areas that are strong or need to improve, allowing you to focus your time.

Get Started

1. Once or twice a year, do a review of the content on your website. Make sure it is up to date, relevant, and engaging for your customers.
2. Create a guest persona based on your ideal customer and create a situation that might bring them to your site. Then go through your site looking through the lens of their situation, paying attention to tone, clarity and flow of information and calls to action.
3. Interview your customers and website users to see if your website is delivering the information they need.

QUESTIONS TO ASK YOUR CUSTOMERS:

- How likely are you to recommend our website to a friend?
- Did you have trouble finding something?
- Is our information clear (pricing, amenities, services)?
- Who else did you consider before visiting our site?

4. Social Media Automation

Automating your social media posts helps to cut down on the amount of time you have to spend on social media posts. You can schedule content to maintain the frequency of your posts, without having to be on social media all the time. Just be mindful of prescheduled content that might need to be changed based on what's happening in the world and current sentiments.

Get Started

1. Select a social media automation platform such as Buffer or Hootsuite.
2. Develop evergreen content – content that isn't time sensitive such as testimonials, media coverage, and timeless blog posts.
3. Share your blog posts (day published, 2 days, 2 weeks, 2 months after published).
4. Acknowledge your community, tag them in posts.

5. Google Analytics

Google Analytics gives you insights into what people do when they are on your website, including what pages they view and how they got to your site. It gives you a realistic picture of the activity taking place on your website at no cost. Although it can be a bit intimidating, you don't need to know everything about the interface to start pulling useful information, and Google Academy offers free online tutorials.

Get Started

1. Sign up for a Google Analytics account using a gmail account.
2. Install Google Analytics on your website using code provided.
3. Set a schedule for reviewing your analytics, looking at behaviour, site content, and your goals.
4. Make annotations in Analytics about events that could impact traffic on the site, such as a social media campaign.