

Restaurants

Making Sense
of Online Marketing

The



DOWN LOAD

Contents

02

Introduction

Our goal is to show you how to connect the dots in online marketing.

07

CHAPTER ONE

How people find you online

Whether people are searching for your restaurant specifically or for one with your theme, it is imperative that your guests or prospective first time visitors be able to find you.

13

CHAPTER TWO

How to set yourself up for online marketing success

With an understanding of how people may find you online, let's talk about the tools you should use to make sure you have a strong foundation in place.

46

CHAPTER THREE

How it all comes together

Let's take a look at how you bring it all together to position yourself for success.

56

CHAPTER FOUR

How online marketing can work for you

With your knowledge of how to make online marketing work for your business, you're ready to take those next steps.



Introduction

People are looking for restaurants online all the time.



77%

of diners check restaurant websites before visiting

ACCORDING TO A SURVEY DONE BY MARKETING AGENCY MGH

.....

Having an updated website is a crucial tool in convincing guests to visit.



79%

of Millennials (ages 18–34) have ordered takeout online, which is 29% more than the older U.S. adult population (ages 45+)

ACCORDING TO ORDERMARK

.....

Restaurants that are online are seeing growth.

↓

↓

That means that there's potential to do more business.



If you're considering getting started with online marketing, you may become overwhelmed by too many tools, never-ending expert advice, and the many marketing myths presented as fact. If you're already doing online marketing, you may be frustrated to find that it's not as easy as many claim it to be.

You're not alone.

If you're like many Constant Contact restaurant clients, you're busy trying to run your operation and grow your business. You're wearing many hats and don't have the luxury of time to figure out how to navigate the cluttered and noisy world of online marketing.

What if there were a way to make sense of online marketing?

Here's the thing, it's not just about the tools available to you. You also need to understand the fundamentals of marketing so you can get the most out of those tools. Again, that's not easy when you're a restaurant operator by trade and a marketer by necessity.

This guide is designed to give you practical advice.

Our goal is to show you how to connect the dots in online marketing. To point out what you should pay attention to so you have a strong foundation in place.

Then you'll have the knowledge, understanding, and confidence to take advantage of the new opportunities online marketing opens for you.



There's something else that's important to note.

As a small business, you have a huge advantage over big businesses because you actually know your guests. Many times you interact with them in a way the big chain operators cannot. It's that intimate knowledge that keeps your business top of mind and gives you an edge.

Ultimately, we're talking about engaging with people. The location has changed to a digital format but at the other end of those devices are people. And people do business with businesses they know, like, and trust.



TIP

Here's a good rule of thumb as you navigate the digital landscape: If you wouldn't do it face-to-face with a guest, don't do it online.

Keep this in mind about online marketing.

If you were asked where most of your business comes from today, what would you say? Many small businesses tell us "word of mouth." When done correctly, online marketing provides more opportunities to extend the word of mouth that's already so important to your business.

As you know, the restaurant business is built on loyal regulars. Online marketing also allows you to strengthen existing relationships with current guests and build new ones.



Here's what we're going to cover:

Chapter 1: How people find you online

Chapter 2: How to set yourself up for success

Chapter 3: How it all comes together

Chapter 4: How online marketing can work for you

Now let's get to it!



How people find you online

We've mentioned that word of mouth now happens online.

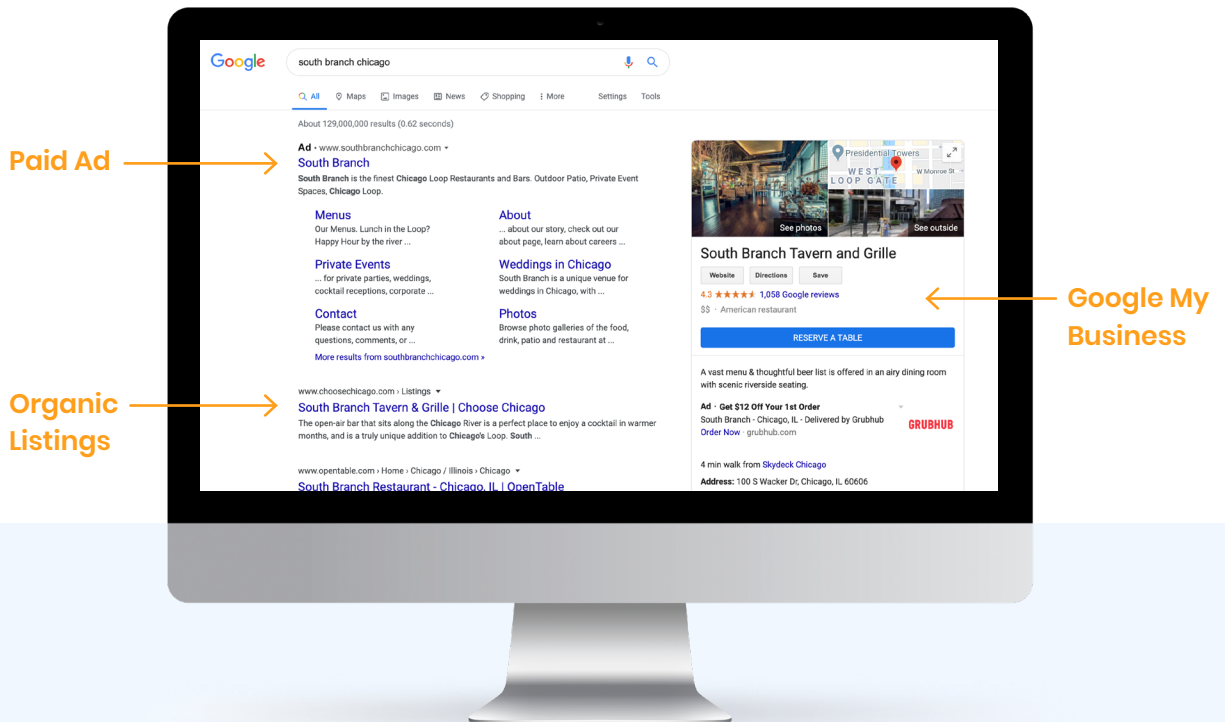
People are talking up their favorite restaurants directly; they're consuming and sharing content they find useful or entertaining from those places, and they're asking connections for recommendations. Your restaurant has an opportunity to be part of more of these conversations.



The more you can do to keep your restaurant top of mind and make it easy for others to talk about you, the more you increase the chances of people recommending or seeking you out when they need what you offer. Beyond being part of the conversation, you must understand what people may find when they go looking for your restaurant specifically by name, or by something your restaurant offers.

And, of course, be aware that if people don't find your restaurant when they go looking online, it begs the question, "Does your restaurant even exist?"

What do people find when they go looking online for your restaurant?



Example using "South Branch Chicago" as the search term

It's no secret that diners turn to search support like Google or Yelp to get more information about a restaurant they are considering for a meal. Let's take a look at some of the things that may show up on a search engine results page, or SERP, when someone searches for a restaurant by name:

- Paid ads
- Organic (non-paid) search results
- Google My Business listing
- Social media accounts
- Online reviews
- Info from other sites

What if people are looking for something your restaurant offers?

In the example on the previous page, we searched for a specific business — South Branch Chicago — by name. But, people don't always search by name. Sometimes they know they want to buy a product or a service, but they don't know who offers it. Then they type in a more generic search term, like "restaurants near me" or "tax preparers."

The screenshot shows a Google search interface with the query "fancy restaurants near me". Below the search bar, it indicates "About 189,000,000 results (1.07 seconds)". A map of the Boston area is displayed, with several red location pins. Below the map, there are filters for "Rating", "Cuisine", "Price" (set to "\$\$\$-\$\$\$\$"), and "Hours". A "Sort by" dropdown is also present. The search results list three restaurants:

- Sarma Restaurant**: 4.7 ★★★★★ (1,197) · \$\$\$ · Small Plates. 0.7 mi · 249 Pearl St. Vibrant modern Mediterranean option.
- The Capital Grille**: 4.6 ★★★★★ (674) · \$\$\$\$ · Fine Dining. 3.3 mi · Hynes Convention Center, 900 Boylston St · In Hynes Convention Center. Upscale chophouse chain with clubby look.
- Casa B Tapas and Cocktail & Rum Bar**: 4.7 ★★★★★ (192) · \$\$\$ · Tapas. 1.1 mi · 253 Washington St. Inspired Pan-Latin tapas in a warm space.

Below the list, there is a "More places" link. At the bottom, there are two snippets from Yelp:

- Best Fancy Restaurants Near Me - March 2020: Find Nearby ...**
Find the best Fancy Restaurants near you on Yelp - see all Fancy Restaurants open now and reserve an open table. Explore other popular cuisines and ...
- Top 10 Best Fine Dining in Somerville, MA - Last Updated ...**
"This place deserves more than 5 stars, all around. This is one of my favorite restaurants I've tried in Boston, possibly my favorite one. Reservations: you buy ..."

Let's take a look at an example.

Imagine you were surprising your significant other with a fancy dinner for your upcoming anniversary. So you jump on your computer or mobile device and search "fancy restaurants near me."

Here's an example of what may come up — of course, your actual results will differ.

Notice that "fancy restaurants near me" brings up the listings in Google Maps first. This information comes from Google My Business profiles (more on that later).

Beyond the map listings, you may also find websites, social media accounts, reviews, and listings of the fancy restaurants near your location in the search results.

If we apply these results to what may show up for your restaurant guests may find:

- Your website
- Social media accounts
- Review sites
- Business listings
- Competitor listings

Review Site

Google fancy restaurants near me

www.yelp.com › nearme › fancy-restaurants ▼

Best Fancy Restaurants Near Me - March 2020: Find Nearby ...

Find the best Fancy Restaurants near you on Yelp - see all Fancy Restaurants open now and reserve an open table. Explore other popular cuisines and ...

m.yelp.com › search › find_desc=Fine+Dining ▼

Top 10 Best Fine Dining in Somerville, MA - Last Updated ...

"This place deserves more than 5 stars, all around. This is one of my favorite restaurants I've tried in Boston, possibly my favorite one. Reservations: you buy ...

www.tripadvisor.com › Restaurants-g41818-Somerville_Massachusetts ▼

THE 10 BEST Restaurants in Somerville ... - TripAdvisor

Breakfast Restaurants in Somerville. Lunch Restaurants in Somerville. Dinner Restaurants in Somerville. Bakeries in Somerville. Cheap Eats in Somerville. Coffee & Tea in Somerville. Desserts in Somerville. Food Delivery Restaurants in Somerville.

Restaurants near Union Square · Restaurants near Davis Square · 1. Bergamot

www.tripadvisor.com › ... › Massachusetts (MA) › Somerville ▼

THE 10 BEST Restaurants in Somerville ... - TripAdvisor

Best Dining in Somerville, Massachusetts: See 10257 Tripadvisor traveler reviews of 345 Somerville restaurants and search by cuisine, price, location, and ...

bergamotrestaurant.com ▼

Bergamot Restaurant - Somerville

About. At Bergamot we've combined our love for great food, wine and friends. We're cooking up "Progressive American Cuisine" — having fun with the best local ...

www.boston.com › food › food › 2018/08/03 › somerville-restaurants ▼

23 best Somerville restaurants | Boston.com | Boston.com

Aug 3, 2018 - Upscale small plates restaurants are balanced by beloved ... Parlor Sports is close to being the platonic ideal of a neighborhood sports bar.

People also ask

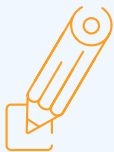
Where can I go out to eat for anniversary? ▼

How do I find nice restaurants? ▼

Where should I eat for a date? ▼

What is the best food to eat in Boston? ▼

Feedback



ACTION STEPS



Search for your restaurant.

What information shows up? Is it what you were expecting? Is there anything there that surprises you? Is there something missing?



Search for the generic terms for your restaurant.

Is your business there in either an organic or paid perspective?



Make a list of results that show up on the first page in both scenarios.

If your restaurant doesn't show up in both scenarios, you have some work to do.

Here's the reality: If you're not online, prospects can't find you.

Whether people are searching for your restaurant specifically or for one with your theme, it is imperative that your guests or prospective first-time visitors be able to find you. Start by searching your restaurant on the various sites and verify that the listings are accurate and that you answer the questions a potential guest may have.

From their first interaction with search results to clicking through to your website, guests are forming opinions about your business. Ultimately they are asking, "Is this a restaurant I want to visit?"

If your business is present online, engaging, interacting, and providing resources to aid guests with their decisions, you'll increase the chances of people finding and choosing you.



The question is, what tools should you use to build a strong foundation for your online marketing efforts? Let's take a look at how to set your restaurant up for success.



How to set yourself up for success

With an understanding of how people may find you online, what should you do to make sure you have a strong foundation in place?

Let's talk about the tools you should use and some tips to get you started.

Here's what you need to get online:

1

A mobile-responsive website



2

An email marketing tool



3

A primary social channel



4

Up-to-date cause-specific listings



5

A way to easily create content





A mobile-responsive website: Your online hub.

Yes, your restaurant should have a mobile-responsive website. Your website is at the center of all your online activities. It's the hub you'll want to point people to in order to drive business. You simply can't rely solely on social media sites. You'll want to have a place you own.

Think about the first thing you do when you want to investigate a business. Typically, you'll go looking for a website to learn more. Your potential customers are doing the same. And they're frequently doing it on a mobile device, making a mobile-responsive website important for today's consumers. This is especially true for restaurants.

72%

**of online
searches
are initiated
on mobile**

ACCORDING
TO HITWISE

A mobile-responsive website provides a great experience for visitors regardless of how they're viewing it because it adapts to the device being used to access it. With a mobile-responsive website, visitors won't struggle to find the information they need. The good news is that you no longer need to be a web designer to build an effective mobile-responsive website.



TIP

**Buy a domain name for
your website to match
your restaurant name.**

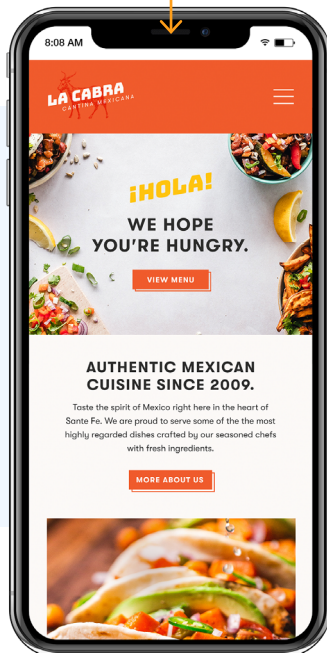
In the early stages of your business, you may use free tools to get online. Eventually, you'll want to use your own domain (for example, YourRestaurantName.com) to look professional and add credibility to your business.



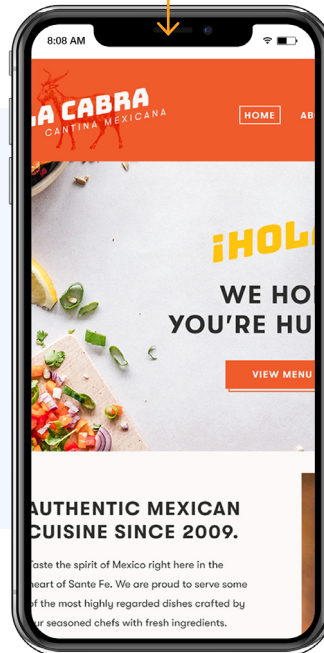
With a mobile-responsive website, people will be able to read and navigate your site with ease regardless of the device they're using.



Responsive
website
on mobile



Non-responsive
website
on mobile



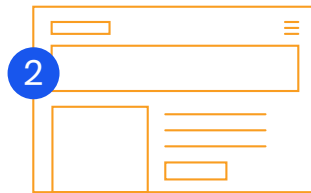
Your website should have at least four pages.

When people visit your website, they're looking for answers to their questions. Use the following pages to answer them.



Homepage

This is where you make a first impression. The homepage needs to be easy to navigate and give your guests a reason to explore more. From inviting them to join your email mailing list to seeing what events you have scheduled, your homepage should tease the visitor to want more.



About Page

Everybody loves a great origin story. Share your passion and purpose for operating a business in hospitality with your guests.



Contact Page

Give them a reason to connect by providing easy access to directions and a phone number. You can also offer them a contact form they can complete so they can share their reason for connecting. Finally, don't forget to highlight your social links in case they want to contact or follow your accounts.



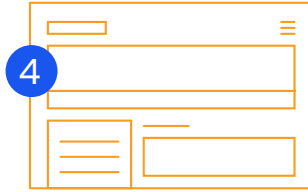
DID YOU KNOW?

Want a custom-designed site?

Get a custom-designed, mobile-optimized site in just minutes with [Constant Contact's intelligent website builder](#).

Need a logo?

A logo and colors form the basis for the visual representation of your brand. [Constant Contact's LogoMaker](#) generates hundreds of options in seconds.



Menu Page

When including your menu online, consider how the guest will interact with it. The goal is to inspire them to visit, but it should also reflect what they see when they visit as well. Include menu descriptions and prices so guests don't have to guess.

Include a web-based menu page and offer a PDF version for downloading on that page separately. This is a much better experience than just offering a PDF, especially for visitors on a mobile device. Be sure to update your online menus whenever you make changes.

Think about your restaurant specifically to add additional pages. For example, if you have online ordering you'll want an Online Ordering page. Selling additional products? You should have an Online Store. Do you offer catering? You'll want to include a page about those services. Most businesses benefit from having blog functionality on their site as well (more on that later).



What should you put on those four core pages? Let's take a look.



HOMEPAGE

What questions should you answer on your Homepage?

What makes your restaurant different and special?

People don't have a lot of time.
Be clear. Be specific.

Who is it for?

The visitor is asking, "Is this for me?"
Who is your ideal customer? Do you serve a particular demographic (men 18–29, or families)? Make it clear who your restaurant is for.

So what?

Why would your potential guest care?
Why should they choose you? Is there something about your product or service that makes it unique? Here's where you give them your best pitch. TV's, live music, a talented chef... anything you believe makes you stand out from your competition.

What should visitors do next?

Make a reservation? Give an email address for a coupon? Make it clear what action people should take as their next step. Here is where you have an opportunity to create a lasting relationship with the potential guest visiting your site. Invite them to sign up for your email list, follow your social accounts, or even give you direct feedback on your restaurant. Include a call to action in a place that catches their eye.



Homepage example



ABOUT PAGE

What questions should you answer on your About page?

What is your back story?

Every restaurant has a back story. People love a narrative, so give them one by describing how you got there and why you are proud of what you do. It allows them to see your restaurant, not just as a business, but as a part of the community that they too should care about.

What makes you or your restaurant different?

Share what makes your restaurant special and why someone would choose to dine with you over other restaurants.

LA CABRA
CANTINA MEXICANA

MAKE A RESERVATION ORDER ONLINE

HOME ABOUT MENU CONTACT US BLOG

OUR STORY

DEDICATED TO QUALITY FOR 11 YEARS.

La Cabra started from humble beginnings—a chef with big dreams and one secret taco recipe. Esteemed chef Rodrigo Gonzalez always knew he wanted to make his impact by sharing his love of cooking. He and his partner Carlos Montez dedicated their lives to starting this business in 2009, developing new and improved recipes that bring in thousands of customers each year.

CONTACT THE CHEF

SANTE FE'S FAVORITE TACO

FRESH INGREDIENTS, ALWAYS.

We know how important it is that you know what you're eating, and we think so too. That's why La Cabra has a wonderful relationship with our farmers and always receives the highest quality fruits, vegetables, and meat products. Take a look at our menu to see how we utilize all of these tasty ingredients!

OUR MENU

“ La Cabra is my favorite weekend spot to go to with my friends! We always get a few plates of the famous tacos and split—there's always something new to enjoy, but we can always go back to our original favorites! ”

— Josephine Martin, 24

LA CABRA
CANTINA MEXICANA

189 EAST PALACE AVE.
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501
P: 505.879.4321
E: INFO@LACABRA.COM

HOURS OF OPERATION

LUNCH
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 11:30AM-2PM

DINNER
MONDAY-THURSDAY: 5PM-11PM
FRIDAY + SATURDAY: 4:00PM-12AM

HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 5PM-6:30PM

SIGN UP FOR SPECIAL OFFERS

SUBMIT

[f](#) [t](#) [i](#) [o](#) [l](#) [p](#) [y](#)

About page example



CONTACT PAGE

What questions should you answer on your Contact page?

Where can I find you?

This page can be both specific info on your location, but also an aggregation page for any of your other points of contact with a potential guest.

Where can I find you?

Make it easy for visitors to access directions, your address, and your phone number. You can also include links to your social media channels and your reservation system or ordering systems.

When can I reach you?

What are your hours of operation?
Are all locations the same?
Are there different hours for support? Other functions?

How can I contact you?

Is there more than one way?
Start with your preferred method.
What should they expect in terms of a reply?

LA CABRA
CANTINA MEXICANA

MAKE A RESERVATION ORDER ONLINE

HOME ABOUT MENU CONTACT US BLOG

LET'S CHAT

SKIP THE LINE, MAKE A RESERVATION

DATE TIME

SIZE OF PARTY

SUBMIT

HOURS OF OPERATION

LUNCH
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 11:30AM-2PM

DINNER
MONDAY-THURSDAY: 5PM-11PM
FRIDAY + SATURDAY: 4:00PM-12AM

HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 5PM-6:30PM

SHOOT US A MESSAGE!

FIRST NAME LAST NAME

SUBJECT

MESSAGE

SUBMIT

LA CABRA
CANTINA MEXICANA

195 EAST PALACE AVE
SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501
P: 505.879.4321
E: INFO@LACABRA.COM

HOURS OF OPERATION

LUNCH
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 11:30AM-2PM

DINNER
MONDAY-THURSDAY: 5PM-11PM
FRIDAY + SATURDAY: 4:00PM-12AM

HAPPY HOUR
MONDAY-FRIDAY: 5PM-6:30PM

SIGN UP FOR SPECIAL OFFERS

SUBMIT

f t i p y

“ It's so much fun to hear some good music and enjoy a good game of trivia at La Cabra, all while eating the best food in Santa Fe! Get some friends together and make a night of it. ”

— Ryan Martinez, 26

Contact page example



MENU PAGE

(and online ordering, if applicable)

Your menu is among the most important marketing tool you have at your disposal.

That is why including it on your site and displaying it in an easy-to-read format is crucial.

One way to accomplish that is by offering online ordering, which is a terrific way to both market your menu and suggest that people enjoy it at home. The key is to make the ordering experience simple and streamlined. There are myriad platforms that offer easy implementation of online ordering along with payment and verification or, if you're ambitious, you can build your own.

Either way, online ordering doubles as a way of displaying your menu in a digestible format and alerting guests to its availability for enjoying off premise. You run a restaurant and highlighting the food to any website visitor just makes sense.



Menu page example

Tips for using images on your website.

Overall, use high-quality images on your website whenever possible. If you don't have your own images, sites like Unsplash offer free, high-quality stock images. Whatever images you choose, the goal is to convey your best characteristics on your site. Whether it's a gallery that you include on your navigation bar or background images for your homepage, the images should demonstrate what makes you special.



Homepage

Take a sports bar as an example. An image that shows lots of folks enjoying games on multiple TV's will clearly demonstrate that yours is a great place to catch a game. You can get those pics professionally done, use a stock image, or just take them yourself. Today's cameras can capture great images.



About Page

Use professional images of yourself and your staff that show your personalities or tell a story that will give guests an appreciation for why your restaurant is in business.



Contact Page

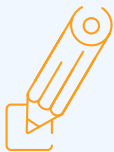
Show your physical location, especially if it's not in an obvious place. Show people having a great time. People want to get a sense of the atmosphere you create. This is important if you have a restaurant, bar, or event space. Include a map with easy access to directions. Remember, directions are different if you are in an urban setting versus suburban. Know your location and provide the best way for a guest to navigate to you.



Menu Page

Food pics can be an incredibly powerful motivator for driving a guest visit. The good news is, with today's mobile phone technology, you don't need a professional to take amazing pics of your food. Avoid using stock images if possible, if your food doesn't look like the picture, guests will be disappointed.

Grab your phone, find a place with good direct light above it to take pics. Set a table and add a dish you want to feature. Even better, include a person that looks ready to dive into the dish. The goal is to provide images that excite the guest's palate and drive them to your door. Focus on color and depth. You can experiment with tilting the plate, or having a server holding it, as if it was being delivered. Try to see the pictures from a consumer perspective and snap away until you get the right shot.



ACTION STEPS



Create a simple website.

Don't have a website?
[Create one with Constant Contact](#) in minutes!



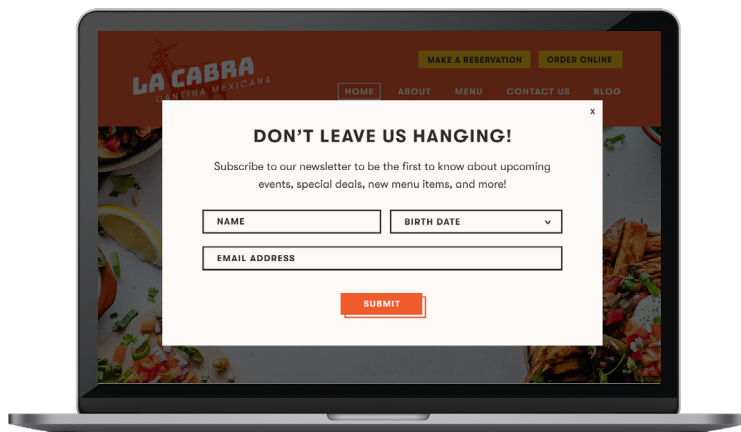
Review your website for the appropriate pages.



Make sure you're answering the questions suggested above.



Add sign-up forms to your website.



What happens after someone visits your website?

It's unlikely they'll come back again. But what if you had a way to contact them? Then you could encourage them to return to your site and eventually dine at your restaurant.

This is why you'll want to collect email addresses from people who visit. You can do this by adding sign-up forms to your website. In addition to using your website, you should also think about collecting emails in person and in print.

For a restaurant this is a particularly effective strategy, because you have some low cost offers you can make that are high value to your guest. For example, a free dessert, appetizer, or entree for a birthday is an excellent way to entice a guest to provide their email. It's personal, everyone loves a gift on their birthday, and it allows you to continue to communicate with them multiple times.



Email marketing: It's how you drive business.

Why is email marketing important today? Simply, because it works. And yes, email is still ranked as one of the most effective marketing channels according to Ascend2's 2019 Digital Marketing Strategies Survey Summary Report.

Like your website, email marketing also creates an asset you own. The contacts on your list are yours. And if you're doing it right, those are people who have said, "Yes, I want you to market to me."

Email marketing also allows you to automate much of the communication so the emails your contacts receive feel timely and relevant. Automation assures you get the right messages to the right people at the right time.

When someone signs up to receive your emails, they are actively demonstrating an interest in you and your business. Take advantage of this time when a new contact is highly engaged and automate a couple of emails to continue the conversation. Whether they sign up today or a week from today, they won't have to wait for you to manually send an email to hear from you.



TIP

Create a simple series of emails to welcome people to your email list.

More on the next pages.



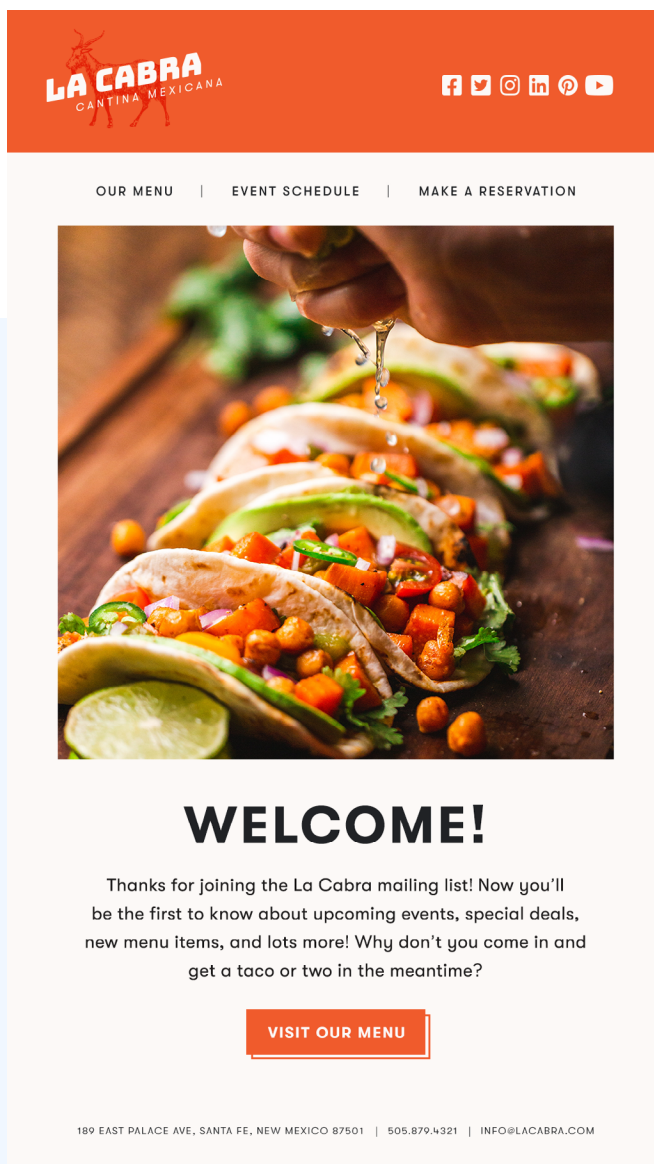
Here are two emails to include in your automated welcome series.



WELCOME SERIES EMAIL ONE

Welcome/ Delivery email

Send this Welcome email immediately after someone signs up. Deliver what was promised, welcome your new subscribers, and reiterate what they should expect in the future.



Welcome email example



WELCOME SERIES EMAIL TWO

Invitation to Connect

Send this email a few days after your Welcome email. Let your new contacts know of the other ways in which they can engage with you — this will most likely be on your social channels — so invite them to connect with you.

This email is important because once your subscribers connect with you in other locations, you have multiple ways to engage and stay top of mind.



And, if your subscribers engage with you on these public forums, your business gets exposed to their connections who are likely also to make excellent prospects for your business.




TIP

Use email automation to save time and get new and repeat business. Need some ideas?

[Find some here.](#)








OUR MENU | EVENT SCHEDULE | MAKE A RESERVATION





LET'S CONNECT!

Follow us on our social media channels to stay connected everywhere! You won't want to miss any exciting news we have to share with you!



FOLLOW



12
Like Comment Share

189 EAST PALACE AVE, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501 | 505.879.4321 | INFO@LACABRA.COM

Let's Connect email example



ONGOING COMMUNICATION

Plan on sending an email at least once a month thereafter.

Consistency is key in any form of marketing. Write down the potential opportunities you have to reach out to your email contacts. These opportunities could be national holidays, events specific to your restaurant, or even those made-up marketing holidays. Share a combination of helpful resources and promotional emails to provide the most value to your contacts.



DID YOU KNOW?

Constant Contact offers powerful, easy-to-use email marketing tools.

[Find out more.](#)

[OUR MENU](#) | [EVENT SCHEDULE](#) | [MAKE A RESERVATION](#)

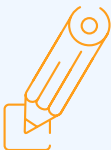
GET YOUR MARGS!

Tuesday is National Margarita Day! And you know what that means—\$5 Margaritas! We'll be serving them up all night until 12am...don't miss out!

MAKE A RESERVATION

189 EAST PALACE AVE, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501 | 505.879.4321 | INFO@LACABRA.COM

Promotional email example



ACTION STEPS



Set up a simple, automated welcome series.



Plan to send an email at least once a month.



Think about other emails you may want to automate.



Resource email example

In the future, you can get more advanced with automation by sending emails triggered by actions taken by your contacts like opening an email, clicking on a link, or joining a list.

3



Social media: It doesn't have to overwhelm you.

If you're like many of the small business owners we talk to, social media marketing can feel overwhelming. And it often feels like you're spinning your wheels — doing a lot of activity across many channels with little to show for it.

You should reserve your business name on the important social channels so you have it. But you don't have to be active everywhere. That's why we recommend starting with one channel that makes sense for your business.

Ideally, choose a primary social channel based on the customers you're trying to reach. Also, consider what channel you're most comfortable using and how it fits with the personality of your business.



Ultimately, social media should allow you to generate awareness, action, and engagement that you wouldn't have gotten otherwise.



TIP

Choose the right social media platform for your business.

[Find out how.](#)



Each social channel also has its own personality.

You should *not* be posting the exact same thing on every channel. You can use the same theme but you should modify your posts to suit the channel.

For example, post a pic of your specials on Instagram because that's where those posts are best received. When accessing Facebook, post a video of your staff trying the specials during pre-shift. The Instagram post is pure image and the Facebook video is an inside peek into how your restaurant runs while informing guests about the specials.

This way you are promoting the same item, but doing so in different ways appropriate for each channel.

You can see another example of what we mean here by following Netflix on Facebook and Instagram.



Now let's take a look at each channel's personality.



Netflix Facebook post



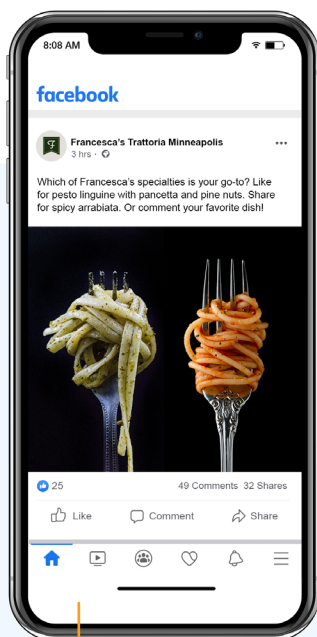
Netflix Instagram post

EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE

Facebook

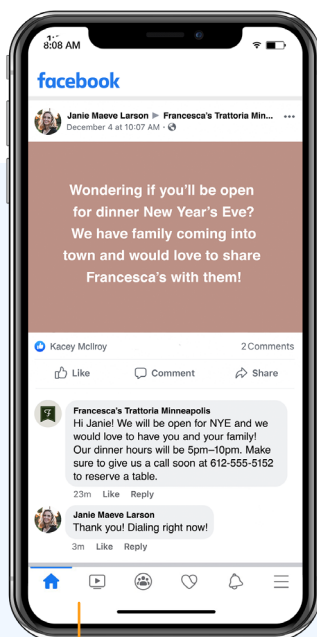
In the news feed, you'll be competing with friends, family, and local and world headlines.

Therefore it's imperative your post catches the eye. Video is by far the most effective type of post on Facebook, but images can still drive action by a guest. For restaurants, there are so many types of content to share and Facebook makes it very easy to include them all.



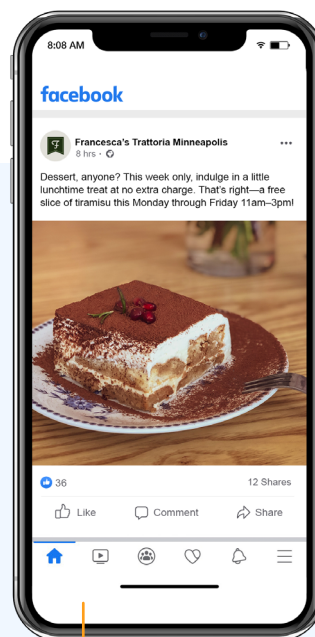
AWARENESS

Post content your audience may want to engage with by liking, commenting, and sharing.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Respond to questions from potential customers to provide a good experience.



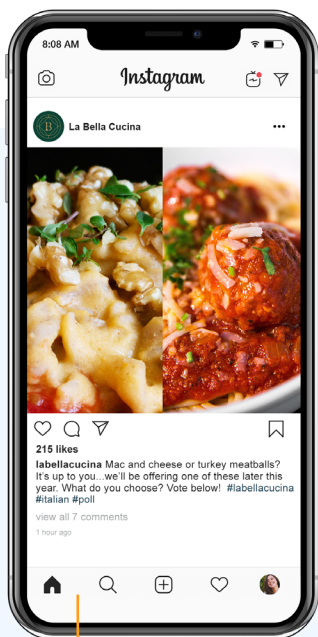
DRIVING ACTION

Drive sales by letting people know about upcoming offers.

Instagram

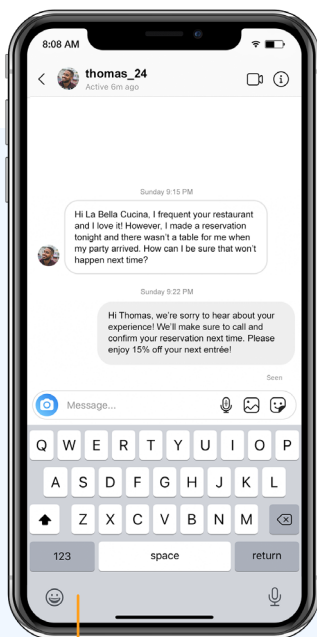
Many restaurant operators are now designing their restaurants to facilitate food pics and encourage their guests to create great user generated content.

But Instagram is so much more. Whether you use Stories to show guests an insider's view of your operation or post the specials each day, your images have to be great. There are resources available to learn how to take great pics and shoot solid videos. A visual platform like Instagram demands it and it's easier than you think.



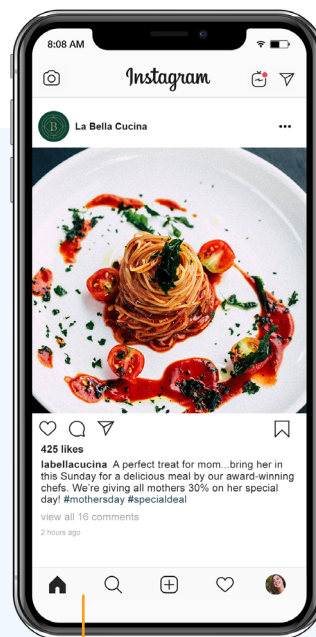
AWARENESS

In this post the location is encouraging the guests to interact by letting them know about a future menu item. The restaurant operator is teasing a new item knowing that it will drive interest and likely traffic.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Respond to direct messages from potential customers. For a restaurant, there can be no better way to prove you're engaged than by replying to any messages. Whether it's saying thank you for a compliment or showing empathy when a guest has a bad experience, personal communication helps make it better.



DRIVING ACTION

This post is a cheeky way to remind guests that you are a great option for a Mother's Day celebration. It's a solid image that says this place will be special for your loved one and it's a gentle reminder not to miss the holiday.

EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE



For restaurant operators Twitter can be tricky.

Even though you can include exactly the same media as Facebook or Instagram, the micro text format on Twitter means your words matter even more than your images.



AWARENESS

Twitter is a great place to inform guests that you are now accepting reservations from a new platform. Announcement likes these should be linked directly to the service referenced and be easy to access once the guest clicks through.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service is all about empathy. When you are responding to a guest's concern, try to see it from their perspective. If they have reached out on Twitter, then they want to have this conversation publicly. Your response must be kind, patient, and assume they are earnest in their desire to improve their experience. If you take that approach it will reflect well on your brand and ensure guests know you take their experience seriously.



DRIVING ACTION

Let followers know how to take advantage of special offers.

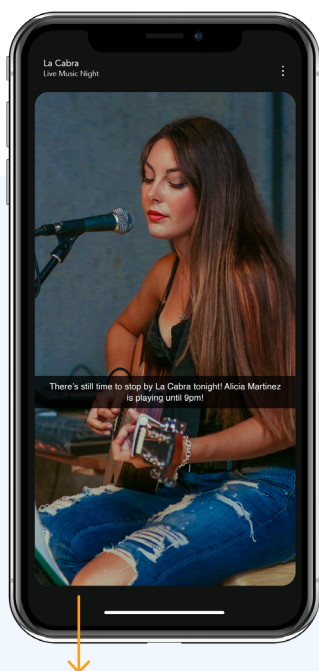
EACH SOCIAL CHANNEL IS UNIQUE

Snapchat

As the newest social media platform to find commercial success, Snapchat has a very specific demographic.

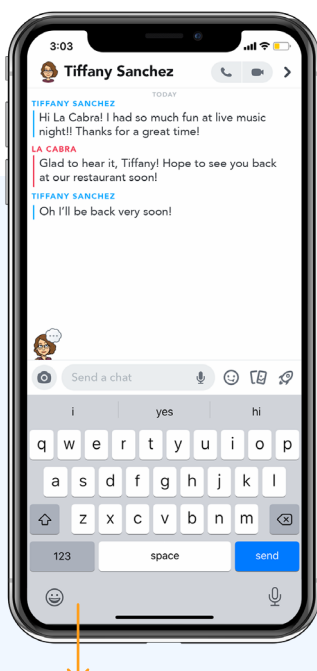
It skews younger with most users under 30. This audience is a burgeoning client group in restaurants and speaking to them where they are is important. With the images disappearing you can have some fun and post often, especially if you want to show how much fun your place is in real time. Snaps are fleeting which increases the fear of missing out (FOMO) which is an incredibly powerful emotion to drive guests to engage.

The goal with Snapchat as any social media platform is to entice guests to visit. Remember you're telling a story and it should lead to them choosing to visit. Also, include links to your website so you can encourage them to engage directly by joining your email list.



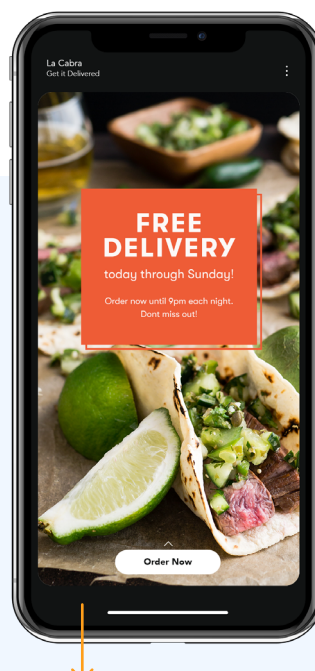
AWARENESS

Let people know about upcoming events.



CUSTOMER SERVICE

Engage with those taking the time to thank you.

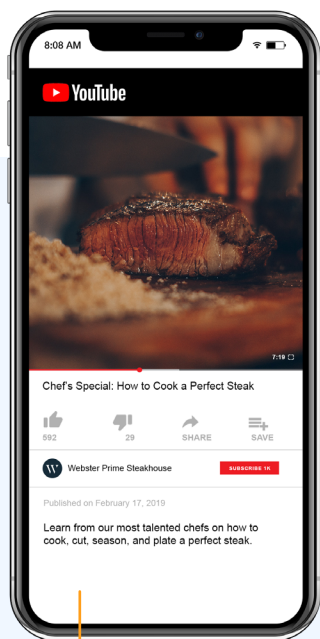


DRIVING ACTION

Let people know of any special offers you have going on for them.

YouTube

As social media goes, YouTube is a great platform to share content and organize any video content you shoot around your restaurant.



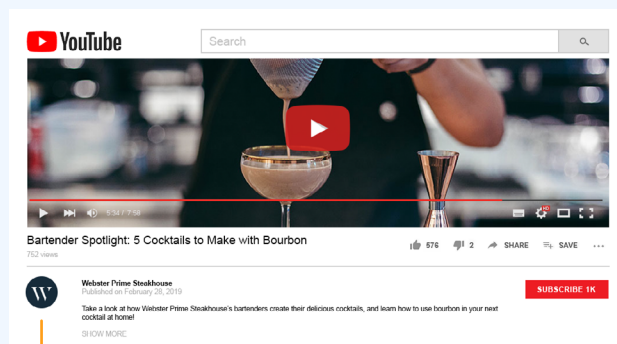
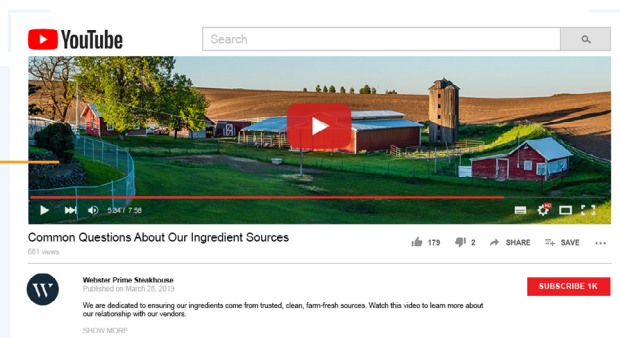
AWARENESS

Create video content to let people know about new programs. Video is a wonderful way to communicate directly with guests. For example, if you serve steak, shoot a video of how the chef cuts, seasons, cooks and plates a steak. Guests will both learn from the chef's model, but also consider you the expert, which is a powerful relationship to create.

A social media campaign centered on YouTube can be difficult, but if you like making videos, you should definitely try. The key is to make the content relevant and engaging. Maybe you want to show the chef prepping a particular special. With video you can dive more deeply into it and use it as a tool to attract guests that want to see your restaurant from the insider's perspective. Whether you simply use it to house and share video, or create the next great food video blog (vlog), YouTube will fit your needs quite nicely.

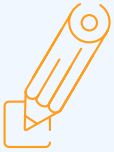
CUSTOMER SERVICE

Respond to questions and provide additional resources.



DRIVING ACTION

Show how to use a product or service. For restaurant operators, YouTube content allows you the time to create engaging content without restrictions. You can give a behind-the-curtain view of your restaurant operation or how to make the newest hot cocktail at home. By positioning yourself this way you become the cultural expert and can build that relationship by showing them all aspects of how you run your restaurant.



ACTION STEPS



Determine which social channel makes the most sense for your business.



Set business goals for this primary channel across three categories.

- Awareness
- Customer service
- Driving action



Create a plan for this channel to reach your business goals.



DID YOU KNOW?

Want to know more about social media marketing?

[Get started with our Social Quickstarter.](#)

Keep focused on how social media can help you with business goals such as awareness, customer service, and driving action.

Engage with people on social so you can ultimately move them to your website and build your email list so you have a list of contacts you own to drive business.



Don't forget social media isn't the only place where people may find and engage with your business.

4



Listings and review sites: Provide accurate information and respond appropriately.

Today people use a variety of apps and websites to find the information they're looking for. Sometimes these listings are automatically generated and other times your customers may create them.

As the business owner, you're able to take control of these listings by claiming them – which is often as simple as clicking a button and submitting requested information that proves the business is yours. Make sure all information is correct and up to date across all sites. The last thing you want is for someone to find incorrect information as it could cause you to lose business.

At the very least claim your Facebook business page, Google My Business profile, and Yelp page. If you are in a seasonal area, then TripAdvisor is another option.

The key is to tailor your message to the audience you are reaching. On TripAdvisor you might highlight some special features of your restaurant that will appeal to travelers like free WiFi or complimentary device charging. However, on Google My Business and Yelp, you want to focus on why your restaurant is different than any other place in the market.



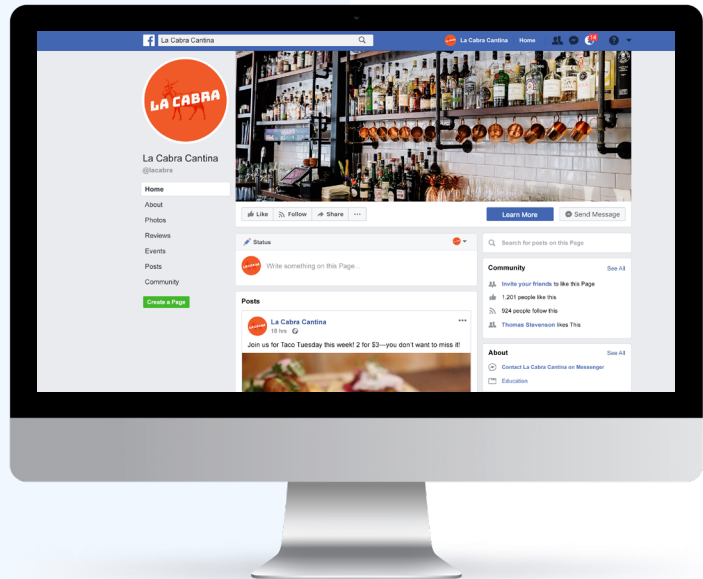
TIP

Once you've claimed a listing, you're able to update the information on those pages for accuracy.



Facebook Business Page

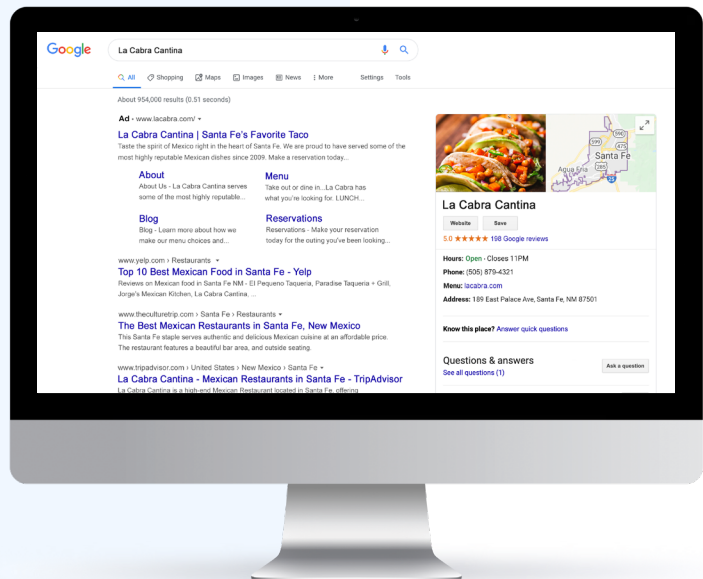
With all listings sites, you are aiming to drive the guest to visit. Having all the elements completed for your listing is an important start to succeeding in that effort. From easy to access contact information and directions to a current menu, the guest should be able to make an informed choice about your business. Here your photos and video content are also important.

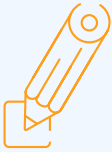


Google My Business Listing

Claim your Google My Business profile to take advantage of the prime placement in Google search results.

Google My Business is more of a utility than a social experience. You have access to claiming this profile and it's imperative that you do so. Put as much complete info and images as they will allow. This will ensure a guest that finds you via a Google search isn't disappointed with the result.





ACTION STEPS

✓
Claim your Facebook business page, Google My Business profile, and Yelp listing.

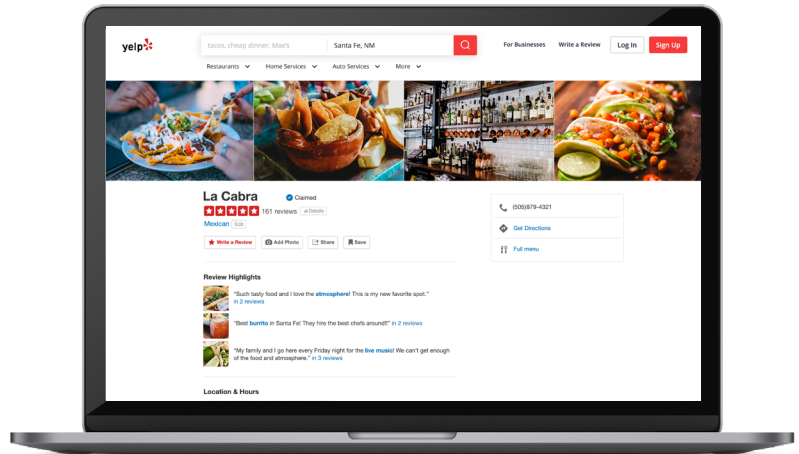
✓
Identify any other key listings that may be important for your business.

✓
Make sure all information is correct on all sites.



DID YOU KNOW?

Find out more about setting up your Facebook business page, Google My Business profile, and taking control of your listings.



Yelp Page

Yelp is by far the most successful local search site available online and has been for a long time. Unlike Google My Business, Yelp is very much a hybrid listing and social site. Guests read and comment on each other's reviews and the information delivered is easy to consume on both the web and on mobile. If you are going to claim only one online profile Yelp is the one. Menus, pictures, and special information should all be present. As you can see from the example, the restaurant highlights that they are kid friendly, keep their kitchen open late, and they are family owned. This is more than just information, it paints a picture of your business that a guest can quickly appreciate and influence them to visit.

One important distinction about Yelp is their review content. That means the stakes are high and your response to both positive and negative reviews can make all the difference. For this reason alone you can't let your profile stand unmanaged.

5-9%

increase in revenue from a one-star increase in a Yelp rating

ACCORDING TO A HARVARD BUSINESS SCHOOL STUDY

5



Create content: Increase your chances of getting found

Content is what people search for, consume, and share online. If you produce relevant content on a consistent basis that aligns with what your audience is searching for, you'll have more people finding you and sharing your content. You'll also make more connections for your business and reach more people, who will also share your content.

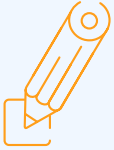
This content helps search engines like Google find your business and can result in free traffic to your website. Yes, there are some technical aspects to consider search engine optimization or SEO. But at its core, it's about delivering relevant and meaningful content to the people you're trying to reach.

A blog is functionality that makes it easy to add content, or posts, to your website on a regular basis. Whereas your website contains information about products and services, a blog gives you the ability to demonstrate your expertise by answering more specific questions for prospects and customers.



DID YOU KNOW?

A blog allows you to create helpful content for your audience directly.

**ACTION STEPS**

Add a blog to your website domain.



List the top questions you get from prospects and customers.

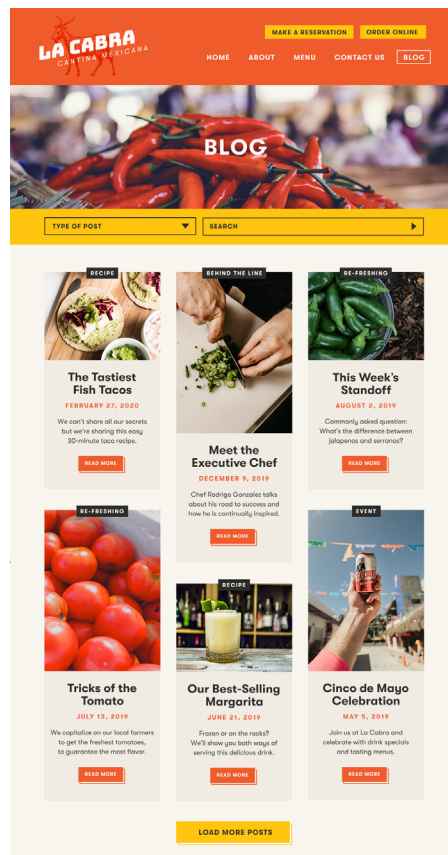


Create a calendar to regularly publish content that answers those questions.

Search engines love fresh blog content.

You get the most benefit when your blog is connected directly to your website and not off on some other platform. Choose a publishing frequency that works best for your business. That could be once a week or once a month. You can then use this content on your social and email channels to lead people back to your website.

We realize this is a big ask for an already busy restaurant manager to undertake regularly writing a blog, but you will be surprised how easy it is and what great content it makes to include in an email to guests. You can position yourself as an expert on food and beverage and write about how you choose those items that are on your menu. Guests are interested in the process and will happily share your professional experience.





How to amplify your efforts.

Once you have the foundational elements in place, you can and should use paid advertising to amplify your efforts. The online landscape has changed over the years. Where it used to be enough to just be there to reach your potential customers, algorithms on most social channels limit the access you have to your audience. Algorithms also impact where your business ranks in search results. In many cases, you'll have to pay to reach people.

That's not bad. You just want to do it in a smart way.



Facebook and Instagram Ads

Ads on Facebook and Instagram are powerful because not only are there lots of people on the platforms, you can also target your ads specifically to increase their effectiveness.

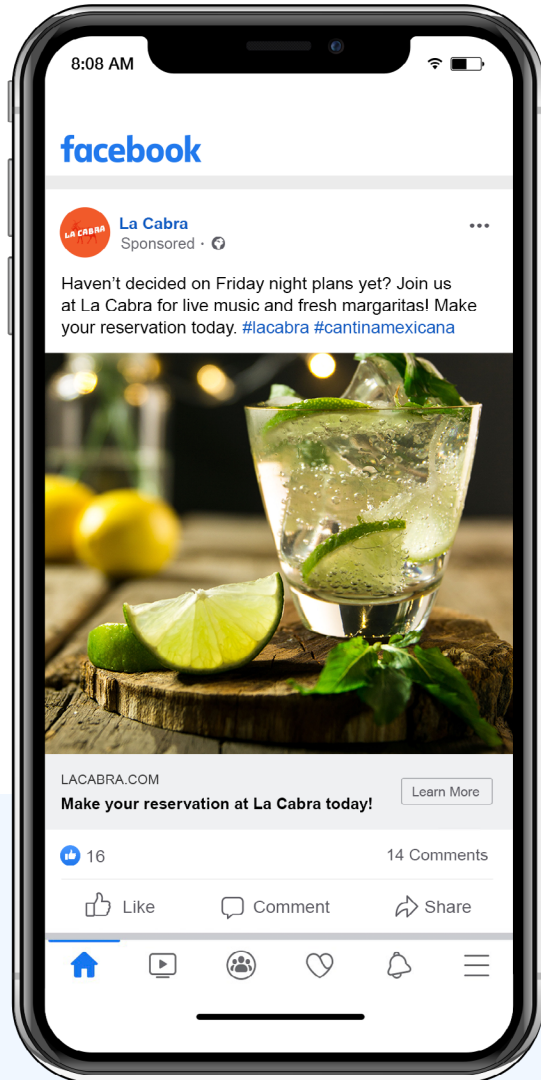
Target your ads based on location, demographics, interests, behaviors, and connections. You can even create a lookalike audience to target people similar to those already on your email contact list.

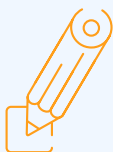
DID YOU KNOW?



Constant Contact walks you through the process of creating ads, making it easy to find customers on Facebook and Instagram, drive website traffic, and grow your contact list.

[Find out more.](#)





ACTION STEPS

✓
Set aside a budget of \$100 to experiment with paid advertising.

✓
Drive traffic to top-performing pages on your website.

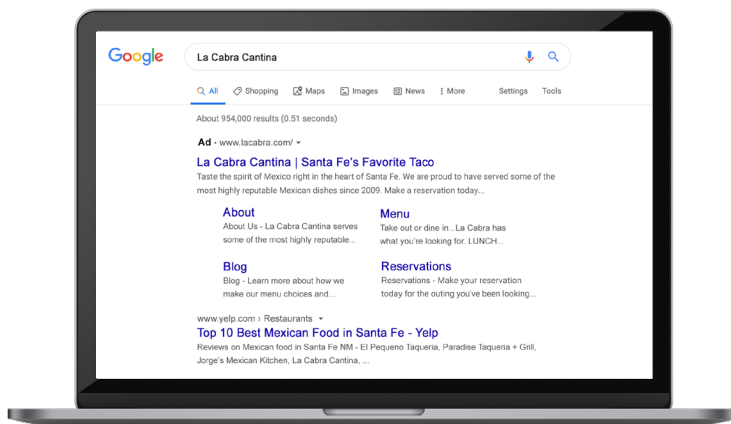
✓
Use ads to get new signups for your email list.



DID YOU KNOW?

Constant Contact has simplified the process for creating an ad and bidding on keywords so that you can quickly start promoting your organization to the people who are actively looking for what your business offers.

Find out more about growing your business with [Google Ads from Constant Contact](#).



CREATE CONTENT

Google Ads

People use Google every day to search for specific goods, services, programs, and organizational information. You can pay to have Google Ads display your text ads at the top of the search results based on specific keywords. These ads are pay-per-click (PPC), which means you pay only when people click on your ad.

How much should you spend on ads?

When you're first getting started set aside \$100 for testing. As you learn what does and doesn't work, you can invest more money in the ads that are working to bring you more business.



How it all comes together

Now that you have a better sense of how people are finding restaurants online and the tools you'll need to position yourself for success, how do you bring it all together to drive new and repeat business?

The reality is that if you aren't keeping yourself top of mind, people will forget about your restaurant. And that can cause you to lose money. Let's take a look at how this all comes together.

Connect

It's all about getting people to your door or mobile-responsive website. You now know that happens through word-of-mouth referrals, searches online, paid advertising, mobile searches on apps, or through listing sites.

Experience

Wherever your prospective guest is engaging with you, you should provide a positive experience. That's often as simple as making sure people are finding the answers to their questions, that you're responding and engaging with people, and generally being helpful.

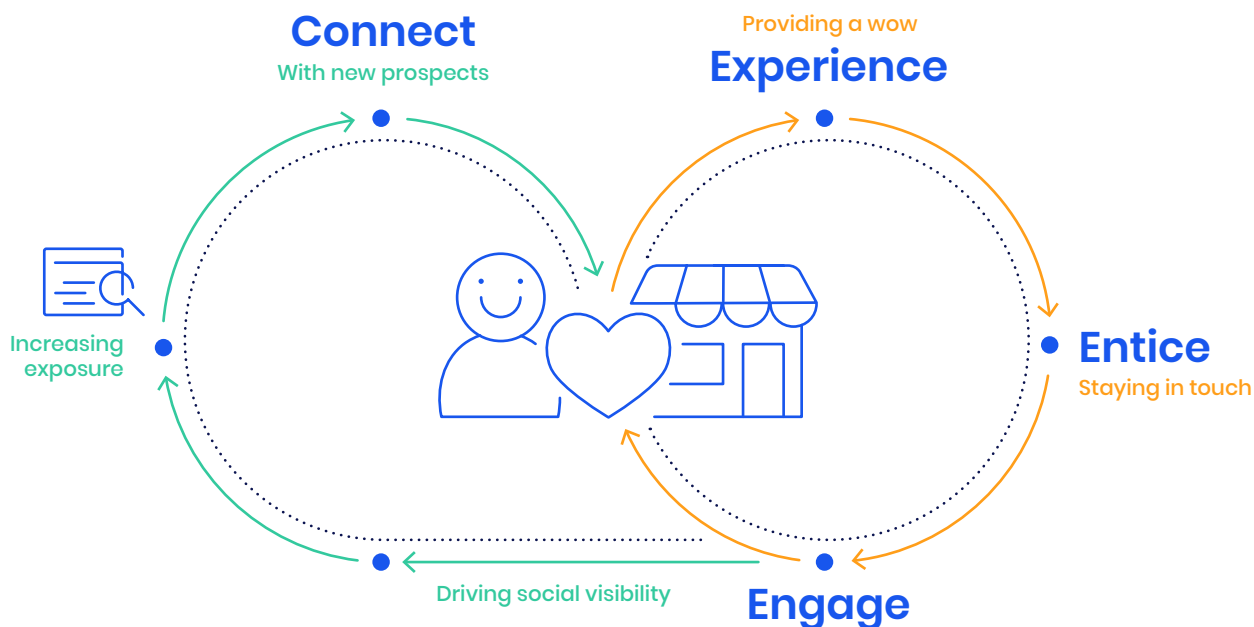
Entice

At this stage where someone is feeling good about your business, it's a great time to entice them to stay in touch with you. This could be mean following you on social channels, or even better, joining your email list.

Engage

Next, engage with these people who have opted to connect with you on a regular basis. This engagement is at the heart of the relationship between a brand and its customers.

Engagement keeps you top of mind and puts you on the path to creating repeat customers, loyalty, referrals, and increased exposure for your business. Simply, engagement creates more awareness for your business and brings more people to your door.



When your connections engage with you on social, forward your emails, or share your content with their contacts, those interactions create more visibility for your business. In turn, this engagement brings new people to your business and feeds into the ways people find your business in the first place.

And that's how it all works together.

By focusing on those core elements of connect, experience, entice, and engage, a small business can create the relationships and interactions that keep existing customers coming back and increase word of mouth and social visibility that brings new customers through the door.

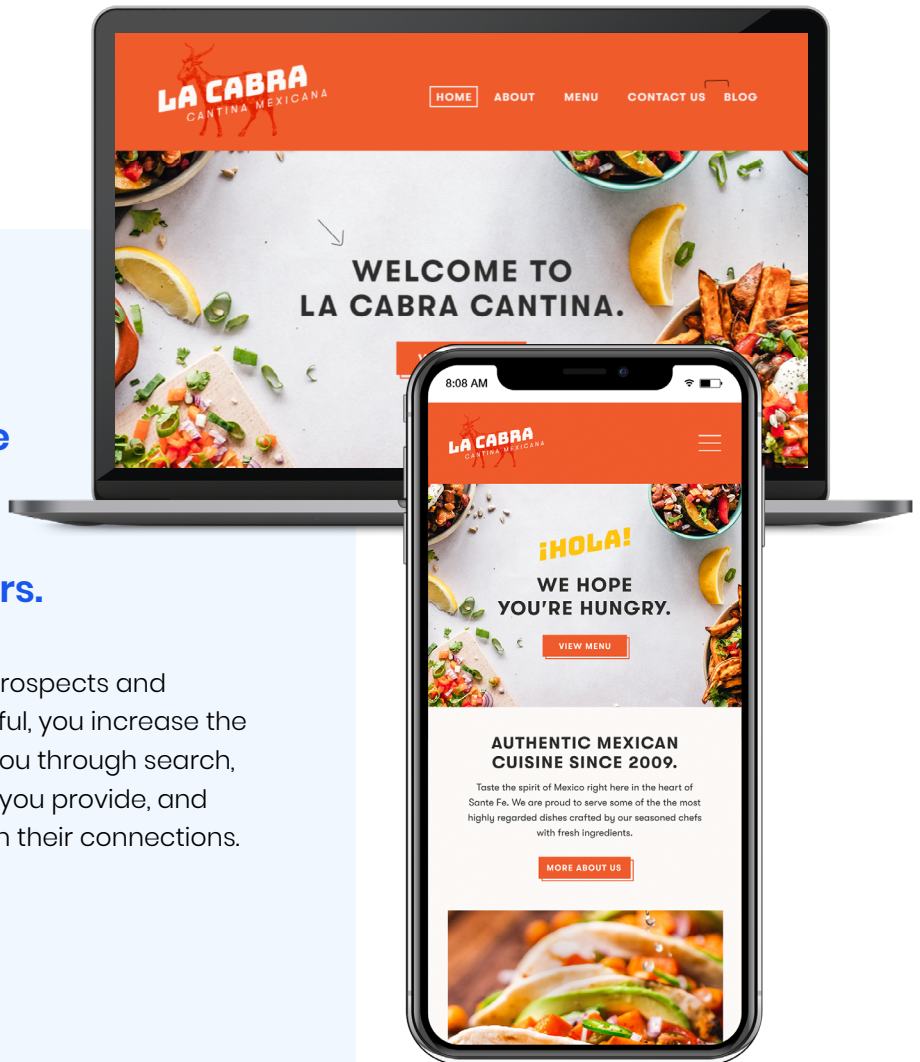
TO RECAP

Here's how you
can take action:



Create a
mobile-responsive
website as a
resource for
potential customers.

By answering questions of prospects and creating content that's helpful, you increase the chances of people finding you through search, consuming the information you provide, and sharing those resources with their connections.



TO RECAP

Here's how you
can take action:



Capture email addresses from website visitors.

Offer a promotion or exclusive content to entice people to join your email list. Then you'll have a way to follow up and encourage people to do business with you.

The screenshot displays the La Cabra website with a dark brown header. The header includes the logo "LA CABRA RESTAURANTE MEXICANA" and navigation links: HOME, ABOUT, MENU, CONTACT US, and BLOG. Two buttons, "MAKE A RESERVATION" and "ORDER ONLINE", are in the top right. A white modal box is centered over the page with the heading "DON'T LEAVE US HANGING!". The modal text reads: "Subscribe to our newsletter to be the first to know about upcoming events, special deals, new menu items, and more!". It contains three input fields: "NAME", "BIRTH DATE" (with a dropdown arrow), and "EMAIL ADDRESS". A red "SUBMIT" button is at the bottom right of the modal. The background of the website shows a collage of Mexican food, including tacos and a drink. Text on the website includes "AUTHENTIC MEXICAN CUISINE SINCE 2009.", "TASTE THE SPIRIT OF MEXICO RIGHT HERE IN THE HEART OF SANTE FE. WE ARE PROUD TO SERVE SOME OF THE MOST HIGHLY REGARDED DISHES CRAFTED BY OUR SEASONED CHEFS WITH FRESH INGREDIENTS.", "MORE ABOUT US", "TACOS. TEQUILA. LIVE MUSIC.", "IN FOR SOME EXCITEMENT?", "La Cabra has live music every Friday night and a variety of fun events in between. Join us for Monday Trivia or our 2 for \$3 Taco Tuesday special!", "SEE CALENDAR", and "WANT TO COME BY? WE'LL SAVE YOU A SEAT." with a "MAKE A RESERVATION" button at the bottom.

TO RECAP

Here's how you
can take action:



Interact and engage on social.

Remember it's called social media for a reason. Social works best when you're not just asking people to purchase your products. Use social to generate awareness, support customer service, and drive action. Ultimately, try to get social followers to take the next steps by visiting your website and joining your email list.



TO RECAP

Here's how you
can take action:



Engage with reviews to build trust.

Say “Thanks” when your customers take the time to say positive things about your business. Also, be sure to attend to negative reviews as well.

People are looking to see how you'll respond. Sometimes the feedback is legitimate, sometimes it's not. Respond professionally to see if you can rectify the issue. People watching can tell if someone's being unreasonable.

The screenshot shows a Yelp business page for 'La Cabra Cantina'. At the top, there's a search bar with 'tacos, cheap dinner' and a red search button. Below the search bar are category filters: Restaurants, Home Services, Auto Services, and More. The business name 'La Cabra Cantina' is prominently displayed, followed by a 'Claimed' status. Below the name are 14 reviews, a 'Details' button, and a 'Mexican Restaurant' label. Action buttons include 'Write a Review', 'Add Photo', 'Share', and 'Save'. On the right side, there's a sidebar with the website 'lacabra.com', a phone number '(505) 879-4321', and a 'Get Directions' button. The 'Recommended Reviews' section features a message about trust and a search bar. A review by Courtney Watson is shown, with a 5-star rating and a date of 7/16/2019. The review text is: 'La Cabra is by far my favorite restaurant! Every time I have visitors I make sure to show them my favorite spots around Santa Fe, and La Cabra always makes the list! Can't get enough of those carnitas tacos.' Below the review is a comment from Carlos Montez of La Cabra Cantina, thanking Courtney for the review and expressing hope to see her soon.

TO RECAP



Here's how you
can take action:




Use email marketing
to provide exclusive,
helpful, and
promotional content.

Email marketing allows you to build more meaningful customer relationships and drive business because people have opted-in to receive information from you.

They're more engaged with your business than the typical social media follower. Provide subscribers with deals and information they won't receive other places. Email can also drive action on your social channels.



OUR MENU | EVENT SCHEDULE | MAKE A RESERVATION



GET YOUR MARGS!

Tuesday is National Margarita Day! And you know what that means—\$5 Margaritas! We'll be serving them up all night until 12am...don't miss out!

MAKE A RESERVATION

189 EAST PALACE AVE, SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO 87501 | 505.879.4321 | INFO@LACABRA.COM

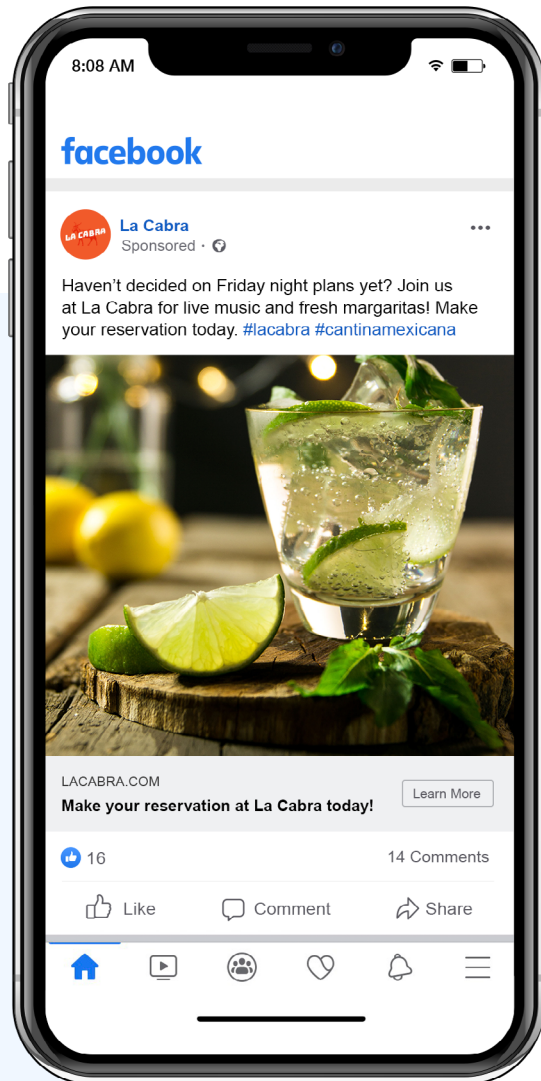
TO RECAP

Here's how you
can take action:



Amplify your efforts with paid advertising.

With your fundamentals in place, you can drive traffic to your website, expose your business to more people, and collect more email addresses to get even more business.



How will you know your online marketing efforts are working?

There's no shortage of things to measure today. Likes, followers, shares, opens, and clicks are all leading indicators. Don't focus on these vanity metrics alone to determine success. Pay attention to the things that are meaningful for your business.

Some high-level questions you should answer to gauge success:

- Are people visiting your website?
- Are people joining your email list?
- Are people visiting your location?
- Are people making reservations?

How long does online marketing take to work?

From an organic, or non-paid perspective, you should think in terms of months. But once you build that foundation and have those strong relationships with your customers, the time frame shortens. Then you can experiment with paid advertising to amplify those efforts that are working.

REMEMBER

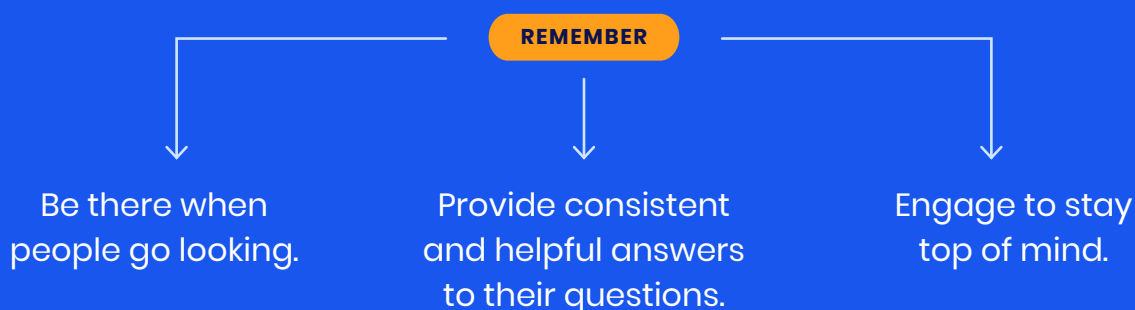
Across all that you're doing online, the idea should be to use your mobile-responsive website, email marketing, social channels, business listings, content, and advertising to be useful to your current and potential customers.

- Create your website as a resource.
- Use other channels to drive people to your website.
- Capture email addresses and engage to drive new and repeat business.



How online marketing can work for you

**With your knowledge of how to make
online marketing work for your business,
you're ready to take those next steps.**



By doing these things you'll get the word out about your business, drive more people to your website, and see long term success.

You've got this. You've got us.

CONSTANTCONTACT.COM

Is your business online ready?

Review the following information. If you answer “no” on any of these items, a Constant Contact marketing advisor can point you in the right direction.



Call our marketing helpline:
(888) IDK-MKTG
(888) 435-6584

Do you have a logo for your restaurant?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have a domain name?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have a website?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Is it mobile responsive?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Does it include at least these four pages?		
<i>Homepage</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>About Page</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>Contact Page</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>Menu Page</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Are you answering the appropriate questions for visitors on each page?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Are you using the appropriate imagery and photography throughout your site?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have a way to capture email addresses from your website?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Are you offering something of value in exchange for an email address?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Have you ever run an SEO audit on your website?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Are you using an email marketing tool to stay in touch with customers and prospects?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have a Welcome Series ready to automatically go out to new subscribers?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have a written plan to send an email at least once a month?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have any ideas for other emails you may want to automate?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

Are you using social media channels for your business?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Have you reserved your business name on the major social channels?	<input type="radio"/> FACEBOOK <input type="radio"/> TWITTER <input type="radio"/> INSTAGRAM <input type="radio"/> SNAPCHAT <input type="radio"/> YOUTUBE	
Have you chosen one channel as your primary area of focus?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Are you engaging with people trying to interact with your business on this channel?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Have you set business goals for your social activity across the three categories?		
<i>Awareness</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>Customer Service</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>Driving Action</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Do you have a written social plan to achieve those goals?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Have you identified the listings and review sites that are important for your business?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Have you claimed your business on these listings and sites?		
<i>Google My Business</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>Facebook</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
<i>Yelp</i>	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Have you confirmed the information is accurate on these sites?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO
Are you engaging with people on these platforms?	<input type="radio"/> YES	<input type="radio"/> NO

Do you have a way to easily create content on your website such as a blog?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Have you made a list of commonly asked questions from your prospects and customers?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you have a written plan to publish answers to those questions on a consistent basis?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are you currently doing any paid advertising?

☐ FACEBOOK
☐ INSTAGRAM
☐ GOOGLE
☐ OTHER

Have you set aside a small budget to test your paid advertising efforts?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you have a written plan for paid advertising efforts?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Do you have a key metric that's important for your business?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are you looking beyond vanity metrics and paying attention to the metrics that matter for your business?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are more people visiting your website?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are more people joining your email list?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are more people contacting you?

☐ YES ☐ NO

Are more people visiting your location?

☐ YES ☐ NO

→ Find more powerful tools, marketing advice, and how to win with online marketing at constantcontact.com

Constant Contact is an online marketing platform built to simplify the complex task of marketing your idea, even if you're a beginner. And our award-winning team of marketing advisors is there for every customer, every step of the way, offering live, real-time marketing advice on the phone or online anytime you get stuck.

Whether it's creating great-looking email marketing campaigns, running Google Ads to get more website traffic, or finding new customers on social media, we've got all the tools, features, and expert guidance you need to help you succeed—all in one place.



Headquarters
Reservoir Place
1601 Trapelo Road
Waltham, MA 02451

[CONSTANTCONTACT.COM](https://www.constantcontact.com)