



FREE Online Marketing!

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Even a small business can make a big impression online with couple of hours of time and, optionally, a small budget.

What you need:

1. **Photos.** At least one, preferably 5 (or more!) photos that present your business well. They don't have to be professional photos but do need to be authentic. They should be wide, not tall, in orientation.
2. **Software.** You'll need a way to crop and size your photos. Don't have one? Try the FREE <https://www.picmonkey.com/photo-editor>
3. **Information** about your business, including your contact info, hours, a one-sentence and one-paragraph description.
4. **A playful attitude!** So many people come to beachdog.com terrified they'll get lost and frustrated along the way. Social media is designed to be intuitive, user-friendly. Don't let your fear shut down your brain and you'll be just fine.

Step 1: Assess the situation.

We could have an extensive discussion regarding the relative value of a variety of social media platforms for your business. For today, we'll focus on the tools that are going to bring the strongest return on effort for most companies. For *social media*, that means Facebook. For *local business listings*: Bing, Yahoo, Yelp, Google+, Google Maps, Google MyBusiness, YouTube.

Do you exist in all these places? Does your company have a profile? Google the name of your business. Note the results and, from the list above, what is missing.

Step 2: Build your empire.

People are very likely already finding you on the Internet. Now is your chance to have them find what you want them to see rather than partial and/or poor information gathered by computer robots, well-meaning fans, and/or disgruntled customers.

It costs nothing but time to set up a profile for your business in each of these online venues. It's as simple as filling out forms and cropping/sizing your images according to the specifications of each before uploading them. Go to each of these sites and stake your claim to your name:

- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/business/products/pages>
- Bing: <https://www.bingplaces.com>
- Yahoo!: <https://help.yahoo.com/kb/local>
- Yelp: <https://biz.yelp.com/>

- Google MyBusiness (includes Maps, Local, YouTube): <https://www.google.com/business/> and/or <https://support.google.com/business/?hl=en#topic=4539639>
- YouTube.com. You can set up your YouTube profile through Google MyBusiness because, yes, Google owns YouTube. If you want to set up YouTube first for some reason, here are step-by-step instructions: <http://sproutsocial.com/insights/how-to-create-youtube-account/>
HINT: video need not be professionally produced! Keep the wide view on your phone and shoot! You can also curate lists to your YouTube profile. Add video others have done that is relevant to your business, such as that produced by your vendors and associations.
DID YOU KNOW? YouTube is the #2 search engine. Video is HOT! Load yours to YouTube first and share it from there to your site, Facebook, etc.
- If you are a restaurant or lodging business, add: <https://www.tripadvisor.com/Owners>

Step 3: Decide how much time and cash you want to put into the machine.

You're ahead of many of your competitors already by completing the steps so far. If you are not interested in social media yourself, and/or don't have an employee with a fire in their belly for marketing your products and services this way, turn off the computer with a smile on your face. You've done well!

If, however, you want to leverage this effort to build your brand, expand your reach, improve customer relationships, and/or tease sales and promotions, a world of opportunity is now at your fingertips.

Developing an *editorial calendar* is an outstanding way to meet your goals without wasting time online—or missing key opportunities. Here's a template to get you started setting goals and creating a calendar to keep you focused: <http://contentmarketinginstitute.com/2012/08/editorial-calendar-template/>

Sadly, gone are the days when a business could get a great response online without engaging in paid listings. If you want social platforms to work on your behalf, take advantage of the opportunities these venues offer, whether it's paid ads, boosted posts, or sponsored listings.

The good news here is that it doesn't take much cash to make a strong impact. Start with \$100 and don't spend it all in one place. Boost a post and/or buy an ad. Wait a few days then look at your analytics (aka insights) and see what happened. Use this information to guide your next step.

HINT: Boost a post that is already popular with your followers.

HINT: Once you have a plan in place, look for an employee who loves social media to work on your behalf!

Call on us if you'd like help!

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