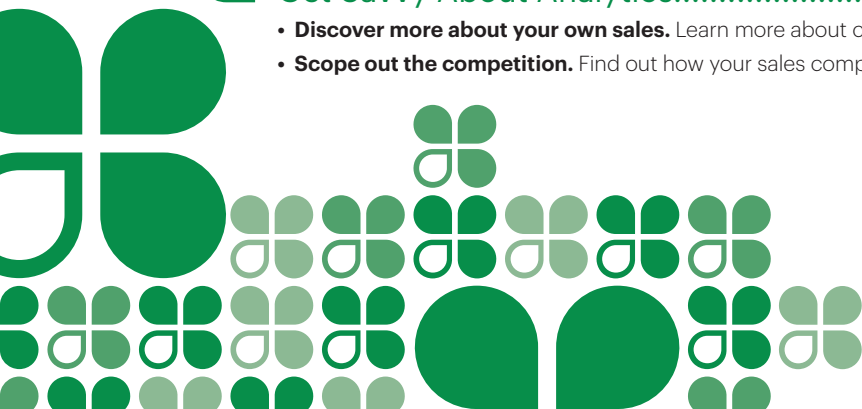


365 Ideas to Grow Your Small Business



365 Ideas to Grow Your Small Business

- 1** **Get Smart(er) at Marketing..... 03**
 - **Toot your own horn.** You've got to tell others how great your business is.
 - **Think low cost, high return.** Effective marketing strategies don't have to cost a fortune.
 - **Get creative.** Partnerships, events, and social media can help you reach an entire new crop of customers.
- 2** **Be an Expense Streamlining Ninja..... 11**
 - **Reduce inventory.** Stagnant items are a drain on your bottom dollar.
 - **Schedule strategically.** Once you go digital, you'll never go back.
 - **Don't overpay on your lease.** Everything is negotiable.
 - **Be a vendor's best friend.** The more business you give them, the bigger discounts you'll land.
- 3** **Increase Your Business Footprint..... 20**
 - **Open a second location.** You've found success at your first brick-and-mortar, so why not go for 2.0?
 - **Launch a website.** Take your products where the shoppers are.
 - **Drive new business.** Through a mobile location, that is.
- 4** **Be a Customer Service All-Star..... 25**
 - **Deliver the very best.** Personal interactions are the foundation.
 - **Acknowledge mistakes.** A small gesture goes a long way in rectifying a problem.
 - **Accept that returns are a part of life.** Customers appreciate transparency and ease.
- 5** **Form Genuine Relationships..... 33**
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 - **Use rewards to drive loyalty.** Implement a loyalty program to drive customer engagement.
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 - **Know your audience. And your competitors.** Your business needs to stand out from others.
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 - **Think of yourself.** New vendors should be accommodating to your needs, not just your customers'.
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 - **Discover more about your own sales.** Learn more about customer habits and product trends.
 - **Scope out the competition.** Find out how your sales compare to those of nearby businesses.



What do all successful entrepreneurs have in common?

According to one **article**, entrepreneurs are very determined to follow their own passions, and because of this, they're better at listening rather than speaking, they admit what they don't know, and they're ready to embrace failure on their path to success.

As a small business owner, you've taken that stellar big idea and launched a successful business. But with all the day-to-day stresses of running your operation (cash flow, employee turnover, and burnout to name a few), you know there's room for improvement, but you can't find the inspiration to take those next steps. And without that motivation, your growth mindset is stagnant.

That's where Clover can help. We've identified seven areas—and 365 small, but mighty ideas—that can help power the growth of your business. From smarter marketing to getting savvy about analytics and even increasing your business footprint, these tips will help elevate your business to the next level.

Make it your goal to get started today.



Get Smart(er) at Marketing

You know that your business is great. Now, you've got to spread that news to others.

Marketing a small business is challenging. There's no guarantee that the actions you take will result in more business. Some strategies will lead to large growth; others might have very little return. That's why you need to be savvy—maximizing low-cost opportunities to develop a following and encourage repeat business.

These ideas can help you get started.

Get Smart(er) at Marketing

1

Everyone loves a surprise! Do something unexpected for your customers just because.



2

Create an exclusive prix fixe package to entice couples for a special date night.

3

Celebrate left-handed customers by offering a treat when they checkout. (Watch how they sign their credit card slip to figure out who's eligible.)

4

Offer a special boozy brunch and turn your regular java and orange juice into Irish coffees and mimosas.



5

Show your appreciation for your senior citizen customers by offering a free drink or dessert with purchase or a coupon for their next visit.

6

Encourage everyone to get involved in the community. Make space in your store for local organizations to sign up volunteers or donate canned goods or clothing.

7

Coffee shop owners: Tell your top java-lovers about a particularly special brew that only they know how to order.

8

If you don't sell ice cream, team up with a nearby merchant that does and offer bundled discounts to celebrate the lazy, dog days of summer.



9

Make a batch of lemonade or special punch and serve it to your customers.

10

Spruce up the neighborhood. Take half an hour to have your team clean up the block or the area around your store.



11

Consider donating a portion of the day's profits to a local fundraising initiative.

12

On a cold winter day, find a way to work a special pasta meal into your menu.

13

Create an exclusive prix fixe package to entice couples for a special date night.

14

Offer a small discount to grandparents who are dining with their grandchildren.

15

No matter what type of business you run, every customer loves a plate of homemade cookies.

16

Offer “late-night shopping” and stay open a couple hours later once a month.

17

Team up with a local artist and throw a gallery night event featuring his or her work in your store.



18

Practice a random act of kindness and give each customer that enters your store a compliment.

19

During the stressful holiday season, think of creative stress relievers and market specials that will help customers unwind.

20

Set a fun, playful mood for your customers by dressing in a silly manner or creating an interesting window display.



21

Throw a “Girls Night Out” event and offer a special gift to women who shop with their female friends.

22

When small children visit, hit play on a fun song and hold a dance party.

23

Buy flowers from the grocery store and hand a single stem to every customer who visits within a predetermined time frame.



24

Honor local veterans with a special coupon.

25

Test your customers' brains with clever trivia questions and reward the winners with a prize.

26

Help your customers beat the afternoon slump by setting out bite-sized pieces of chocolate.



27

Invest in reusable shopping bags that customers can use long after they've walked out of your store.



28

Toy store owners: Organize a scavenger hunt for children and hide toys throughout the store.

29

Who doesn't love peanut butter?
Create special cocktails or dishes with a peanut or a peanut butter base.

30

Post a sandwich board in front of your shop and share a daily quote. Sometimes, make it funny, other times inspirational.



31

Offer specials to anyone wearing green on St. Patrick's Day. Publicize in advance so your regulars know to drop by.

32

Show your love to customers wearing red or pink on Valentine's Day. Treat them to a small box of conversation hearts or a heart-shaped chocolate.



33

Pique customers' curiosity and sense of adventure by offering a surprise dish with no description whatsoever.

34

Give out crunchy treats to the four-legged friends of your customers.



35

Place a bowl of clean water in front of your shop. Owners of furry creatures will appreciate the gesture, especially on hot days.

36

Offer a freebie for enrolling in a customer loyalty program.



37

Bar owners: Offer a trivia night special to drive weekday traffic.

38

Practice random acts of kindness. Compliments make people feel great, so encourage your staff to give out five compliments each day.

39

Once a week, recognize a random customer with a “thanks for being you” free gift.



40

Create a window scene that features numerous products interacting together.

41

On a beautiful day, move inventory outside and offer an impromptu sidewalk sale.

42

Send a handwritten thank you card. It takes just minutes, and a customer will certainly remember the personal note.



43

Host a pop-up location that features a select portion of your inventory.

44

Hand out stickers or temporary tattoos to kids featuring your store’s logo.

45

If you run a music school, have your students offer sidewalk concerts around town.



46

Add brightly colored signage to make existing merchandise look exciting and fresh.

47

Encourage customers to style individual pieces of clothing purchased from you their own way and post the photos on your social media feed.

48

Create a customized hashtag and use it on all your social media posts.



49

Redesign your floor to reposition inventory that's lagging on shelves.

50

Sell inventory that's lagging in your existing sales channels on other platforms, like Amazon or eBay.

51

Offer tiered discount days, where the more a person spends, the more they save.



52

Identify an item that compliments your top seller and gift a free sample of it.

53

Develop creative ways, including "staff picks" or "customers' favorite," to proactively steer shoppers to specific items.

54

Create marketing emails that look professionally designed touting these selections with **MailChimp**.



55

Go beyond pushing product. Create and share helpful, interesting content in your marketing emails.

56

Restaurants: Share recipes that compliment some of your most popular dishes.

57

Clothing stores: Give tips for cleaning some of the most stubborn stains.



58

Own a bookstore? Schedule readings or book signings with local writers. Offer a discount when someone buys more than one book.

59

Host merchant product demonstrations.

60

Around the holidays, offer fun distractions or entertainment for children while parents shop.



61

Respond in the moment and offer instant specials, like a hot drink on the coldest day of the year.

62

Bundle your offerings and sell several services or items together.

63

Make the add-on sale. Know a related product for each of your top sellers and at checkout, ask customers if they are in need of it.

64

Create small project guides — complete with supply lists — for various home and garden projects. Place them by related products throughout your store.



65

Use **Promos** to send high-value, real-time promotions via email, text, or social media to VIP customers.

66

Don't spread yourself — or your marketing budget — thin across all social media platforms.

67

Figure out what platforms your customers are on and concentrate your efforts there.



68

Reveal your personality in your social media posts

69

Develop personas for your ideal buyers and speak to them on social using your authentic brand voice.

70

Be inspired by social media posts from your favorite big brands and replicate them.



71

Remember that people hop on social media to zone out. Make entertainment your number one priority.

72

Utilize free, built-in analytics tools instead of buying some fancy, costly software.

73

Go for quality, not quantity. Comments and shares ultimately have a greater ROI than number of followers or likes.



74

Post on social media regularly. Consistency is key.

75

Offer tiered discount days, where the more a person spends, the more they save.

Be an Expense Streamlining Ninja

When you're focused on growth, you might forget about another aspect of your business that very much affects your bottom line: business expenses.

Reducing the amount of money you spend on overhead, inventory, and business processes can greatly increase the success of your small business. Give these ideas a try and watch your monthly expenditures shrink.

Be an Expense Streamlining Ninja: Inventory

76

Sell off old stock. Items that have been lying around aren't generating any profit.

77

Don't mark down products storewide. Selectively offer a discount on items that have been hanging around your shelves for too long.

78

Start a clearance sale at 30 percent off marked prices for one week.



79

Double down the second week of a sale and discount remaining items 60 percent.

80

Donate remaining items post sale to charity and write them off on your taxes as a loss.

81

Create a sense of urgency with sales. Announce to customers that stock is limited.



82

Accept that it's okay to not make back what you paid for something.

83

Design a well-organized stockroom so it's easy to track inventory levels.



84

Have a designated spot for each specific piece of inventory.

85

Keep your stockroom organized and clean at all times, so that individual products don't go missing.

86

Never sidestep the process when filling an order in a rush. Doing so creates inventory headaches and inaccuracies in the future.

87

Reward employees with a small bonus who follow inventory practice and maintain accuracy.



88

Take advantage of bulk discounts only when the large amount of merchandise actually reflects realistic sales potential.

89

Don't order extra stock to make up for a vendor's shortcomings when it comes to timely fulfillment.

90

Switch vendors if supply chain bottlenecks continually arise.



91

Throw an overstock or flash sale to entice shoppers through your doors sooner than later.

92

Ask a supplier if they'll accept a return or an exchange of unsold merchandise.



93

Consider working with small suppliers who usually are more willing to accept small orders than large vendors.

94

Use a cloud-based **POS system** like Clover to track your inventory in real-time.



95

Avoid overstock by maintaining one stock count across all channels (in-store, online).

96

Monitor sales history of individual products to improve demand variability predictions.

Be an Expense Streamlining Ninja: Scheduling & Human Resources

97

Using Clover's **reporting capabilities**, determine your peak hours and slow time periods.



98

Schedule your most experienced workers during peak times to get the most bang for your buck.

99

Eliminate physical time clocks and punch cards.

100

Utilize an app, like **Time Clock by Homebase**, to track clock-ins, clock-outs, and breaks.



101

Automate the sending of shift reminders.

102

Be accepting of shift swaps. This deters employees from canceling on you right before they're scheduled to work.

103

Rely on your scheduling app to handle shift trades.

104

Ditch paper. Send employees their schedules via email, text message, or digital calendar reminders so they never need to ask for a copy.



105

Have employees submit time-off requests electronically via your POS system.

106

House human resources documents electronically in one place.

107

Standardize performance reviews so employees know how and when to expect feedback.



108

Create electronic hiring forms for new employees to complete.

109

Watch webcasts to learn labor management best practices.

110

Import employee time cards directly into your payroll management system.



111

Create a schedule at least a month in advance.
Both you and your employees will appreciate it.

112

Consult your sales analytics to predict when you might
need an employee to work late and let them know in advance.



113

Give as much advance notice as possible
when asking someone to pick up an extra shift.

114

If you have to cancel an employee's shift,
give them extra hours during your next busy time.

115

Ask employees to input their availability in your scheduling software.
Consult this information if you need someone to fill in at the last minute.

Be an Expense Streamlining Ninja: Leasing

116

Sign a longer lease and most landlords may give you better terms.



117

Insist that your lease includes an option to renew.

118

Request that rent hikes be limited to the increase in “cost of living” for your area or a reputable inflation index, like the Consumer Price Index.

119

Account for add-ons, like utilities and cleaning, in the cost of maintaining your location.



120

Negotiate for maintenance to be included in the cost of your lease.

121

If maintenance costs are not included in the price, reach a deal on an out-of-pocket max that you’re responsible for.

122

Ask for language in your lease that allows you to share the space with another business.

123

Make sure your location is worth the cost of doing business in that area. If not, shop around for a new place.



124

Don’t be afraid to counter-offer lease terms.

125

Negotiate a stockroom renovation, for example, or other repairs when renewing your lease.

126

Point out that you’re a good tenant – have a strong credit history, make on-time payments, have good relationships with neighboring businesses – when negotiating a lease renewal.



127

Do your homework and learn what nearby businesses pay in rent.

128

Scout out other potential locations and use them as leverage when bargaining for better lease terms.

129

Request that your initial security deposit rolls over from year-to-year instead of making an additional deposit annually.

130

Keep an eye out for additional restrictions in your lease, such as limitations on the times you can do business, the types of items you can sell or the services you can provide, the modifications you can make to the exterior, etc.

131

Launch a pop-up shop to test out a location.



132

Don't overestimate how much space you need. Typically, retail locations and restaurants need **15 square feet** per customer.

133

Purchase the correct type of insurance and the amount of coverage for your business location and its contents.

Be an Expense Streamlining Ninja: Vendors

134

Know what value your business brings to a vendor.

135

Never accept the first offer from a vendor. Everything is negotiable.

136

Inform vendors of their popularity and how much you've increased your supply order to meet demand.



137

Ask for an extended payment term on your largest orders.

138

Inquire about making a larger deposit in exchange for a discount on your order.



139

Consolidate and order from as few vendors as possible to receive better wholesale pricing.

140

If negotiating price isn't an option, inquire if there's a deal on shipping rates or the amount of your deposit.

141

Talk up good vendors to nearby businesses and ask for a referral discount when someone switches to your supplier.

142

Ask for a small discount in exchange for posting about the vendor's products on social media.



143

Gather at least two other quotes to ensure you're getting a competitive price.

144

Restaurant owners: Remain in the know about commodities prices.

145

Share future expansion plans so they know you're committed for the long term.

146

Treat negotiations as a respectful, collaborative partnership—not a conquest.

147

Demonstrate loyalty. Vendors often reward long-term customers with incentives.



Increase Your Business Footprint

Smart business owners dream big, but start small. Typically, that means launching a single sales channel at a time.

Adding new sales channels can be a great way to grow your business—provided that you expand slowly and intelligently.

Increase Your Business Footprint: Open a New Location

148

Recognize that each location is unique and needs to be customized with some local flavor.

149

Maintain standard business processes, technology, and policies across locations.

150

Understand what customers value and prioritize differs from place to place. Get to know your new community and tailor your customer service to meet its different needs.

151

Ensure that your flagship location is profitable—and will continue to be in the future—since you'll need to rely on its cash flow for a while.



152

Implement the same training program to maintain the same level of customer service across all locations.

153

Choose a location that is far enough away from your original store or restaurant that you won't compete with yourself, but not such a distance that you can't oversee both locations.

154

When you do hire a manager for one location, choose an existing employee for the position instead of an outside hire.



155

Outsource pricing, menu, and inventory changes to **Multi-Location Manager** so that updates are made across all locations in real-time.

156

Note changes to make to your existing business that will make its second location run more efficiently.



157

Identify new competitors and challenges that you don't currently face.

Increase Your Business Footprint: Launch an eCommerce Site

158

Automate the building of your online store. Use Clover's **eCommerce tools** to sync your brick-and-mortar site with your digital one.

159

Have a responsive online store, so your wares look good whether a customer is shopping on a desktop or a smartphone.

160

Make security a top priority. Encrypt customer data so it remains protected.

161

Offer free shipping and returns, if you can.

162

Have a consistent return policy across all channels of your business.

163

Use original photography on your site to maintain a branded look and style.



164

Generate menu pages and allow customers to purchase services online that can be redeemed at your physical location.



165

Boost your performance in online search results by using the **Pointy app**, which directs people to your site who are nearby and searching for a product you sell.

166

Encourage customers to enter personal reviews about each item. Peer-to-peer recommendations and feedback can help improve your conversion rates.

167

Allow customers to check out as “guests” instead of requiring them to create logins.



168

Requiring someone to enter all his or her personal information up front can deter a purchase and increase cart abandonment rates.

169

Optimize your site for search keywords.
Free tools like **WebsiteScore** and **Serpstat** can help.

170

Keep an eye on competitors' sites. If you spot features that you like, figure out how to incorporate them into your website.

171

Utilize the latest in website design themes so your online store feels modern, fresh, and relevant while delivering a great user experience.



Increase Your Business Footprint: Open a Mobile Location

172

Test the waters by **opening a food kiosk** — a booth or a stand — instead of starting with a large food truck.



173

Create a limited menu, which will help keep costs down.

174

Accept payments with **Clover Flex**, a durable, full-feature device that accepts credit card payments without a Wi-Fi signal.

175

Don't assume that the same occupancy license that applies to your main location is transferable to your mobile one. Budget the expense for additional permits.

176

Find your niche. If you want to sell the same product as another food truck, brainstorm how to make your presentation or your customer service stand out.

177

Use data to determine the best location for your truck. The app **Food on a Truck** tracks sales by day, hour, and location.



178

Offer **online ordering** so busy customers can simply pick up food instead of waiting in line.

179

Expand beyond serving traditional meals from your mobile location. Generate additional business by catering weddings or birthdays and corporate functions.

180

Approach local cafés or grocers to carry your food in their stores.



Be a Customer Service All-Star

You've made a huge effort to build a business that offers fabulous products and services that your customers love. But none of that matters if your customer service isn't as high quality as your wares.

Hands down, providing good customer service is the number one way to grow your business. According to one study, **52 percent** of consumers surveyed said they would spend more with a company that has good customer service. In contrast, another survey found that 40 percent of consumers stopped doing business with a company because of a bad customer service experience.

Demonstrate your belief that your customers deserve the best by delivering the best. Here's how.

Be a Customer Service All-Star

181

Introduce yourself when someone walks into your store.
A personal greeting goes a long way.

182

Ask for a customer's name and use it when thanking them for making a purchase or saying goodbye.

183

Answer the phone when it rings. Identify yourself by name and kindly ask how you can be of assistance.



184

Include a phone number on your website, so customers can easily get in touch with you when they have questions or concerns.

185

Identify your top sellers and do your best to always keep them on hand so no shopper has to leave empty-handed.

186

Don't be anonymous. Include names and photos of your team on your website.



187

Make it easy for customers to know your hours.
Post them on the homepage of your website.

188

Offer an easy way for customers to give you **feedback online**.

189

What inspired you to open your own business?
Share this story with your customers.



190

Encourage shoppers to contact you using a method that's convenient to them: phone, email, an online form, or direct message via social media.



191

Be real. Listing factoids about yourself and your employees lets customers get to know you, even if they're shopping from the comfort of their own homes.

192

Never let more than 24 hours go by before responding to a customer's question or request.



193

Send a "thank you for your note" email, even if the message doesn't merit a response.

194

When a product does not live up to expectations, apologize and offer to exchange it for a similar item.

195

Respond to positive online reviews with a sincere thank you.

196

Celebrate a customer's birthday by serving him or her a free glass of champagne or a complimentary dessert.



197

Comp a meal when the dish has been made incorrectly.

198

Don't get defensive and argue when a customer posts a critique on an online review site or social media.

199

If you spill something on a customer, offer to pay for his or her dry cleaning bill.

200

Respond to negative online reviews with how you're ensuring the problem doesn't happen again in the future.

201

While customers wait for their food to be prepared, offer a free small bite of a new dish you're trying out.



202

When someone tweets about your business for the first time, send him a direct message with a small discount code.

203

Ask in-store shoppers for their honest opinion about products you're selling.

204

Follow up with customers when you take their advice on how to improve your service or offerings.

205

If a regular asks for something you don't have, consider ordering it online and having it delivered to their house.



206

Give a referral discount to your regulars when they send a new customer your way.

207

Make an honest effort to immediately correct a perceived mistake with an order.



208

Sold out of one of your bestsellers? Find it from another retailer and use their inventory to stock your shelves until the next shipment arrives.

209

Offer same-day delivery to local shoppers that make online purchases.



210

Launch a subscription service that automatically ships customers their favorite items at designated times throughout the year.

211

Host a trunk show. Make it exclusive and invite only your regulars, but encourage them to bring a friend.

212

Reach out to a competitor if you're out of a product that one of your regulars needs.

213

Always take ownership of a problem instead of shirking responsibility.

214

Give your top customers your private cell phone number and encourage them to contact you when they need something.



215

Don't stalk. Ask customers if they need anything, then give them the space to browse and explore your store.

216

Pay close attention to your regulars' habits. If they come in every Thursday for a prosciutto sandwich, say, have it bagged up and ready for them upon their arrival.

217

Take a proactive approach to resolve a troublesome situation with a heated customer instead of saying, "that's against our policy."

218

Lengthen the window of your return policy. Many small businesses only accept returns within 30 days. Consider increasing yours to 60 or even 90 days.

219

Make your return policy fully inclusive. Give shoppers the same timeframe to return an item — regardless of what it is.



220

For in-person returns, have a brief discussion about why a customer is returning an item.

221

Don't require a receipt for returns from members of your loyalty program. Use your records to locate their purchase instead.

222

Issue refunds according to the original form of payment instead of only giving store credit.

223

Think about creating a secondary window for returns. During this extension, accept an item for its lowest selling price.



224

Accept exchanges of unworn or unused merchandise at any time.

225

If someone wants to exchange something, but you no longer have the item and it's outside your return window, offer him or her store credit in the amount that he or she originally paid.

226

Always ask why someone wants to exchange something. The knowledge gained about a product can help you better guide future shoppers looking to buy the same item.



227

If you're having quality issues with a product, proactively reach out to those who purchased it and offer a refund.

228

Make an exception and accept a return from a top customer when he or she is asking outside the window of time.

229

Post your return policy clearly on your website (on the footer of each web page is a great location) and in your store by the checkout counter.



230

Do not require online customers to obtain a return authorization code before they mail back unwanted merchandise.

231

If an item appears new, accept a customer's word that an item is unworn—even if the tags have been removed from it.

232

Instead of offering an excuse when a product or service disappoints a customer, figure out how to fix the problem immediately.

233

When talking to a customer, give him or her eye contact and don't let your eyes wander.

234

Listen attentively when a customer is upset and remain focused solely on what they're saying.



235

Keep calm and reassure a customer that you share his or her disappointment when a product doesn't live up to your standards.

236

Check in with regulars on occasion to see how they're doing. You don't have to wait for a problem to arise to reach out.

237

Reach out to customers when you receive new merchandise that you know they'll love.



238

Don't let a teaching moment pass you by. Discreetly provide feedback to employees in real-time.

239

Lead by example. Provide stellar customer service yourself and your employees will mimic the behavior they see.

240

Have employees taste every dish. They should be able to answer basic questions about everything on the menu.



241

Clothing store owners: Require workers to try on clothing so they can accurately answer customers that ask, "How does this fit?"



242

Review inventory with employees before it hits the floor so they know which items come in multiple colors and which ones don't.

243

Encourage employees to develop relationships with their own VIP customers. The more regulars, the better.



244

Give employees the opportunity to dole out a predetermined number of small discounts at their discretion each month.

245

Have employees shadow you so they learn to subtly upsell by smartly pairing relevant products.

246

If you notice lines developing at your quick-service restaurant, increase the number of checkout locations.



247

Eliminate the cash register completely. **A mobile point-of-sale device** makes hurried customers happy because they can pay and dash.

248

Properly staff your restaurant with enough wait staff so there is a sufficient number of employees to give customers the attentive service they deserve.

249

Allow hungry customers to place take-out orders on their computer or smartphone.



250

Manage expectations. Don't underestimate how long you need to prepare a take-out order.

251

Host a focus group. Gather VIPs and have them offer feedback on some of the various products and services you offer.

252

Keep your dressing rooms clear. Customers should always have an empty, clean room to try on clothes.



253

Check in periodically with customers in your dressing rooms, but don't lurk or linger if they don't need assistance.

254

Be honest. Don't tell a customer that something looks good on her simply to make a sale.

255

Each week, gather your staff together to share the most challenging customer service moments. Brainstorm how you can better handle them in the future.





Form Genuine Relationships

Putting the time and effort needed to build customer loyalty is the best investment you can make as a small business owner.

Why?

Research shows that increasing customer retention rates by 5 percent can boost profits by 25 to 95 percent. That's right, keeping loyal customers is truly more important than making new sales or expanding to multiple locations. Doing so is one of the most important drivers of growth.

Employ these strategies to nurture your customer connections.

Form Genuine Relationships

256

Recognize special occasions. Send birthday, holiday, and anniversary cards to your regulars.



257

Follow up post-purchase to inquire if the customer is satisfied. If he or she isn't, ask how you can be of assistance.

258

Point out to customers what you're doing for them, whether it's fulfilling their special order correctly the first time, letting them know when a sold-out item they loved is back in stock, or shipping their order ahead of schedule.

259

Share recommendations for books, restaurants, workouts, movies, and more.



260

Ask customers for recommendations. Doing so demonstrates that you view the relationship as symbiotic.

261

Send a personalized note to first-time customers thanking them for their business.

262

Delight them with a small discount, exclusive offer, or a special event sent a few days after their initial purchase to encourage a return visit.

263

Supply employees with business cards printed with their phone number and the hours that they're available to hand out to customers.



264

Ask customers to provide you with "wish list" items. Reach out once you have them in stock.

265

Send a targeted email to customers inviting them to join your rewards program.



266

Offer fast, hands-free payment to members of your loyalty program.

267

Reach out to customers through their preferred channel, whether it's email, text message, or via an app.

268

Let data drive your rewards program. Use the dashboard in **Rewards** to track usage.



269

Increase the number of visits made by offering bonuses to regulars and VIPs.

270

Share your contact information in the message welcoming customers to your rewards program.

271

Encourage shoppers and diners to contact you anytime they have a question or need assistance.



272

Identify the item that a customer buys most frequently and surprise them with a sample-sized free gift of it.

273

Give a shout-out to your best customers on social. Keep it personal, sincere, and shareable.



274

Throw an after-hours event and invite your frequent customers.

275

Use coupons to entice regulars to come in even more frequently than usual.

276

Café owners: Offer free coffee refills to regulars.



277

Provide free gift-wrapping service to loyalty program members year-round.

278

Level-up a service for VIPs by offering a free 15 minutes or gifting manufacturer samples.

279

Treat your most loyal customers to early access to new merchandise before it hits the floor or an off-menu tasting dinner.

280

Create a leaderboard for your loyalty program and publicly celebrate the leaders.



281

Learn more about loyalty programs available through the Clover App Market like **Digital Loyalty**, **Loyalty and Rewards**, and **My Rewards**.

282

Test out a loyalty program by having employees recommend it at checkout for a month.

A top-down view of a wooden desk. In the center, a silver laptop is open, displaying a website. To the left of the laptop, there are purple flowers. To the right, there are green flowers. Below the laptop, there is a brown book. In the bottom left corner, there are scissors and some colorful circular objects. In the bottom right corner, there is a green mesh bag. The background is a wooden surface with horizontal planks.

Successfully Launch New Products and Services

People are creatures of habit, and that's particularly true when it comes to their purchasing preferences.

According to one marketing consultant, American families repeatedly buy the same **150 items** — these products making up as much as 85 percent of their household needs.

Undeniably, best sellers should be the bread and butter of your business. But, you can't grow unless you introduce new offerings. Follow these tips to achieve buy-in from your customers.

Successfully Launch New Products and Services

283

Create a merchandising philosophy that sets you apart from your competition.

284

Design a survey to learn which products and services customers would like you to offer.



285

Launch the questionnaire where you interact the most with your customers—whether it's in-store, on Instagram, or via email.

286

Identify the segment of customers you're not reaching and brainstorm how to get them to walk through your doors.

287

Pilot your latest service with your regulars.

288

Solicit testers' opinions during a pilot program and take their feedback to heart.



289

Create buzz. Tease your social media followers with "coming soon" posts.

290

Encourage customers to write about your new offering on online review sites and social media.

291

Leak behind-the-scenes photos of unpacking new merchandise.



292

Pair an existing service with a new one and offer the two at a lower price than if a customer purchased each individually.

293

Throw a launch party and give a small discount on new products.



294

Expand your offerings slowly so your business remains focused on serving its core audience.

295

Gym owners: Offer a demo class debuting the latest workout.



296

While diners are waiting for a table, have a member of the wait staff pass out samples of the newest dishes on your menu.

297

Have top customers give feedback on the next season's inventory before you actually buy it.

298

Link up with a nearby small business. Create a small vignette in your location featuring their latest products and have them do the same for yours.

299

Have a VIP customer use his or her phone to film consumer reviews of your new offerings.



300

Identify a service offered by one of your competitors and figure out how you can do it better.

301

Only introduce something new if it meets the needs of your target market.

302

Determine the area that your competitors are underserving and stake your claim for it.

303

Bring in something seasonal that will be in high demand during your slowest time period.



304

Add products that compliment top sellers to your inventory.

305

Create packages or gift baskets featuring trusty favorites alongside new merchandise.

306

Rely on beloved vendors. Your customers love their existing products, so they'll likely adore new ones, too.

307

Limit the number of brands you introduce to your inventory. There can be a steep learning curve anytime you do business with a new vendor.

308

Ask new vendors that you're considering working with where else their goods are stocked. You don't want to buy inventory that's sold in numerous other stores nearby.

309

Maintain a healthy ratio of new products and bestsellers.



310

Don't add a product simply because customers ask for it.

311

Believe in the product. If you don't, neither will your customers.

312

Brand recognition is powerful. Stock items from new or different product categories manufactured by your go-to vendors.

313

Jump to stock collaborations between a popular vendor and mainstay brand. These items are a win-win since they attract fans of both companies.



314

Take into account business needs, not just customer needs when working with a new vendor.

315

Don't stock inventory from new vendors if the ordering process is difficult.

316

Prioritize manufacturers who have "at once" inventory that can be quickly restocked if demand for the new item exceeds your supply.

317

Determine whether a new item or service can be priced to generate a profit.



318

Don't add something to your inventory simply because you like the vendor. New products must be right for your store.

319

Create demand. Stock new items in-store or online, not both.

320

Use Pinterest to place images of new products next to ones you already sell to visualize what they'll look like on your shelves.



321

Judge each potential new service for uniqueness. If it's too similar to something you already offer, a customer will opt for what they already know and love.

322

Tap into the feeling of familiarity. "You like this, so try that" is powerful when directing customers to new offerings.

323

Provide detailed descriptions of new services and dishes on your website and on menus.



324

Sell what you love. If you're not passionate about your goods and services, neither will your customers.

325

Make products with recurring sales value part of your merchandising plan.

326

Spot hot products before they're part of a trend.



327

Set the bar for quality and make sure every new item meets or exceeds it.

328

Make sure a need for the products or service exists.

329

A picture says a thousand words — and you want it to say, “Buy me.” If your business is e-commerce only, select new products that look desirable in photographs.

330

Introduce new dishes featuring locally-grown ingredients.



331

Provide the proper training to your staff so they’re particularly knowledgeable about new services. Customers will ask more questions than usual, and your staff’s answers could mean the difference between a sale and an “I’ll pass.”

332

Introduce new merchandise that’s a wide range of price points, so there’s something fresh for every customer.

333

Offer a free trial product or service to every 50th person that walks through your doors one day.

334

Athletic apparel merchants: Participate in a local running race wearing the latest sneakers and wear a pin that says, “Ask me about my new kicks.”



335

Bring out the competitive side of your clients and issue a challenge for them to name your new service. The most creative entry wins.

336

Provide your new offering as a part of a raffle giveaway. Promotion for the event will give you free publicity.



337

Ask yourself if the price is appropriate and if not, try to make adjustments.

338

Create a detailed list describing your target market, and make sure all new products and services address that group of customers.



339

Write a brief value proposition: a short description of why customers should care about the new product or service.

340

Carve out a small budget to market new services to drive more foot traffic.





Get Savvy About Analytics

It's time for small businesses to embrace big data analytics.

Many small business owners avoid using analytics because they're skeptical that it's worth the investment or they think it's too hard to use. **Research shows** that nearly 51 percent of small businesses believe in big data, yet only 45 percent perform regular data analyses.

No-analysis-required market intelligence is just what you need to take your business to the next level. Use **Main Street Insights** to uncover the following stories hiding in your sales.

Get Savvy About Analytics

341

Discover your average ticket size.

342

See which customers account for the highest number of transactions.



343

View the customers that spend the most per purchase.

344

Track the number of repeat customers you have, as well as how many customers visit for the first time.

345

Gain knowledge about the age and gender demographics of best customers.

346

Learn the average amount spent per transaction.



347

View your sales by the day, week, month, or year.

348

Uncover what day of the week and hour of the day are your busiest.

349

Confirm your business's slowest times.

350

Learn where your customers live.



351

View the geographic areas where your customers spend money.



352

Uncover how far your customers travel to get to your business.

353

Compare how your revenue has changed from year to year.

354

Use data to inform if you should scale your business and where to expand.

355

Gain valuable market knowledge about where your customers spend money via a color-coded heat map.



356

See how your daily, weekly, and monthly sales measure up against similar businesses in your area.

357

Reveal consumer-spending trends at similar, nearby merchants.

358

Follow how weather conditions affect your business.



359

Find out which repeat customers have the largest social media following.

360

Monitor card versus cash transaction data.

361

Identify which items are often purchased together.

362

Find out which items are popular with new customers compared to repeat customers.

363

Identify your most important performance metrics and have them automatically reported to you on a regular basis.



364

Make sure you can easily access transaction data from anywhere at any time.

365

View forecasted data to prepare for rushes and slumps.



**For more helpful tips on how to do
business better, visit:**
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