

# 10 Tips to Harness the Power of Local Marketing

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**If your business is the kind that relies on local clients—such as a restaurant, retail store or landscaping service—there are more ways than ever to attract these customers. Try these 10 tips to harness the power of local marketing.**

1. **Understand search.** It's important for your business to show up on the big search engines, Google and Bing. But it's easy to get buried there—so make sure your business can also be found on local search sites such as CitySearch, Local.com and Yahoo! Local.
2. **Build a business website.** Customers looking for local businesses don't use the Yellow Pages anymore—they go online. Your website doesn't have to be elaborate; just be sure it provides the basic information (address, phone number, store hours and services) that local customers seek.
3. **Advertise online.** Local online advertising works—that's why use of targeted online ads is projected to more than double next year. Does the idea of online advertising intimidate you? There are many companies that will manage your entire campaign, from creating your ad to optimizing it.
4. **Use location-based services.** With location-based services such as Foursquare, Gowalla, Google Places and Facebook Places, you can help customers find your business, get coupons and earn rewards. These services are simple, free and a great way to drive customers to your door.
5. **Try "group deals."** Group buying websites like Groupon, LivingSocial and SocialBuy offer limited-time discounts on local products and services—if a certain number of customers buy. Businesses sign up with the service, then share profits with the site. Group deals are a great way to move excess inventory or attract new customers.
6. **Get listed on ratings and review sites.** Customers look to review sites to decide where to shop. In addition to the local search sites in #1, also get listed on Bing Local, Insider Pages, Merchant Circle, RatePoint and Yelp!, and on niche review sites for your industry, region or city.
7. **Optimize your listing.** Make the most of your listing on review sites by adding photos, a description of your business, directions or maps, coupons and deals. Most review sites let you do this for free.
8. **Manage your reviews.** Read your ratings and respond quickly (and tactfully) to negative reviews before they hurt your business image. Visit Yelp! for advice on responding to reviews.
9. **Engage.** Local tools' biggest benefit: They enable you to engage with your customers. By learning what customers like and don't like, you build lasting relationships...and increase sales.
10. **Experiment and learn.** Track the results of each local marketing tool you use. As you learn what works and what doesn't, you can fine-tune your business for greater success.

### By Rieva Lesonsky

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