

Quick **wins** for Small Businesses: Taking **control** of your **marketing**



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SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

When you're running a small business, it's not always easy to find the time to dedicate to marketing activity. The day to day activity is often more on your mind than planning ahead with marketing campaigns, especially if the business is booming and you're rushed off your feet with orders.

For companies without a dedicated member of staff for marketing, you may have limited skills and knowledge of marketing in house. Fortunately, there are so many ways to automate and maximise your marketing even with limited time in the day. All you need is a person willing to learn who can take a few hours a month to plan ahead, and your marketing will be taken care of.

As experts in providing software solutions and support to print and design companies, the Clarity team has put together some essential information on how to secure some quick marketing wins. Learn more about what software packages are available to help you take charge and plan ahead, as well as how to master your social media and understand results and reporting. Discover how to harness the power of email marketing with just a few clicks and reach customers in a whole new way.

Secure quick wins in marketing with the power of automation, targeting, lists and scheduling tools. Whether you're keen to expand your marketing knowledge or just want to get ahead with your planning, our guide will illustrate some of the easiest ways to make marketing wins and up your business presence.

SECTION 2: EMAIL MARKETING

We're all familiar with newsletters as a form of email marketing, but there's so much more out there than just sending a monthly bulletin. Email marketing can be a really powerful tool, and it's quick to get to grips with thanks to new, easy to use (and free) software.

Clarity Recommends: Mailchimp

If you're not already using Mailchimp to manage your email marketing, this is one of the best tools to add to your arsenal to get great email marketing results. Mailchimp offers free packages and paid so it's possible to test whether this is right for you before committing. Get access to design templates, analytics, how-to guides and list segmentation all in an easy to use dashboard.

Bonus: Clarity Software offers CRM integration with Mailchimp, so no need to rebuild your customer lists or databases from scratch.

Email Targeting: Lists and Segmentations

What is an email list?

This is where all your customer emails who have agreed to receive marketing emails and materials are stored. You must make sure that this list is stored securely and only contains the addresses of people who have agreed to receive marketing messages. This is to ensure you are staying GDPR compliant with

people's data.

Your email list is likely to be just a bulk one for people who have agreed to receive marketing information and is great for sending general messages like newsletters or key company announcements. But you can go one step further and segment the list to create targeted lists - perfect for marketing campaigns and tailored messaging.

What is segmentation?

While we might think more of a famous chocolate orange when it comes to segments, this is a key part of making the most of your email lists.

Rather than sending bulk emails out and hoping some people get the right message, segmentation allows you to target specific groups of customers. For example, you might want to send a welcome email to new customers, or contact a group who order the same or similar products with an exclusive offer.

You can create email segments by applying filters or assigning tags to emails. For example, you could filter by sign-up date to send a message to new customers, or you could filter by company type i.e. large scale signage, low volume print runs.

Creating list segments will take a little bit of time to set up at first, but once they're done you only need to maintain and monitor them, so it's well worth the leg work.

Being able to send specific messages to the exact audiences means your messages are being seen by the people most likely to respond. This is much more effective than blanket messaging and you can tweak and tailor your emails exactly to the list or segment you're talking to. Personalised messaging goes a long way in email marketing and people like to feel they're receiving genuine offers that are just for them.

Spotting Opportunity

The beauty of email marketing lists is that you can see when people are purchasing but also exactly what products they're choosing. This makes for a great opportunity to identify and promote cross-selling opportunities.

For example, you might see a customer has placed a large order for event signage. Many events will also use flyers, leaflets or brochures to hand out information, or they may have small promotional items to giveaway. By being able to see exactly what was ordered, you can send tailored follow up emails letting the customer know that you also offer all kinds of materials to support event planning.

Clarity software can help you create lists based on past orders using our CRM function so you're

sending specific messages to the right people - and you're more likely to get extra sales opportunities out of it.

Writing Effective Marketing Emails

With your lists created and ready to go, you're set to send your first marketing email. To write an effective marketing email, remember a few key things:

- **Write a catchy email subject line.** Make it something people will want to click on and open!
- **Get to the point ASAP.** You hooked them with the subject line so keep the momentum going when they go to read the email.
- **Clear CTA.** Make the Call to Action (CTA) compelling - such as a limited time offer or a 'first 50 sign ups' deal. You don't always have to include something like this but it is a good tip to get people acting quicker.
- **Don't text dump.** While sometimes you might need to send a more typical newsletter format with lots of text, try to keep your information concise and to the point.
- **Include outbound links.** Hyperlinks are your friend if you want people to find more information, rather than including everyone in one email! You'll also be able to track and see how many people clicked on the links, which can be useful for tracking campaign success.

It's a good idea to break up your text with design elements. Even simple things like coloured line breaks in your company branding are a great way to reinforce your brand while creating a smart professional finish. Mailchimp allows you to add design elements in a simple click and drag function.

When to hit send?

Before you're ready to send, always use the preview function and check how the email appears on desktop and mobile. Once you're happy with how it looks (and all the links work correctly), you're ready to send!

Make sure you've got the right email list selected for sending and then you can either do an immediate send or schedule for later. If you're scheduling for later, think about when people are most likely to read their emails - but also when they might have time to respond to a CTA. Lots of us check our emails first thing in the morning, but how often do we take the time to follow a CTA thread from a marketing email?

Consider sending at an optimised time for marketing offers. Anytime between 11am and 1pm is usually good as people are into their working flow and have a little time to breathe and read their emails in more detail, rather than the morning rush.

Making the most of scheduling

If you're feeling productive or want to get a whole month of emails dealt with in one go, the scheduling tool is your friend. You can prep a whole month of promotional materials ready to go and schedule them well ahead of time. No more worrying about a last-minute scramble to get things ready to go. Using a monthly block of scheduling can also help you effectively track campaigns and work out when the best open rates and times are for your audiences.

It's not all about the hard sell

It might seem like email marketing is all about getting sales and pushing the latest offers in front of customers. It can be used as a great sales tool, but you also need to make sure you're sharing information that is worthwhile with the audience. If they clock on that you're only ever pushing sales they're likely to stop reading or unsubscribe.

Mix up your messages and focus on educating and communicating with the audience first, then selling second. Include blogs and insightful articles (if you produce these yourselves or link to relevant industry news), snippets from social media and other business updates. Bring a little touch of humanity to the emails and work on building a relationship will help bring more sales in future.

Sales Pipeline Opportunities

One of the best things about integrating your email marketing with CRM or Sales software is you gain new insight into the sales pipeline. You can check against your jobs won/lost and schedule follow up marketing emails for 3-6 months time to review with the prospect.

If your site offers an e-commerce option, you can also explore sales funnels. These are handy little emails that check in with customers throughout their buying journey. Things like 'forgotten basket' or follow up emails with bonus discounts can be scheduled to send after customers complete (or don't complete) certain actions. This is a great way to better understand your customer behaviour and it can show you where your website or sales process might need re-evaluating or improvement.

Using email marketing effectively not only helps you get more messages out to your customers, but also helps you establish a presence and tone of voice with them. Having consistent, quality and well-targeted messaging is a fantastic way to connect with customers and encourage them to reach out with more business enquiries. With tools like Mailchimp, it's never been easier to get the hang of marketing emails and send professional-looking emails that help sell your business.

SECTION 3: SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

If you're using social media for business, this is already a great step in the right direction. Social media channels like Facebook, Twitter, LinkedIn and Instagram are great ways to speak to customers and prospective customers regularly and give quick updates or even exclusive offers.

However, we also know that many small businesses are struggling to get the most from their social media accounts. It's easy to maximise your voice on social media with some simple scheduling and planning tools.

Choose your Channels

Contrary to popular belief, you don't have to have all of the social media channels for your business.

Choose the channels that are more likely to resonate with your customers and attract the right attention. Many B2B companies find Twitter and LinkedIn tend to work best for them, while B2C companies might lean more towards Facebook and Instagram.

If you want to have all the channels then go for it! Just think realistically about how much time you have to manage and run the channels and whether your customer base uses that channel as well.

Scheduling and Planning

Use a social media manager like HubSpot to take the stress out of daily posting. You can plan a month of posts to automatically post, including links and images. Manage everything centrally from the HubSpot dashboard to save you signing in and out of various accounts, and track activity too with their analytics and monitoring tools.

Don't feel pressured to post on every channel every single day either. A few posts a week is plenty for keeping your presence up to date. You could always increase to daily posting for special events or promotional weeks.

Monitoring and Response Rate

Many customers use social media to engage with brands, and the same goes for you! Make sure you're able to monitor your channels for performance and reply to any queries, comments or questions that might pop up. Be sure to always try and respond within a reasonable timeframe and if possible, privately message the person (particularly if they have an issue or complaint).

The HubSpot social media dashboard can help you with this and you can check all your social media activity from one place, including likes, comments, shares and tags.

Content Creation

Coming up with ideas for posts that are all unique and offer value can often seem a daunting task. But there are a few ways to tackle it that makes creating social content a breeze.

Think about what your business's position is. Are you well known for being educational or informative? Do you have any expert voices in your company who could share insight? Have you been around a long time and can reflect on changing industry trends?

It's also a good idea to step into your customer's shoes. Think like a customer and apply the 'jobs to be done' approach. For example, at the end of the financial year, create posts about how financial planning for the next quarter is going, or discuss what kind of year you've had. If you know there are peak seasons or months for businesses because of events or industry pressure, identify with those and talk about them. Show you're in touch with the same pain points and calendar as your customers.

Key Social Media Tips

- Don't always push products and services. People switch off when they feel all they're getting is more adverts.
- Mix things up. Share blog posts, news articles, photos, videos. Have fun with it!
- Join in with industry hashtags. Using hashtags helps more people see your posts - but don't hashtag every word! Choose key phrases.
- Always try to include an image or a link in each post - this encourages people to interact.
- Write like a person, not a sales machine. Use language that suits your brand, but remember people love the unusual so consider experimenting with a fun and friendly tone.

SECTION 4: FOCUS YOUR EFFORTS

We've discussed a lot of different ways you can maximise your marketing presence here, but the most important thing is to know where to focus your efforts. This way you're making the most of the limited time you have for planning and actioning marketing, as well as getting the most out of it.

We're all about working smarter, not harder here at Clarity, and we want you to do the same.

Experiment, then Confirm

With tools like Mailchimp and HubSpot, you can experiment with different types of marketing activities. Using these tools allows you to measure the effectiveness of the activity. How did people respond? Was there a reflected uptick or uplift in enquiries or orders?

When you can see how marketing activity impacts sales, it's much easier to learn what works and what doesn't. It might take a few months of testing different methods, but once you've got a solid, tried-and-tested approach in hand, you can cut the stuff that doesn't work and focus all your efforts on the things that do.

This period of experimentation can often yield interesting results. Sometimes things you never expected to take off end up generating huge numbers of leads, whereas campaigns you wanted to work might produce mediocre results. A lot of marketing is trial and error so if things don't quite pan out as you hoped, don't be disheartened. Chalk it up to experience and try again with a different approach.

It's important that everyone is aware that the initial marketing phase will be a lot of trial, improvement and refinement. No one's first attempt at anything will be perfect and remember that for yourself. Keep practising and experimenting and you'll have a solid marketing approach in no time!

Make the most of tools and software

We've discussed how useful software platforms like Mailchimp and HubSpot are, but there are a few more tools that can also help with your marketing activity:

- **Canva.** A free and simple tool for graphic design. Create social media posts, web graphics and more. Great for putting together quick and simple stuff.
- **Google Analytics.** If you're not already using this, you're missing out on loads of data. Google Analytics provides valuable insight to your website and tracks where traffic comes from - great

for measuring campaign effectiveness or where leads are coming from.

- **Moz.** One of the leading platforms for SEO (search engine optimisation) keyword research. This is a next-level tool if you want to improve your content rankings on Google with effective keywords.
- **Unsplash.** Access to thousands of royalty-free images, great for adding to social media posts or marketing emails.

Whatever route you decide to take your marketing down, remember that Clarity offers integration with our CRM software to marketing tools for the most effective approach to customers. Our team are happy to discuss how you can connect Clarity with your marketing activity, or you can find out more by visiting <https://clarity-software.com/marketing-software/>.



It's **simple** - it's taking control of your marketing with **Clarity.**

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