

Wellington

AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

CHAMBER MEMBER BUSINESS OF THE MONTH: Sugar Bee Copy International



Flex Your Marketing Muscle with Chamber Member and 7-Year Advertising Veteran

Who We Are.

Sugar Bee Copy International (SBCI) is a boutique marketing consulting agency that specializes in content creation. With over 7-years' experience in advertising, SBCI, founder Eve Grey has broken down today's technology and commerce to a science. Marketing doesn't have to be complicated when partnering with a strong team. That team will also allow you the power for tailoring your message. Your marketer needs to ensure all communication is properly deployed. Read on to learn more about marketing and one of the Wellington Chamber's newest member, Sugar Bee Copy International.

As any small business or entrepreneur knows, marketing is key to your company's growth. There's no mistake every business plan out there includes a section targeting the strategies, demographics and geographical locations in which the company will create as milestones. While all this sounds good, there's just one issue. It's called T-I-M-E.

There are only so many hours in a day when you're the CEO, president or even a freelance professional. Most likely you're trying to find a way to fit everything into your schedule and could use an additional 4-10 hours added to your week. Because social media, website maintenance, and branding have become a full-time gig, executives are left with no other alternative than to hire outside of their company or have existing personnel to manage these daily tasks. Also, innovation and technology changes almost daily, i.e., Facebook alone has gone through multiple interface changes in 2017 where it's difficult to keep up. Anyone who is granted permission to work on your company's marketing, needs to have the know-how, time and be 100% trustworthy.

Besides staying current with time and changes, in some cases, your secretary or head of Human Resources (HR) may not always be the best choice for managing such things as blogging and social media. Even if they have a marketing degree, leaving your employees with the responsibility can be overwhelming when they have additional scope of work. Furthermore, depending on the situation, you could be faced with complete chaos trying to retrieve credentials

or inappropriate posting. Hiring a reputable marketing or advertising firm to mandate your company's online presence can be one of the most important investments you can make. But, there are some vital things to consider when hiring the right people.



Buyer Beware: There are very few regulations with marketing firms so be cautious when hiring an outside source. False advertisement, political and racial issues can cause a company to lose a lot of money if these incidents find their way into your content. Besides risking questionable posts, most advertising agencies charge huge retainer fees and include a hefty contract. Even though you may have the luxury of firing a business, there's more involved. Be sure you're using a company that has a good reputation or comes highly recommended. Most importantly trust your gut instinct and read your contracts.

By the same token, you need to hire a marketer who can be trusted. You need to know who you're hiring is manning the battlefield and not being passed down an agency's lower level staff. Today's culture with millennial offices entails, long lunches, slacking deadlines along with things like social media being placed on autopilot for the weekend. Based on working for these types of businesses in the past,

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Tuesday, January 9th**▶ NETWORKING & EDUCATIONAL BREAKFAST**

7:30 am

Taco Johns - 7910 6th Street | Wellington

Guest Speaker: Kathi Wright / Executive Director of the Boys & Girls Clubs of Larimer County

Topic of Discussion: "The Who, What, When, Where, Why of a Boys & Girls Club."

Tuesday, January 9th, 23rd - Feb 13th, 27th**TOWN BOARD OF TRUSTEES MEETING**

7:30 pm

Leeper Center | 3800 Wilson Avenue

Thursday, January 11th**▶ RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY**

8:30 am

Thistle, Ltd - 3713 West Cleveland | Wellington

Thursday, January 11th**▶ REGIONAL BUSINESS AFTER HOURS**

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Event held at Budweiser Event Center

5290 Arena Circle | Loveland

Register online at: www.fortcollinschamber.com/event/regional-business-hours-budweiser-event-center-2/

Cost is \$13 pre-register for members, \$20 at the door.

When registering please select your Chamber.

Tuesday, January 16th & February 20th**▶ CHAMBER BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING**

8:00 am

Wellington Housing Authority | 3914 Roosevelt Avenue

Tuesday, January 16th**STRATEGIC & BUSINESS PLANNING;****3 PART SERIES \$120.00**

3 Sessions ending Tuesday, January 30th

Topic: Managing a Business

Larimer County SBDC Training Site - Rocky Mountain

Innosphere

(970) 498-8918

Email: terri@larimersbdc.orgRegister at <https://clients.coloradosbdc.org/center>**Tuesday, January 18th****MAYOR'S RECOGNITION NIGHT**

6:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Leeper Center | 3800 Wilson Avenue

▶ CHAMBER'S DONATION CHECK PRESENTATION TO THE BOYS & GIRLS CLUB

Presentation donation check will be made during the Mayor's Recognition Night

5:00 pm - 7:00 pm

Leeper Center | 3800 Wilson Avenue

Eve Grey of SBCI has been employed in some of these young digital media offices. "In the previous positions where I worked, it wasn't uncommon to punch out on Friday at 3 pm to return Monday to all-day meetings. In most cases, the client's needs were neglected until Tuesday when there was time to answer phone calls and emails. Not to mention, the oversight of potential or previous clients leaving reviews or inquiries about products and services. You can imagine the business people lose when they aren't doing a good job managing things like Facebook, Twitter or LinkedIn. Since many people find these channels to be a viable way of communicating and doing business, they might turn elsewhere if their questions go unanswered.

At the same time, businesses need proper management of Social Media. They also need to drive traffic to their website. "No one is going to search for something 6-pages deep when surfing Google" states Grey. "SEO marketing is necessary if you're going to have rank, and there are two elementary things to include that will boost you to the first page. The two are daily posting on social media, and weekly blogging from the website. These tools can make a huge difference when people are searching for answers." Grey knows all too well as a professional content writer who gets outsourced from other digital media companies. She explains "I'm the one they call when they don't have an effective blogger writing for their companies. Blogs and ghostwriting is one of the most common requests. Reason being is SEO and Blogs are constantly pumping new juice into your website, and Google loves fresh, new content".

Despite partnering with other agencies for blog writing and creative content, SBCI does a multitude of content production. Eve explains "The current trend today is video marketing. Google's algorithms love video, and everyone needs to be utilizing these company assets." Look around, and you'll see many agricultural and manufacturing businesses use video." They reach their clients with controlled messaging about their products or services through digital assets otherwise known as video vignettes.

'Digital' is an encompassing word these days, and Eve has a strong background in commercial television where she excels with her clients. Ms. Grey isn't your average videographer. The former SAG actress has produced over 35 commercials around the country. She's also co-produced "The John Kerwin Show" which is a national comedy talk show still airing on JLTV today. Formerly head of video production at one of the leading automotive advertising agencies, Herman Advertising made Grey responsible for producing and directing several television commercials. Auto Dealers such as Porsche of San Diego, Audi, and Toyota of Lewisville have had the pleasure of working alongside of Grey for distribution on both the web and broadcast TV. Video and original photography are two creative assets that every business needs to be top-notch within the digital world.

Whether you're seeking blogs, social media management, video production or still shot photography our services will help you gain serious traction with search engine optimization and building a strong brand. The best part is we are now local to Wellington, Colorado where our home-base is located. Join Eve for a cup of coffee or contact her directly, to learn more about how you can build an online presence selling more of your products and services. ■

The first consultation is always free for Chamber Members!

**Sugar Bee Copy International****Eve Grey**

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Wellington, CO 80549

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Santa's Bistro

Wellington Chamber & Main Street Programs float built by Richard Crus and assembled & organized by Rick Freeman. The organizations provided a drawing to win Santa's Bistro!! 100% of proceeds benefited the Wellington Food Bank.



Business Lighting Contest

On behalf of the Wellington Chamber of Commerce and the Wellington Colorado Main Streets Program we congratulate our 2017 Business Lighting Contest Winners and appreciate all the business entries we received.

A special thank you to the Wellington Grill, T-Bar Inn, and Papa's Table for donating the generous gift certificates as prizes!! And to our judges Heather Zadina (Chair of the Wellington Area Chamber of Commerce) and Brian Graves (President of the Wellington Colorado Main Streets Program).

We could not have done this without all of you and look forward to the next lighting contest! THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!

1st Place: Kinzli Team at Re/Max Alliance (\$100)



2nd Place: Automotive Repair of Wellington (\$75)



3rd Place: BSH Insurance (\$25)



Friday, January 26th

FINANCIALS & BOOKKEEPING -
FROM INPUT TO UNDERSTANDING \$40

8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Larimer County SBDC Training Site - Rocky Mountain Innosphere

Register at <https://clients.coloradosbdc.org/reg>

Thursday, February 1st

QUICKBOOKS ONLINE; 3 PART SERIES \$199.00

3 Sessions ending Thursday, February 15th

Topic: Business Accounting & Budget

Larimer County SBDC Training Site - Digital Workshop
(970) 498-9295

Email: terri@larimersbdc.org

Register at <https://clients.coloradosbdc.org/Events>

Friday, February 2nd

3 WAYS FINANCIAL INFORMATION CAN MAKE YOUR
BUSINESS THRIVE \$40

8:30 am to 12:00 pm

Larimer County SBDC Training Site - Rocky Mountain Innosphere

Register at <https://clients.coloradosbdc.org/reg>

Tuesday, February 6th

▶ NETWORKING & EDUCATIONAL BREAKFAST

7:30 am

Taco Johns - 7910 6th Street | Wellington

Guest Speaker: Gayle Langley / Program Coordinator of Colorado Department of Local Affairs (DOLA)

Thursday, February 8th

▶ BUSINESS AFTER HOURS

5:30 pm to 7:30 pm

Hosted By: Blue Federal Credit Union

Event held at: (Location Pending)

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC! BRING A GUEST!!

Saturday, February 10th

VALENTINE'S DAY SQUARE DANCE

Wellington Fire Department - 8130 3rd Street | Wellington

Visit www.townofwellington.com for additional details or call (970) 568-3381

WELCOME TO OUR NEWEST MEMBERS:

A NEW YOU RODAN + FIELDS SKINCARE

AMERICAN ELECTRICAL INNOVATIONS

AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR OF WELLINGTON

BERKSHIRE HATHAWAY - KRIS LAINE

BRANDESIGNS WEB SOLUTIONS

CHIPPED OFF WINDSHIELD CHIP REPAIR

COLORADO HOME VIEW AT RE/MAX ADVANCED

KRISTI CANNON

OBERMEYER HYDRO

SUGAR BEE COPY INTERNATIONAL



Heather A. Zadina
Chair, Board of Directors
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www.wellingtoncoloradochamber.net

2017 Chair's Review

2017 has been a dynamic and very productive year in Wellington! The Wellington Area Chamber of Commerce – which, with the exception of one paid part-time administrative assistant, operates solely due to volunteer efforts - has continued taking advantage of new opportunities to expand our participation and visibility in the community, as well as increase value and services for our members. We are proud to present this, the Chamber's 3rd Publication of the fast-growing Community Guide and Membership Directory, which now has an even wider distribution and will include more communities along the front range!

As our community continues its rapid growth rate, Chamber membership also continues to steadily grow – as of this publication, we have 144 members, including 38 brand NEW members. One exciting new change in 2017 was the introduction of a new level of membership: the "Home-Based Business" membership. This level was created at a lower cost-entry point in order to bring in more of our smaller, non-storefront, members. We also welcomed several new businesses to the area with Ribbon Cutting Ceremony events this year! Ribbon Cuttings are available to ANY new business – not just Chamber members! In addition, the Chamber continues to offer several informative and social opportunities EVERY month! Our Business After Hours events, hosted by local businesses, generally take place on the second Thursday of each month, and our Networking and Educational Breakfast meetings take place on the first Tuesday of each month at 7:30 a.m. at Taco Johns. If you are a Chamber member and have not yet come to one of these events, we welcome you to join us!

In addition to our "usual" activities, we also hosted a few special community happenings this year. One of our major events was hosting the Culpepper Merriweather Circus – this event was a lot of fun and was well attended by the public. Over 1,117 tickets were sold (over 10% of the town!) and the Chamber was able to gain \$1,668 as a result! Additionally, Chamber II Rounds was held in September – this annual event raised funds for Harvest Farm. Not only was it a big Success - around 45 players enjoyed two rounds of disc golf – but we were able to donate \$1,940 to Harvest Farm as a result! In addition, our annual dinner in October was a resounding success. Not only did we have a fun time networking and indulging a marvelous feast at new Chamber member, Terry Bison Ranch Resort, we also had the most successful fundraiser on record, enabling us to donate over \$5,700 towards the Wellington Boys and Girls Club building fund! October ended with our annual Trick or Treat Down Main Street & Beyond and the costume contest afterward. This annual event, thanks in large part to the generosity and participation of Wellington businesses, is still growing with even more kids and more business participants every year! Finally, this year we also launched the "Chamber Ambassador" program, as we sought to connect with and better serve our members. We gained a lot of valuable insight as to what we were doing right and what we can improve upon as we strive to keep evolving with our every growing community.

The Chamber is also partnering more frequently with the Main Streets Program on dual-projects, such as our joint 4th of July parade float and our round-table joint board workshop we participated in this past spring. We are striving to find more ways to work together toward our common interest of cultivating and supporting our community while maintaining our independent missions.

Our town is GROWING!!! Of primary significance to the community this year - THE BOND PASSED and a new high school/middle school has been approved for Wellington. This school will not only be a great asset to our

community and help propel us into the future, but it also will be the first time the town has had a high school in 50 years! Although, unfortunately, progress on the school has been delayed by about a year due to various legal issues primarily regarding bond wording; these issues are not expected to change the ultimate outcome; while the legal process is underway, the school district has entered into a purchase agreement for land for the new school – so, process IS moving forward as much as possible at this time.

Meanwhile, Wellington business is growing as well! The Boxelder Business Park is BOOMING - ALL building lots in the business park have been sold and many additional businesses are bringing new employees to Wellington's economic base. In addition, we are excited about several other new businesses which we understand will be locating to our community within the next year. Cleveland Avenue continues to offer substantial opportunities for commercial growth – we are confident that the ongoing changes and improvements along Main Street will attract commercial development and interest in the available vacant lots and buildings, as well as provide a much-needed tax base for continued expansion and maintenance. In addition, our new Town Administrator, Ed Cannon, along with a few local business owners, and Chamber liaisons, have been participating in a new economic development focus group which meets on a bi-weekly basis to discuss new and possible future economic opportunities within our community. Finally, although an ideal solution to the existing access issues with Wellington's infrastructure may be some time away, we are actively trying to stay on DOT's radar and working with them concerning the overpass between east and west Wellington.

As you can see, your Chamber is active in your community. We are proud of our community and we are committed to being a leading, motivating, and supportive presence for Wellington Area businesses. We have had a very productive and amazing year, but we are always seeking to expand and improve. Please consider becoming more involved in YOUR Chamber – sponsor events and attend Chamber functions to promote your business, network, and support local business. We expect an exciting, constructive 2018 and hope to see YOU at Chamber events!

AND REMEMBER - SUPPORT WELLINGTON, SUPPORT LOCAL BUSINESS.

Chamber Gives Back to the Community!

During the after hours in November 2017, the Wellington Chamber presented the Harvest Farms with a donation of \$1,940.36 after this year's 'Chamber 2 Rounds' Disc Golf Tournament's. Due to the success of the event and generous sponsors, we were also able to donate to the Fort Collins Disc Golf Association!!



(Photo courtesy of Brian Graves / Graves Images)

CHAMBER WELCOMES AUTOMOTIVE REPAIR OF WELLINGTON

Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held on December 14th 2017. Thank you, Automotive Repair of Wellington for hosting this month's Business After Hours and congratulations on your Ribbon Cutting Ceremony!! Owners, John & Linda Knaack recently purchased the previous B&B Auto building at 3703 Cleveland Avenue, and have partnered with NAPA Auto Care Shop to provide extensive automotive service and products. John and Linda are considering doing some Car Talk Events in Wellington in the near future. Do you have a specific topic you would like to discuss? CALL TODAY (970) 567-8333.



(Photo courtesy of Brian Graves / Graves Images)

WELLINGTON AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

2018

MEMBER 2 MEMBER COUPON BOOKS

1 (970) 568-4133

"Contact the Wellington Chamber with your discount offer and we'll take care of the rest!"

Chamber businesses are encouraged to take advantage of the opportunity to provide discounts on products or services to other Chamber members.

This **FREE** coupon book offers great exposure to your business and savings to other Chamber members!!

Each coupon will expire **December 31st 2018** and a new book will be available each year.



10% Off Grooming Service.
We groom all critters large and small!
Call for pricing and for an appointment today.
Coupon expires December 31st, 2018

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Annie Lindgren, Executive Director
Wellington Colorado Main Streets Program
4006 Cleveland Avenue | Wellington, CO 80549
(970) 568-4985
www.townofwellington.com

Happy New Year from the Wellington Main Streets Program!

We have a lot of great things planned for 2018. Here are a few of those things:

- The Historical survey on historical properties of downtown Wellington will be complete by March, and the results will be available to the public. We are excited to learn more about historic Wellington to see how we can do a better job of celebrating Wellington's history!
- Local artist Shandy O. is working on a mural for the Town Hall building that we hope to have completed and installed by July.
- We are planning an Arbor Day Celebration in conjunction with Tree Top Inc, who has graciously offered their services for cleaning up the trees along Cleveland Avenue.
- The 2018 Summer Concert Series is scheduled for the 3rd Saturday of the month in June, July, and August, and this year's band theme is 'The Women of Summer'. We are excited to roll out some new sponsorship options and sponsor benefits, including a VIP tent and an expansion of the beer garden fence!

With the new year comes membership renewal!

You can mail your membership renewal in to PO Box 1021 Wellington, CO 80549 or drop it off at our office at 4006 Cleveland Avenue. Monday through Thursday 8:00 am - 4:00 pm.

MEMBERSHIP LEVELS:

- o Citizen Level: \$25, Entry Level Support
- o Advisory Level: \$50, Eligible to Serve on Committees
- o Director Level: \$100, Board of Director's Candidacy
- o Business Level: \$200, Offers Board Candidacy plus a link from our website and exclusive promotion on social media

Sponsorship opportunities currently available:

- Interested in sponsoring a flower planter along Cleveland Ave.? Let us know before the March 31st deadline! Sponsorships this year are \$100, and this includes the planted flowers and the care for the flowers, as well as recognition of your sponsor ship on social media and in publication. Flowers will be planted by June 1st.
- Interested in sponsoring the 2018 summer concert series? We added a new sponsorship level this year of 'Supporting Sponsor'! Amount is \$250, but we have some flexibility with this sponsorship level, so let us know how you or your business would like to be involved! Benefits include access to the new VIP area, and promotion of your business at the concert.



If you are interested in these sponsorship opportunities, or have an idea for how your business would like to get involved with making improvements to downtown Wellington, please email Annie at annie@wellingtonmainstreet.org or call the office at (970) 568-4985.



Mike O'Connell, Larimer SBDC Director
 Larimer Small Business Development Center
 320 East Vine Suite 303 | Fort Collins, CO 80524
 (970) 498-9295
 info@larimersbdc.org | www.larimersbdc.org

Starting A Business FAQs

Where should I start when starting a business in Colorado? First consult the Colorado Business Resource Book, a basic guide to starting a business in Colorado. The guide is customized to include the specific forms and licensing information for each individual business. If you still have questions, contact the Small Business Navigator at 303-592-5920. Once you have a basic idea about your business, contact the SBDC nearest you to schedule free one-on-one consulting services as well as referrals to various government sources of assistance that provide additional business consulting and economic development assistance.

How do I get a state business license? The State of Colorado does not issue or require a generic general business license. Licenses are issued by various state agencies for specific types of business, activities and professions. Refer to the Occupational Licensing Database for more information.

How do I register my business name or set up a legal structure? To verify if a name is already being used in Colorado, check the Secretary of State website. Corporations, Limited Liability Companies, sole proprietors, general partnerships and trade names register organizational paperwork with the Secretary of State (303-894-2200). Trade name registration with the Secretary of State does NOT establish exclusive rights. However, it is required when doing business under any name other than the first and last names of the owner(s)/organizer(s). For more information, refer to the Legal Structure chapter of the Colorado Business Resource Book.

How do I get a state tax identification number? You can apply for a state tax identification number using the online form CR 100 - New Employer Registration.

What is the sales tax rate in Colorado? The state sales tax rate in Colorado is 2.9%. However, sales tax is also collected for counties, cities and special districts. The exact sales tax rate is determined by adding the various rates that apply at the location where a sales transaction is completed. The state collects the majority of all sales taxes. However, there are 71 "home rule" cities that require separate licensing and directly collect their city's portion of the sales tax on all sales made within their jurisdiction. For more information, click here. The Department of Revenue publishes the Colorado Sales/Use Tax Rates, DRP 1002, which lists the tax rates for all jurisdictions in Colorado. Publication DRP 0099, Colorado Sales and Use Tax and the Colorado Sales Tax chapter of the Colorado Business Resource Book are also available.

Where do I obtain workers' compensation insurance in Colorado? Workers' compensation insurance is purchased through private insurance companies in Colorado. There is not a state fund. The Colorado Legislature created Pinnacol Assurance (303-361-4000), a non-profit insurance carrier, to sell workers' comp. It is not, however, a state agency. Many new businesses frequently obtain their workers' comp through Pinnacol; however, it not required that new business use Pinnacol. Businesses are encouraged to shop for the best rates and service as they would for any other form of insurance. Consult directories and speak with other business owners for references. For information regarding

employer responsibilities to provide workers' compensation insurance coverage, contact the Division of Workers' Compensation (303-318-8700) or refer to the Employer Responsibilities chapter of the Colorado Business Resource Book.

How much is the unemployment insurance tax in Colorado? For the majority of employers, the beginning base tax rate is 0.017 plus principle bond rate of 0.0038 for the combined rate of 0.0208 on the first \$11,700 of each employee's annual earnings. Those employers in construction-related businesses may be subject to a different tax base. For more information regarding unemployment insurance, contact the Unemployment Insurance Section (303-318-9100) or refer to the Employer Responsibilities chapter of the Colorado Business Resource Book.

Where do I get a government grant to start a new business? Unfortunately, there are really no government grants - state or federal - available for starting a business. There are very specific targeted government grants but they rarely apply to start ups. These grants are called Small Business Innovative Research (SBIR) grants. SBIR grants are usually issued by a federal agency that is seeking research and development in specific areas including military weapons development, biotechnology and other high-tech fields. SBIR Colorado (303-427-1312 ext 201) is a non-profit organization that assists entrepreneurs, scientists and researchers identify SBIR grant opportunities.

Where do I apply for a government loan? The vast majority of government loans programs - state and federal - are called guaranteed loans. To apply for these loans, a business owner contacts a bank or other financial institution which applies to the government for a guarantee on the loan. There are also other forms of private financing for business owners. The Financing Chapter of the Colorado Business Resource Book outlines many of these options. Before speaking to a bank or any seeking any other type of financing, a business owner should realize two important factors:

It is very difficult to finance new businesses. The majority of financial resource for a new business will come from the personal assets of the owner and their family and friends. Banks and the government prefer to see a two or three year business history before making a loan, regardless of the age of a business. While this does not eliminate the possibility of financing, it makes the second factor even more important.

A complete and well written business plan is critical to any type of financing. SBDC centers provide free one-on-one consulting to assist business owners in the writing of their business plan. The Business Plan Chapter of the Colorado Business Resource Book provides a basic outline for writing a business plan.

Where do I get basic information about the quality of life and the cost of living in Colorado? The Colorado Office of Economic Development (303-892-3840) publishes the Colorado Data Book, which has a basic information guide regarding the State of Colorado as a whole. There are over 50 local economic development offices and more than 150 chambers of commerce that frequently provide more specific local information ■



ARTICLES FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS

The Goldman Sachs Group, Inc.
www.goldmansachs.com

5 Questions To Ask Yourself About Building Your Brand's Online Presence

An online presence has become vital to reaching and connecting with customers. If you are not utilizing web tools to ensure the correct information about your business is reaching your intended audience, you may be leaving money on the table and missing valuable opportunities to turn potential customers into real ones. Participants in the Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses program are taught how to harness their online presence to achieve larger strategic goals. The key to this is a solid foundation on which to execute online marketing activities.

Below are five important questions you should ask yourself about your business's online presence to ensure it is working as hard for your business as you are.

1. DO YOU RANK IN SEARCH ENGINE RESULTS?

According to Search Engine Land, 85% of consumers use the Internet to search for a business, so it's essential to be easily found online. Use a few search engines to look up your business and note where you rank. The higher your position in the results, the more likely it is for potential customers to click on your business. Try adding your city to the search query and see if the results change. If your business isn't showing as high up in search results as you'd like, do some research on search engine optimization (SEO) to determine what techniques might best work for you.

2. CAN POTENTIAL CUSTOMERS FIND YOU?

Google Places is a powerful tool; it increases your business' visibility on Google Maps, Google+ and on mobile. Register your business with the platform by claiming its listing, adding information and photos, and verifying ownership. Make sure you update the listing with your phone number and business hours so customers can easily contact you or visit your location. Also consider registering your business with other geo-based sites, such as Foursquare, Yelp and Bing so you can be easily found on additional platforms.

3. ARE YOU LISTENING TO YOUR CUSTOMERS?

A Search Engine Land Study found that 72% of consumers trust online reviews, and Yelp is the dominant player in this space. On Yelp, any customer can review any business, whether the owner has claimed it or not, leaving your business vulnerable to false information or criticism. Claiming your business on Yelp requires authenticating ownership and creating an account. Once you have claimed your business, you can track and respond to reviews, monitor views of your page, update the information and use Yelp's ad platform to either promote your business or offer deals to new customers. Customer reviews are not limited to Yelp, so make sure you are paying attention to what is being said about your business on other platforms such as Seamless, Amazon, TripAdvisor and Angie's List. Also set up a Google Alert for your own name, your business name and any major competitors so you have your finger constantly on the pulse.

4. ARE YOU ACCESSIBLE EVERYWHERE?

A study by BIA Kelsey found that 93% of small to medium sized business websites don't render on mobile devices. You may have an excellent, detailed website, but if a customer on the move can't easily find out where you are or what you do, it greatly reduces the likelihood of their visiting your business. Depending on your website's content management system, you may be able to use a plug-in that recognizes the device being used to visit your site and shows mobile friendly content. Alternatively, it may be worth exploring building a responsive

design site that provides an optimal viewing experience across a wide range of devices.

For a mobile site, you need to have all of the most important information about your business front and center; this should be your address, a click-to-call phone number, and your business hours. Check what your site looks like on various devices by using an online mobile website tester and make sure the important information about your business can be found in as few clicks as possible.



5. IS YOUR MARKETING MESSAGE CONSISTENT ACROSS NETWORKS?

In addition to websites, review pages, and other online profiles, most small business owners are active on at least one social media platform. Having a presence in all of these places makes it important to be aligned in your online communications. Use consistent information and imagery across all profiles—including background images, profile pictures and contact information.

Remember, you don't need to be active on every single platform; instead, focus your time and energy on the platforms on which your customers are active. You may even want to set up accounts on platforms you are not currently using, even if they remain dormant. This ensures you have them if you decide to expand to new platforms and prevents someone else from using your business name.

These are just a few answers to questions that small business owners should ask themselves in order to build their online presence, but there are many more. For example, you may wonder how to build a successful e-commerce site. Check out a blog post by Jose Vasquez, a Goldman Sachs 10,000 Small Businesses graduate, to see his suggestions on building a successful e-commerce site ■