

Title slide

Hi, I'm Deb Brown from SaveYour.Town, Thanks to Kansas State Extension and Research for having me here today. I'm going to talk about Marketing in a Small Town. We'll discuss enticing the customer, being different, and living in the 21st century. This bit of advice applies to businesses, nonprofits and governmental entities. Let's begin!

Entice the customer

Rule #1 it is all about your customer and you'll want to entice them to come to you. How do you do that?

Curb appeal

Curb appeal is what draws attention and brings people in your doors. 70% of first-time sales happen because of curb appeal. Try extending your inside to the outside. Plant some flowers in pots and put outside. Or bring some of your items for sale outside.

Did you know that women make 80% of all retail purchases? What if you put a bench outside for the husbands and partners to sit on while the women shop? Bring some of your products outside – entice your customers to come in and see what you've got.

Front and Back

Don't forget the back of your store! If you have an entrance there, all the better. If you don't, you should know that people do drive down the alleys and see what the back end of your store looks like. Does it match the image you want to portray? This picture is on the back of a building in Webster City. The man who owns it ran for city council and got beat soundly. His friends put this on the back of his building. It wasn't so funny at first – but he's a good man, and he got the humor in it. Now it's a story the whole town shares. Just because you lose doesn't mean you're a loser.

Signage

Signage – are we using what works? Is the sign on the front of the store high up on the building? Did you know that people driving cars can't see it? Try blade signs – they are visible while driving and walking.

Welcome to Norseland

Is your name on the window? When the sun is shining, you can't read it. If it only has your name, does it tell people what you sell? Just because people in town might know you, not everyone does. Letting us know what you sell is valuable as well!

You can Pee Here

One more thing. **Don't put a sign in the window that says, 'no public bathroom'.** How welcoming is that? Does that make you want to shop? Let people use your bathroom. Make your bathroom a fun place to use. Make sure that fun extends into the rest of the store too! When someone is using the bathroom, you have a captive audience. What can you promote at eye level in your bathroom?

Change Your windows

It's like changing your clothes – people notice you when you don't wear the same thing every day. You've got products and services and this big window is free advertising. Take advantage of it. This woman is Rose Ellis, an artist in Grand Rapids Michigan. Her studio is in a store window. She said "You couldn't get me out of here with a crowbar. It's the best business plan I never thought of. It has turned my life around." Now that's using your window!

Educate Your Locals

Why not host an open house just for them twice a year?
Several businesses could partner up and do this.
And while you're at it – invite the local press.
This is word of mouth marketing and very effective.

Be different rule #2

There's no rule that says you must do your work the same as everyone else. Let's dig into this.

Find out what people want slide

You do want to find out who your market is. Who will use your product or service? What is their Age, location, and income level? Knowing your customer will help you be different enough – you'll be able to better serve them!

Study trends and listen to your customers when they tell you what they'd like to see in your store. Make sure your product or service is relevant to your business. In the 2nd Wind Music Store in Fostoria, Ohio the owner was selling a lot of reeds for musical instruments. He was a previous music teacher and knew very well how often reeds break or wear out. He created a subscription plan for reeds, called the Reed Revolution and now his customers who used to have to come to the store now receive reeds automatically in the mail. That's knowing your market, being different and providing excellent customer service.

Be tech savvy

Technology is here, no sense arguing that it won't work. It will, if you choose to use it. You can use your iPad to look up product info for your customer. Teach them Alexa or Google dot and show them how to re-order from you on those products they buy all the time (hint: go to YouTube and look for a video that will teach you how to do that!) Add a smart tv to loop a presentation about your town and provide a charging station for their cell phones while they shop. Be sure to ask to ask your vendors for any tech tools or sites you can showcase!

Partnerships

Create partnerships with other stores to promote your products or services. Working with people you know is a great way to start.

Partnerships with ‘different’ kinds of business are an avenue we often forget about. Some of the partnerships we’ve seen in my town are:

Osweiler’s, a woman’s clothing store, has given \$25 gift certificates to the restaurant next door to their customers when they spend over \$100 in their store.

in TANDEM Marketing, a local coworking location, has hosted Travel to Ireland presentations for the Chamber.

Wilson Brewer Park and The Depot crew (a local historical site) partnered with Summer Nights (a downtown festival) and brought old timer costumes for kids to try on and have their picture taken. The chamber asked them not to just set up a booth and hand out flyers. At the next event they took several old pictures of buildings and put them on blocks. Then people had to identify where those buildings were!

Schlotfeldt Engineering partnered with The Tour of Empty Buildings and provided the maps for the tour.

Find ways to work with other businesses in your community to promote each other. You probably don’t all have the same customers!

I love a parade

What are you doing in your community to promote your business?

Here’s an idea — get in a parade. That’s right — gussy up that old jalopy and be in a parade. While you are at it, take a lot of pictures and talk to some other people in the parade. Meet folks who are watching the parade.

Here’s another suggestion — write about the other businesses in the parade on your website or newsletter. Take pictures of them and put them up on Facebook. You could live tweet the event! You could promote the parade, write a press release stating that not only will you be in the parade, but it will be live tweeted and live Facebooked (upload the pics live). Send the press release to all the local folks, and don’t forget the tv people.

Tell stories. Make it fun. Get excited. Get your workers and your kids involved.

While you’re at – find a parade in a nearby county. Spread the love. Give of yourself and talk about others. Tell the stories. Ken Blanchard said “ I absolutely believe in the power of tithing and giving back. My own experience about all the blessings I’ve had in my life is that the more I give away, the more that comes back. That is the way life works, and that is the way energy works.”

Live in the 21st Century

We are here now. Let’s utilize the tools we have now. Your older customers won’t always be around, and you will need to cultivate new customers too.

Are you mobile friendly? Did you know that 97% of consumers search online for a local business? Are you there? Do you know where ‘there’ is?

Website

Let's start there. You own the content on your website. So, it makes sense to push your consumers to your website. At the very least you want it designed as a simple landing page with your name, address, phone number and email—and pictures. Make it easy for customers to find you and contact you.

Add pictures often. Those videos you shot? Put them on your website. Add new product information. Give advice and how-to instructions.

Don't know how to do this on your website? Websites these days are very very easy to update by the website owner (you). If your site is old, and you are unable to update it – it's time to look at changing that. Don't be afraid. It's not hard! It's easy for me to want to preach here – I hear once and awhile “I'm too old to learn that.” Or “I don't have time.” First – you are not too old. I'm 63 and I learned how to do it. You can too. Or you can hire someone to do it for you. Just be sure you trust them, and you update often. As far as not enough time to do it – it's your business. This is a must have item. If you want to be found in this day and age. Even us old people are looking online for you. Make time.

Google

Are you listed with Google? Google My Business is a free tool provided by Google that allows business owners to setup a brief profile that displays their name, address, phone number, hours and website link in relevant search results like Google's Local Map Pack, Local Finder, and organic rankings in general. A critical first step in ANY local SEO strategy is to claim and verify your local business' Google My Business (GMB) listing. When someone searches for your business on Google, the information used in the setup of your GMB profile (phone number, address, reviews, etc.) is pulled from your *Google My Business* page and populated in the search result. It shows up in Google side bar on first page and on the mobile phone. Also, if someone searches for 'furniture Webster city' it will pull up three suggestions IF you are using those keywords. You can often add pictures to this listing as well. Google likes that, and when they like that you get put closer to the top of listings.

Let's Talk Social Media

This is a tool, not an end all be all. You'll look at them and decide which one or two will work best for you. It's a tool, and one that you want in your tool box.

Cross promote

Jody Halsted is a travel writer and a trip planner for Ireland – she uses hashtags that make sense, and she has posted on Facebook, twitter and Instagram with this post. You can use one post on several places. Notice she has tagged other people and places and used hashtags that her customers would search. And the picture is just fabulous.

Don't do it

If you've got a social media account and you never post on it, people don't believe you're open! Just don't do it. And don't hand it over to an intern to do the work. First, they don't stay. You can have them help, but don't make them the only one doing the posting. You'll

want to monitor their work as well. Are they representing your brand? Are they reaching out to your determined audience?

Share Other links

People love a good story, share those kinds of links. Put your own spin on it! Don't forget to share what your partners are writing about too. 80% of your posts should be about other things than just YOU YOU YOU.

Video

Don't be afraid to shoot it and share it. Try some Live videos – and don't wait for people to join and watch it. Just begin – share about a product, tell a story, do an interview. These videos can be a bit longer. Use a product like Lumen5 to take your pictures (or videos) and overlay text on each slide. They then create a video for you.

Email newsletter

Begin collecting email addresses – it can be by using social media to collect them and or you can leave a box on your counter with little sign up forms. Don't send emails every day! Determine a schedule that works for you. For me, it's weekly. But it might be monthly for you. Email newsletters can share product info, sales, events, advice, stories and even offers. They help establish you as an expert in your field.

Build Relationships

I get asked by retailers “Is that social media stuff really working for you?”

Then they say, “Well, teach me so I can get more customers too.”

I can teach you how to use social media, but social media is just a tool. .Learn how to use it, then build great things. Get the people to come to your shop or store. Show up in person if you're a brick and mortar. Visit your website if you are online.

In social media, we learn to carve out ways to have conversations with people we don't know very well. It could be your neighbor, or a person across the world. It always involves having a conversation – along the lines of:

- I like this
- I don't like that
- here's a link about the red dog you were talking about
- did you see that story about Patagonia?

Not every conversation should be about your business. In fact, 80% should be about something else. Remember, you are creating a relationship.

It's a two-way conversation about things in life. You'll mention your business of course, you won't scream about it, make that the only thing you talk about. Think about the conversations after church or over coffee with a friend – is the only thing you talk about your business?

So, what does it take to make social media work in your business?

A commitment. Drew McClellan told me “*plan on 12 to 24 months to commit to building social media for your business.*” He was right. Take the small steps, try things out, see if they work. Build relationships.

Guilt

Just saying locals should shop local doesn't encourage them to do so. In fact, trying to make them feel guilty because they don't shop local doesn't work. Providing real value and service and getting the word out will go a lot further than just expecting people to shop local only because you are there.

Know your products

I used to sell high end luggage in a retail store. Why pay over \$500 for a suitcase? I could show how to pack it, address objections before they asked them, and talk about the value and why it cost so much. THE REAL SECRET WAS ... so could all my staff. **Train your staff and set expectations.** Can I walk into your store and be greeted by someone who doesn't have a cellphone in their hands? Or at least who isn't on the phone and won't greet me? You get to train your staff - and set the expectations. That's part of being a store owner (or manager). Why not write down the expectations, and review it weekly in your staff meeting? Or post it in the break room? Give your staff the opportunity to learn about the products. Bring in vendors to share about their lines. Make videos available (YouTube is great for this too).

Show your products

Not only do they know their products, they give you an opportunity to touch them at Sawmill Designs. What a bonus! When you walk in the store, you see this display and realize you can choose your own wood, and by touching it and looking at it. Not by looking in a catalog. This is a real value for a local business. Amazon can't compete with this.

Be ninjas

Be Ninjas in your own store - pretend you are a customer. What do you see first? Is it the sidewalk in front? Is your most popular items right up front, or are they in the back where the customer must walk through the store to see them? Do you have interesting vignettes to draw people in? Is the store clean, free of dust and no dirty floors? Has the store been rearranged lately or is it the same stuff in the same place?

Traditional Marketing

Will it still work for you?

Use the news

Talk about telling your stories! Write once, use six times

I think it's important to support your local newspaper and radio, but not just in a random kind of way. Newspapers are having problems, and part of it is because they haven't figured out how to reach this 'new' customer. The one who doesn't read the paper! Begin **building connections** with them. Ask for a sit down with the sales manager and the publisher. Most

small-town newspapers don't have a large staff and it's easy enough to sit down with staff. If your market includes customers who are primarily using online tools, you want to find them online! Ask the paper what they are doing to utilize their online tools. Can you advertise on their website, or will they post about you on Social Media? It behooves them to be found where their customers are as well. And not everyone reads things in print or listens to the radio. If your market includes newspaper readers, run an ad. Ask the paper if you can write an article for them too. With reduced staffs, you might find they will jump at the chance to have more content available! If you're a hardware store, you can write about the correct way to set up your Christmas tree, for example.

Radio

Get interviews, use kids (listeners love them) – and ask them the same things you asked the newspapers. But only if that is where your market is!

Try these ideas

Now I'll share a few ideas that could work for you.

Ask your customers to leave a Review

Ask your customers to leave a review. Even better - make it easy for them to do so. Create a postcard they can take with them that have the links to where to post a review. Or an even **smaller step** - put those links on your website and direct people to your site. People really like to be asked for help, and it's an easy ask for you.

Online event

Are you giving customers a way to support you in **small meaningful ways**? Kevin Rubash, the owner of Interior Spaces had several old inventory framed pictures that he wanted to do something with (like sell). Instead of just hosting a sale, he created a Facebook Art Auction. He posted a picture of each piece. Then he put a two-day time frame on the auction. And he encouraged his local town followers to bid on them in \$5 increments. It was an auction for local people only. He would not ship the pictures. In fact, they boosted the post locally! The final winner to this event, all the proceeds were donated to the local food bank!

Community

Tell your stories. Customers want to know you are just like them. Do you support the Little League team? Great! Let them know! Have events in your business that feature them. Make the community a part of your business. You don't have to finance every opportunity that comes by, there are other ways to show you care. Posting flyers in your window is a small step. Have a fashion show for the prom kids - and partner with the business who rents tuxes and/or sells prom dresses. Be sure to invite the moms to this too!

Work with other sites

Look at other Facebook pages, and see what groups you might want to belong to. Then share what you are doing in a relevant way. And encourage them to do the same on your page!

Ten Lessons Learned

It pays to be old – if you can remember the lessons learned! Here's 10 that you'll want to remember.

1. When using your digital camera to make a video, plant your elbows on a solid surface and then hold the camera. It eliminates the shaking.
2. If you want someone to do something, ask them to do it. Don't expect them to read your mind.
3. Practice writing press releases. Learn how to write them. People want to know what exciting things you and your company are up to. A press release is a great way to tell them.
4. Think in tomorrow and 5-year increments. What are the six things you'll do tomorrow? And Make a plan that extends out five years. It makes you look at things differently.
5. Learn how to write a profit and loss statement. How do you know if that idea is any good if you can't show how you can make money at it?
6. Volunteer to be around people you want to be like. You want a successful business? Volunteer at the local chamber of commerce. You want to travel? Volunteer at the CVB. You'll be introduced to all the people you need to know.
7. Join a service organization. Learn how to go to meetings once a week and work on giving back. Kiwanis, Rotary, Lions – just to name a few.
8. Be a mentor. Work with a kid in school, big sister big brother program, at your local church — pass on your knowledge.
9. Tell stories. People don't remember dates and times. They remember the stories.
10. Always be yourself. You are good enough just as you are. Shine. Shine. Shine.

Questions?

Thank you!

I have a gift for you – it's from Becky and me. You'll receive a free video on how we use the Idea Friendly Method in our work. And you'll get our free newsletters too!

www.saveyour.town/gift