


# **10 Easy Actions Small Business Owners Can Do Now to Hit the Ground Running in 2021**





There's very little left to be said about 2020 and how it didn't turn out the way any of us anticipated. Whether viewed from a personal perspective or with our business heads on, all plans went out of the window in Spring never to be seen again. So while there are positives to carry forward, such as newfound flexibility and resilience, many will be glad to start anew in 2021.

Against this backdrop it is tempting to begin counting down the days until the festive period, slowly winding down and allowing ourselves to mentally check out. But, just before you begin singing along with Mariah and indulging in mince pies, how about investing a small amount of time each day into some simple actions which would help turn 2021 into the top-notch year you want it to be?

Sounds good? Well we've spoken to a number of marketing experts and consolidated their advice into a list of the most important (and achievable) actions for small business owners to tackle before saying goodbye to 2020. So, in no particular order, here are 10 marketing actions to carry out before you let yourself disappear off for a well earned break.



# 1

## Choose 3 topics your customers will want to hear about in the first 3 months of 2021

Sharing your knowledge and expertise is a great way to strengthen relationships with your clients as well as position yourself as the go to company with future prospects. Begin by brainstorming all of the important industry developments your customers will want to know about and then select the best three. Next, write a sentence or two on your thoughts, hopes, expectations etc for the topic. Finish off this task by deciding how best to share your message; can you write a blog or an email? Is it a complex concept that needs to be discussed in a phone call? Perhaps you will do a video recording of yourself talking through the matter - software such as Loom is excellent for this. Remember that how you give the message is just as important as the message itself.

# 2

## Conduct a database review

It's not fun and it's certainly not festive but now is a good time to take a hard look at your prospect and client database. Things to consider; where does my data live, how much have I got / how much do I need, what sort of condition is it in? On the topic of where your data lives, the

answer should be a CRM (customer relationship management) system such as HubSpot. If not and your data is still in spreadsheets, contact books or worse still on paper, then this is something to tackle immediately.

When it comes to volume of data, having as many contacts as possible is the aim right? Wrong! Apart from risking your compliance with data protection regulations such as GDPR, bad data lists are slowing down your sales and marketing efforts. What constitutes bad data? It can take many forms from data that was entered incorrectly to that which has naturally decayed as people change email address, jobs etc. However it got there, you need a systematic approach to weeding it out. So while you are not going to tackle the work before Christmas you can conduct a thorough review in order to make a realistic plan about the scale of the task and exactly when you are going to tackle this in 2021.



# 3 **Email your existing clients to thank them for their continued business**

A small gesture which you most likely already do but if not then it is worth considering. Whilst one email to all clients might feel like a time saving initiative, adding a small amount of personalisation will go a long way.

The number of clients you have and the email tool you use will determine how much personalisation is practical, but including your contact's first name and company name in your email is important. Better yet, a truly individual email referring to a shared experience from 2020 will have further impact still.

# 4 **Website review**

For a simple review you should aim to conduct a mini health check of your site. Start by creating a sitemap; a document which lists all the pages on your site.

Next review each page to determine if it is still up to date and relevant to your target audience. If not, decide a priority level for when you will update it.

Lastly, for all those pages you are happy with, make a note of when you will review them again.

With a little more time and expertise then a deeper audit would move you from health checking to supercharging your site's performance. You could consider getting in touch with an independent expert to find out if there are any quick wins. There are many people who can help you with this and the audit can range from a free 30 minute review through to a deep dive over the course of a few days.

# 5 **Make a list of all the key 2021 events and moments for your industry**

This list can be as detailed as you like but the more events the better at this stage. Aim to capture items such as upcoming legislation, trade events, product launches etc. Don't forget to speak to colleagues and associates who will help you to capture all of the key dates.



By building this calendar you are laying the foundations to organise your sales and marketing efforts for 2021. For example, if upcoming legislation is going to impact your customers then you need to consider how far in advance they need to start preparing for it. Understanding this guides your efforts to start communicating with them to offer advice and position yourself as experts. Similarly, taking the time to prepare thoroughly for trade events will ensure your team is not caught short and you can invite prospects and customers well in advance.

## 6 List out 10 prospects you'd most like to work with in 2021

This task is as straightforward as it sounds but can be really powerful.

Some factors to consider when compiling your target list; how realistic is it that you will be able to work with them. Maybe you're not quite ready for Apple or Amazon yet? However with that said, be bold. If you don't start off with big aims then you're likely to be underwhelmed by the results.

Next ask yourself why you want to work with these clients? An obvious reason might be the anticipated sales volume, but beyond that you should have companies who represent a route into a new market or audience demographic. Finally make yourself and your team accountable for this list by sharing it with colleagues and putting it somewhere visible in your workspace.

## 7 Google My Business

Google My Business (GMB) is a free tool provided by Google which is a must for most businesses these days.

If you haven't set your profile up, or reviewed it in a while, then it is important to do so and takes very little time. GMB is a way in which you control the information Google shows when people search for your business.

From your GMB page you can define things such as opening hours, phone numbers, where you show up on Google Maps and manage Google reviews. It is a really powerful free tool, particularly if you have a physical shop or office which customers can visit. For more information and guidance on how to get set up visit - [https://www.google.com/intl/en\\_uk/business/](https://www.google.com/intl/en_uk/business/)



# 8 Tactics for customer reinvigoration

You already know that winning business with existing customers is much easier than chasing new prospects. So it stands to reason that it pays to review your lapsed customers and make a structured plan for how you are going to begin selling to them again.

To do this you start by looking at a handful of your best (repeat) customers and compare them to your lapsed customers in a disciplined manner. Ask yourself what is the difference between the two sets of customers. Are the lapsed customers really the right demographic for you? If so then have you handled their account differently to this point?

Once you are happy that you have a suitable set of customers to pursue then it's time to consider the types of tactics that you will use in 2021 to reinvigorate these accounts. Sometimes a simple email or call can get you back on the radar, others might need a more tactical approach such as broadening your contacts base. Making a plan and sharing it with your sales team is a sure way to get your 2021 off to a flying start.

# 9 Review your LinkedIn & social media profiles

So you and your team took the first step and set up a LinkedIn, Facebook, Twitter and Instagram account for your business and then what? A few sporadic posts and the enthusiasm weaned as attention was diverted to chasing more immediate goals? If this sounds familiar then now is the time to review and ask yourself what do these profiles say about the business to your customers, prospects and even your own staff?

As a minimum you should take the time now to ensure that all the profiles still reflect your branding and the contact details are correct. Secondly, test to confirm that if you were contacted through one of these channels then someone would receive the message and action accordingly.

With more time, set out a simple plan to start to grow your presence and following on these channels. When used to their fullest these tools can be a great way to engage with customers and prospects alike. The plan doesn't need to be overly complicated at this stage, you can build on the dates and themes from actions 1 and 5 and assign a person who will be responsible for turning these into social media friendly updates. You will want to consider the metrics that



you will use to measure success; whether it's reach / impressions, clicks, engagement, traffic to site - whatever it is, make a note of your base starting point.

# 10

## 2021 Sales Target

2020 has been hard for most businesses, so go ahead and allow yourself time to indulge by spending a little time picturing a dream 2021. Once you have done so then write down a sales target that both scares and inspires you in equal measures. Reflect on this for a day or so and once you have settled on a number, then say it out loud, to your colleagues.

If you have completed actions 1 - 9 then you have laid the foundations for a great marketing plan and as such are well prepared to answer the inevitable question of "how are we going to do that?"



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If you'd like to discuss any of the actions in more detail then feel free to get in touch at [hello@changelanes.co.uk](mailto:hello@changelanes.co.uk)

Our team are experts in helping small businesses to grow by putting in place a well structured marketing strategy, translating this into a concrete plan and then aiding teams to deliver it.

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