

M LOCAL BUSINESS MARKETING

The Marketing Guide for Local Business Owners

December 2024

KEEPING
THE SALES
MOMENTUM
AFTER
THE HOLIDAY
SEASON

TOP
CHARACTERISTICS
EMPLOYEES WANT
IN A BUSINESS
OWNER

TOP ISSUES
FACING
SMALL
BUSINESSES
IN 2025



Setting 2025
Goals for
Your Small
Business

SMALL
BUSINESS
MARKETING
TRENDS FOR
2025

Infographic:
Promotional
Product Trends

FREE!

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Happy Holidays!

Here we are in December once again. Another year is almost put to rest. Hopefully, you've already been thinking about 2025 and how you're going to grow your business. What are your goals for the coming year? How did you do with your goals for this year?

This month's articles and infographic cover many topics that we hope will be relevant to your business, including the importance of evaluating your marketing plan each year! Hopefully, These tidbits will help you plan and execute your plans for the coming year.

If you're not already receiving this magazine regularly, we suggest you add your email to our subscriber list. We have some exciting articles already in the works for the upcoming issues. Don't miss out! If you find the magazine helpful and know other local business owners who could benefit from receiving our magazine each month, please do us (and them) a favor by forwarding a copy to them.

Have a topic that you'd like to see us cover? We welcome any suggestions, comments, or questions you might have. Wishing you all a happy holiday and a prosperous new year!

Darcy Guello
Principal
Guello Marketing

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A Little About Us

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It's a full-time job for me, an experienced online marketer, to keep up with all the changes and opportunities online. How could you possibly run your business while trying to figure out the online jungle? Where do you even start?

I've seen businesses that paid thousands of dollars for a website that no one visits; or business owners who spend hours each week posting on a Facebook page that they don't get any customers from. You don't want that to happen to you.

If you're interested in finding someone you can trust with online marketing advice, I'd like the chance to prove you can trust Guello Marketing. Consider this a personal invitation for us to talk.

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Marketing Calendar

Plan your marketing messages around these upcoming holidays and proclamations.

December

International AIDS Awareness Month
Cat Lovers' Month
Human Rights Month
Worldwide Food Service Safety Month
Made in America Month

December 21st - First Day of Winter
December 24th - Christmas Eve
December 25th - Christmas
December 25th to January 2nd - Hanukkah
December 26th to January 1st - Kwanzaa

1st - World AIDS Day
1st - Christmas Lights Day
2nd - World Pollution Prevention Day
2nd - Mutt Day
3rd - Intl. Day of Persons With Disabilities
4th - Wildlife Conservation Day
4th - Cookie Day
5th - International Volunteer Day

5th - Walt Disney Day
8th - Brownie Day
9th - Pastry Day
9th - Christmas Card Day
10th - Lager Day
11th - App Day
12th - Gingerbread House Day
13th - Cocoa Day
14th - Free Shipping Day
15th - Cupcake Day
16th - Chocolate Covered Anything Day
17th - Maple Syrup Day
17th - Wright Brothers Day
18th - Answer The Phone Like Buddy The Elf Day
20th - Ugly Sweater Day
21st - Crossword Puzzle Day
26th - Day of Goodwill
27th - Fruitcake Day
28th - Chocolate Candy Day
31st - New Year's Eve

January

National Blood Donor Month
Poverty Awareness Month
Eye Care Month
Birth Defections Prevention Month
Family Fit Lifestyle Month
Financial Wellness Month

January 1st - New Year's Day
January 15th - Martin Luther King Jr. Day

1st - Polar Bear Plunge Day
2nd - Science Fiction Day
4th - Spaghetti Day
4th - Trivia Day
6th - Bean Day
8th - Bubble Bath Day
9th - Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
11th - Milk Day
13th - Gluten Free Day
14th - Dress Up Your Pet Day

15th - Hat Day
16th - Hot & Spicy Food Day
18th - Winnie the Pooh Day
19th - Popcorn Day
20th - Cheese Lover's Day
20th - Take a Walk Outdoors Day
21st - National Hugging Day
23rd - Pie Day
24th - Compliment Day
24th - Peanut Butter Day
25th - Opposite Day
26th - Spouse's Day
27th - Chocolate Cake Day
27th - Holocaust Remembrance Day
28th - Lego Day
29th - National Puzzle Day
30th - Croissant Day
31st - Backward Day
31st - Hot Chocolate Day



Setting 2025 Goals for Your Small Business

The start of a new year always brings fresh opportunities, but 2025 feels different, doesn't it? After navigating years of change, small business owners are more ready than ever to push boundaries, explore uncharted waters, and set ambitious goals. But how do you craft goals that inspire growth without feeling like a shot in the dark? Let's talk about setting powerful, actionable goals that will take your small business to the next level in 2025.

Start with a Clear Vision

Before you dive into specifics, step back and ask yourself: What does success look like for your business by the end of 2025? This isn't just about numbers on a spreadsheet. Think about the broader picture—your brand's impact, your team's culture, and how your business fits into your customers' lives. Vision is the anchor that keeps your goals focused and meaningful.

Embrace SMART Goals

You've probably heard this before, but it's worth repeating: your goals need to be SMART—specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound. Saying, "We want more customers," is vague and uninspiring. Instead, aim for something like, "We will increase our customer base by 25% by December 2025 through targeted social media campaigns." Doesn't that feel more tangible?

Dig Deep into Your Data

Numbers don't lie. To set realistic and effective goals, you need to understand where you stand. Review your sales trends, customer feedback,

and website analytics. Is there a particular product or service that's performing well? Are there bottlenecks in your sales process? Data is like a roadmap—it shows you where you've been and helps chart the course forward.

Focus on Customer Experience

In 2025, customer experience will continue to reign supreme. It's not just about what you sell; it's about how you make your customers feel. Are your customers delighted at every touchpoint, or are there gaps in their journey? Setting a goal to improve customer satisfaction scores or decrease response times could give your business a competitive edge.

Invest in Your Team

Your team is your most valuable asset, so don't overlook them when setting goals. What skills or resources do they need to succeed in 2025? Consider goals that focus on training, team-building, or improving workplace culture. A motivated team is like a well-oiled machine—efficient, reliable, and ready to tackle challenges head-on.

Explore New Revenue Streams

Are you relying too heavily on a single product or service? Diversifying your revenue streams is a smart move for any small business. Think about complementary offerings or untapped markets you could explore. For example, a bakery might add online classes or subscription boxes. Set a goal to launch a new revenue stream by mid-2025 and track its performance.

Strengthen Your Online Presence

It's no secret that digital channels are vital for small business success. Is your website optimized for mobile? Are you consistent on social media? In 2025, aim to enhance your online presence through better SEO, engaging content, or an updated website design. Remember, your digital footprint is often the first impression customers have of your brand.

Leverage Technology for Growth

From AI-driven analytics to automated marketing tools, technology can be

a game-changer for small businesses. But it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the options. Start small—pick one or two tools that align with your goals. For instance, using a CRM system to track customer interactions could help you improve retention rates.

Set Financial Milestones

Revenue growth is a common goal, but it's just the tip of the iceberg. Dig deeper by setting specific financial milestones, such as reducing expenses by a certain percentage or increasing profit margins. These goals ensure you're not just making money but keeping it too.

Prioritize Sustainability

Sustainability isn't just a buzzword; it's a business imperative. Customers are paying attention to how brands impact the planet. Could you reduce waste, switch to eco-friendly packaging, or support local suppliers? Set a sustainability goal for 2025 and let your customers know about your efforts.

Engage with Your Community

Small businesses thrive

on community support. How can you give back in 2025? Consider goals around sponsorships, volunteering, or collaborations with other local businesses. Not only does this build goodwill, but it also strengthens your brand's reputation as a community partner.

Measure and Adapt Regularly

Setting goals is only half the battle—you need to track your progress too. Set aside time each month to review your goals. Are you on track, or do you need to pivot? Remember, flexibility is key. Think of your goals as a compass, not a set of handcuffs.

Celebrate Small Wins

Don't wait until December 2025 to celebrate your achievements. Acknowledging progress, no matter how small, keeps you and your team motivated. Did you hit a monthly sales target or launch a new campaign? Take a moment to appreciate the effort behind it.

Think Long-Term While Acting Short-Term

It's easy to get caught up

in immediate challenges, but don't lose sight of your long-term vision. Each goal you set for 2025 should act as a stepping stone toward bigger ambitions. It's like building a house—every brick matters, but the blueprint keeps the end result in focus.

The Power of Bold Goals

Big goals can feel intimidating, but they're often the ones that drive the most growth. What's one audacious goal you've been hesitant to pursue? Maybe it's expanding to a new location or doubling your team. Take the leap. 2025 could be the year your small business transforms into something extraordinary.

Setting goals for 2025 isn't just about checking boxes—it's about creating a roadmap for success that aligns with your vision. By focusing on what matters most to your business, leveraging data, and staying adaptable, you'll set yourself up for a year of growth and achievement.

So, grab that notebook, dream big, and let 2025 be the year your small business truly shines.



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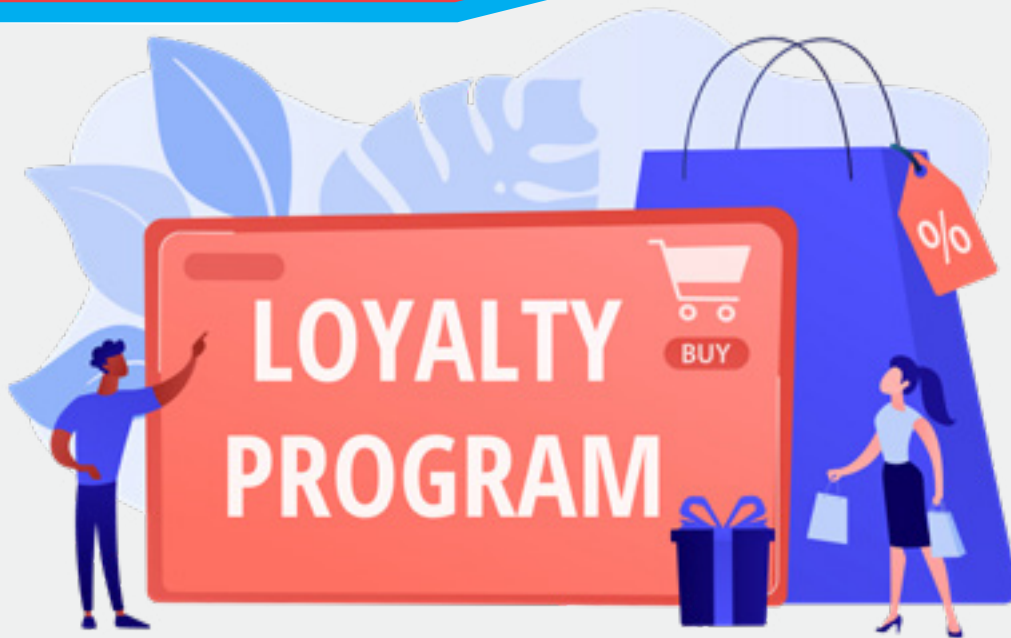
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Keeping the Sales Momentum After the Holiday Season

As the holiday season winds down, many businesses find themselves in a familiar position: wondering how to maintain the energy, excitement, and sales that defined the last few months. The post-holiday period can feel like the aftermath of a big party—quiet and a little too slow. But what if we told you it doesn't have to be that way? Keeping the sales momentum alive after the holiday rush is not only possible, but it can also set the tone for a successful year ahead.

Reignite Customer Engagement

The holidays bring a flood of new customers, many of whom make purchases for the first time. Don't let those relationships go cold. Reach out with personalized emails or messages thanking them for their holiday purchases. Include a special offer or incentive to encourage them to return soon. Remember, staying top-of-mind is half the battle.

Launch a "New Year, New You" Campaign

January is all about fresh starts, and your business can tap into that energy. Whether you sell fitness products, organizational tools, or even comfort foods, frame your offerings as part of your customers' New Year's resolutions. Use messaging that speaks to renewal and growth, positioning your products or services as the perfect solution.

Run Exclusive Post-Holiday Promotions

Who doesn't love a good deal after splurging during the holidays? Offer limited-time promotions to clear out leftover holiday inventory or introduce



new collections. Flash sales, "New Year specials," or bundled discounts can create urgency and entice customers to keep spending without the holiday pressure.

Capitalize on Gift Card Redemptions

Gift cards are a holiday staple, and January is prime time for recipients to redeem them. Encourage gift card users to spend more by offering discounts on purchases that exceed the card's value. For example, "Spend \$10 more and get 15% off your next purchase." It's a win-win for your customers and your bottom line.

Plan a Loyalty Rewards Push

If you don't have a loyalty

program, now's the time to start one. If you already do, use January to promote it heavily. Customers love feeling valued, and loyalty programs offer a way to keep them engaged. Offer bonus points for purchases made in the first quarter or double rewards for referrals to give your sales a lift.

Host Engaging Events

The holidays might be over, but people are still looking for reasons to celebrate. Host an event—whether virtual or in-person—that ties into your brand. Think workshops, live Q&A sessions, or product demos.

Events not only drive engagement but also provide opportunities to

showcase your offerings in a fresh light.

Lean on Social Media for Fresh Content

Social media doesn't go on vacation after the holidays, and neither should your strategy. Keep the conversation going with engaging posts, behind-the-scenes content, or user-generated photos featuring your products. Be consistent, creative, and interactive. Social platforms are an excellent way to remind customers why they loved shopping with you during the holidays.

Focus on Building Relationships

January is the perfect time to double down on relationship-building. Use this slower period to respond to reviews, address customer inquiries, and actively participate in conversations on your platforms. Show your audience that you're not just about the holiday rush—you're here for the long haul.

Refresh Your Marketing for the New Year

The new year calls for

fresh messaging. Update your website, email campaigns, and ads with timely, relevant content that resonates with a post-holiday audience. Highlight any new arrivals or upcoming launches, and don't be afraid to share your excitement. Enthusiasm is contagious!

Analyze Holiday Sales Trends

Take a close look at your holiday sales data. What worked well? Which products or services were customer favorites? Use these insights to adjust your strategy for the coming months. For example, if a particular product exceeded expectations, consider expanding that line or offering complementary items.

Tap into the "Self-Gifting" Market

After weeks of buying for others, many consumers turn their attention to themselves. Promote items that cater to self-care, indulgence, or personal improvement. Whether it's cozy home goods, fitness equipment, or educational resources, frame your products as the perfect way to treat yourself.

Leverage Email Marketing

Don't underestimate the power of email. Send out newsletters filled with updates, product recommendations, and exclusive deals to your subscribers. Personalize your messaging based on past purchases or interests to make your emails



feel more tailored and engaging.

Collaborate with Other Businesses

Partnerships can be a game-changer in the quieter months. Team up with complementary brands to offer bundled promotions, giveaways, or joint events. These collaborations can help you reach new audiences while keeping your existing customers intrigued.

Set Internal Goals for Q1

Keeping sales momentum

isn't just about external strategies—it's also about internal focus. Set clear, achievable goals for the first quarter, whether that's increasing revenue, launching a new product, or growing your email list. Rally your team around these goals to maintain energy and motivation.

Celebrate Small Wins Along the Way

Momentum thrives on positivity. Recognize and celebrate every milestone, whether it's a successful promotion, a glowing customer review, or hitting a sales

target. Acknowledging progress keeps your team motivated and reminds you of the bigger picture.

The post-holiday lull doesn't have to mean a sales slowdown. By staying proactive, engaging with your customers, and embracing fresh strategies, you can turn January into a month of opportunity.

Remember, momentum isn't something you wait for—it's something you create. So, what are you waiting for? Let's keep the energy alive and make 2025 your best year yet.

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Small Business Marketing Trends for 2025

If there's one thing we know about marketing, it's that it never sits still. As small business owners prepare for 2025, the marketing landscape is evolving faster than ever, presenting both opportunities and challenges. So, what does the future hold, and how can small businesses stay ahead of the curve? Let's dive into the top marketing trends that will define 2025 and how you can use them to your advantage.

The Rise of Hyper-Personalization

Generic marketing

is out, and hyper-personalization is in. Customers now expect brands to understand their unique needs and preferences. Imagine walking into a store where the salesperson knows your name, your favorite products, and even what you might need next.

That's the kind of experience customers crave in the digital world. Leveraging AI tools and customer data analytics, businesses can create personalized emails, product recommendations, and ads that truly resonate.

AI-Powered Customer Engagement

Artificial intelligence isn't just for big corporations anymore. Tools like chatbots, predictive analytics, and AI content creators are becoming accessible to small businesses. Think of AI as your marketing assistant that never sleeps. It can help you engage with customers 24/7, answer common questions, and even craft compelling ad copy. By integrating AI into your strategy, you can save time and focus on building deeper customer relationships.

Short-Form Video Dominance

TikTok, Instagram Reels, and YouTube Shorts have solidified their place in marketing strategies, and they're not going anywhere. Short-form videos are quick, engaging, and shareable, making them the perfect tool for grabbing attention in a crowded digital space. Whether you're showcasing behind-the-scenes moments, tutorials, or customer testimonials, these bite-sized clips can humanize your brand and drive massive engagement.

Social Commerce is Taking Over

The line between social media and e-commerce is blurring. Platforms like Instagram, Facebook, and Pinterest are becoming one-stop shops where customers can discover, browse, and purchase products without ever leaving the app. If your small business isn't leveraging social commerce, now is the time to start. Make it easy for customers to shop by tagging products in your posts and investing in shoppable ads.

Sustainability as a Selling Point

Consumers are increasingly choosing brands that align with their values, and sustainability is a top priority. In 2025, businesses that demonstrate eco-friendly practices and social responsibility will have a competitive edge. Share your green initiatives, whether it's reducing packaging waste, sourcing materials responsibly, or supporting local communities. Not only will this attract eco-conscious customers, but it will also boost your brand's reputation.

Voice Search Optimization

With the rise of smart speakers and voice assistants like Alexa and Siri, voice search is changing the way people find businesses. Imagine a customer saying, "Find a coffee shop near me that serves organic options," and your business being the first result. To make this a reality, optimize your website for conversational queries, focus on local SEO, and ensure your content answers common questions directly.

Community-Driven Marketing

In 2025, building a loyal community will be more important than ever. Customers don't just want to buy from you—they want to feel connected to your brand. Engaging with your audience through online forums, social media groups, and live events can foster a sense of belonging. Think of your brand as a clubhouse where like-minded people gather, share, and support each other.

Email Marketing Evolves

Email is far from dead; it's evolving. Interactive email campaigns with dynamic content, such as polls, GIFs, and embedded videos, will become the norm. Personalization will also play a huge role, with AI-driven tools allowing you to send tailored messages at the right time. Don't forget mobile optimization—most of your audience will open emails on their phones, so make sure they look great on smaller screens.

Influencer Partnerships Go Micro

Forget mega-celebrities with millions of followers.

In 2025, micro and nano influencers will take the spotlight. These influencers have smaller but highly engaged audiences and are more affordable for small businesses. Collaborating with the right influencer can help you tap into niche markets and build trust with potential customers.

The Power of Interactive Content

Why tell your audience something when you can let them experience it? Interactive content, such as quizzes, surveys, polls, and augmented reality (AR) experiences, will dominate marketing strategies. Think of it as the difference between watching a movie and playing a video game. Interactive content grabs attention, encourages engagement, and provides valuable insights into your audience.

Mobile-First Strategies

With mobile devices accounting for the majority of web traffic, a mobile-first approach is non-negotiable. Ensure your website is responsive, loads quickly, and offers

seamless navigation on smaller screens. Mobile optimization extends to your ads, emails, and social media posts. If your content doesn't perform well on mobile, you risk losing a significant chunk of your audience.

Data Privacy and Transparency

As data privacy regulations tighten, customers are becoming more cautious about how their information is used. Building trust will require transparency in how you collect, store, and use data. Clear privacy policies, opt-in options, and secure payment methods can reassure customers and show that you value their trust.

Gamification for Engagement

Gamification is all about making your marketing fun and rewarding. Adding game-like elements such as rewards programs, points systems, or interactive challenges can keep customers engaged and coming back for more. It's like turning your brand into a playground where customers enjoy interacting with you.

Omnichannel Marketing is a Must

Customers now interact with brands across multiple touchpoints—social media, email, websites, and physical stores. An omnichannel approach ensures a seamless and consistent experience no matter where your customers find you. It's like weaving a web of connections that makes your brand accessible and reliable at every turn.

Focus on Emotional Storytelling

In a world of information overload, stories stand out. Emotional storytelling helps you connect with your audience on a deeper level, turning them into loyal fans. Share your brand's journey, highlight customer success stories, or showcase the real people behind your business. Stories evoke emotions, and emotions drive action.

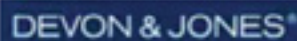
As we step into 2025, small businesses have more tools and opportunities than ever to create meaningful connections with their audiences. So, what's your next big marketing move?



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Top Characteristics Employees Want in a Business Owner



In today's competitive workplace, attracting and retaining top talent isn't just about offering a competitive salary or flashy perks. Employees are seeking something deeper: a connection with leadership that inspires, supports, and empowers them. As a business owner, you set the tone for your company's culture and success. So, what are the qualities that employees truly value in a leader? Let's explore the characteristics that make a business owner not just respected but also genuinely admired.

Visionary Leadership

Employees want to feel like they're part of something bigger than just daily tasks and deadlines. A business owner with a clear and inspiring vision gives their team a sense of purpose and direction. Visionary leaders are like captains steering the ship—they ensure everyone knows where they're headed and why it matters. When employees see a leader's passion and focus, it's

contagious and drives them to contribute their best.

Transparent Communication

Trust is built on honesty, and employees value leaders who are transparent. This doesn't mean sharing every detail, but it does mean being upfront about goals, challenges, and changes. Whether it's through regular team meetings, open-door policies, or company-wide updates, transparent communication fosters trust and eliminates unnecessary uncertainty. Employees appreciate when their leaders keep them informed and encourage open dialogue.

Empathy and Emotional Intelligence

In a world where work-life balance is more important than ever, empathy is non-negotiable. Employees want a business owner who sees them as more than just their roles—someone who

understands their struggles, celebrates their wins, and supports their growth. Emotional intelligence allows leaders to connect on a human level, creating a workplace where employees feel valued and understood.

Decisiveness with a Collaborative Approach

While employees admire leaders who can make tough decisions, they also want a voice in the process. A great business owner strikes a balance between decisiveness and collaboration. They listen to their team's input, weigh different perspectives, and then take decisive action. This approach not only fosters respect but also encourages innovation and problem-solving.

Adaptability and Resilience

Change is inevitable, and how a leader responds to it can make or break a team's morale. Employees look up to business owners who embrace challenges

with resilience and adaptability. Whether it's navigating market shifts, technological advancements, or unexpected crises, a flexible leader inspires confidence and shows that obstacles are opportunities for growth.

Commitment to Professional Development

Employees want to grow, and they value leaders who invest in their development. Offering training programs, mentorship, or opportunities to take on new challenges demonstrates that you care about their future. A business owner who champions learning creates a culture of growth that benefits both the individual and the company.

Recognition and Appreciation

A simple "thank you" can go a long way. Employees want to feel that their efforts are noticed and appreciated. Business owners who make

recognition a priority—whether through public acknowledgment, rewards, or personalized notes—boost morale and foster loyalty. After all, who doesn't want to work for someone who genuinely values their contributions?

Integrity and Fairness

Employees pay attention to how business owners handle tough situations. Integrity—doing the right thing, even when it's difficult—is a trait that earns respect. Fairness is equally critical, as it ensures all team members feel treated equitably. Whether it's resolving conflicts or making policy decisions, employees look to their leaders to model ethical behavior.

Passion and Drive

There's something magnetic about a leader who loves what they do. Employees are inspired by business owners who show passion and enthusiasm for their work. This energy motivates teams to go above and beyond

because they see how much their leader believes in the mission.

Approachability and Humility

Employees value leaders who are approachable and down-to-earth. Business owners who admit their mistakes, seek feedback, and show a willingness to learn create a culture of mutual respect. Humility doesn't diminish authority; it enhances it by showing that leadership is about service, not ego.

Work-Life Balance Advocacy

Employees are more productive and satisfied when they have a healthy balance between work and personal life. A business owner who models and supports this balance earns the admiration of their team. Offering flexible schedules, respecting boundaries, and promoting wellness programs show that you care about your employees as whole individuals.

Problem-Solving Skills

Every business encounters challenges, and employees want to know their leader can handle them. A business owner who approaches problems with creativity and a calm demeanor reassures their team. They don't just focus on issues—they focus on solutions, inspiring their employees to do the same.

Inclusive Leadership

A workplace where everyone feels welcome and included starts at the top. Employees value leaders who prioritize diversity and inclusion, creating an environment where different perspectives are not only heard but celebrated. Inclusive business owners foster a sense of belonging that drives collaboration and innovation.

Generosity and Giving Back

Employees often



admire leaders who go beyond profits and focus on making a difference. Whether it's supporting charitable causes, encouraging volunteerism, or giving back to the community, a generous leader sets an example that resonates with their team. It shows that the business is about more than just the bottom line.

A Culture of Trust

At the heart of all these qualities is trust. Employees want to know that their leader has their best interests at heart. Trust is built over time through consistent actions, open communication, and a

genuine commitment to the team's success. It's the foundation of any strong leader-employee relationship.

The characteristics employees want in a business owner aren't just about leadership—they're about connection. Employees don't just work for a business; they work for the person who leads it. By embodying these traits, you can create a workplace that attracts top talent, fosters loyalty, and inspires greatness.

So, what kind of leader do you want to be? Your employees are watching—and they're ready to follow.

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Top Issues Facing Small Businesses in 2025

Running a small business has never been a walk in the park, but in 2025, the challenges seem to be piling up like an unending to-do list. From navigating the choppy waters of the economy to staying ahead in the ever-changing digital landscape, small business owners are juggling more than ever. So, what are the top issues on the radar for 2025, and how can entrepreneurs prepare to tackle them head-on? Let's dive in.

Economic Uncertainty Is Here to Stay

The economy is like a rollercoaster ride—exciting when it’s climbing, terrifying when it plunges. Small businesses, often operating on razor-thin margins, are particularly vulnerable to these fluctuations. Rising interest rates and inflation have already sent ripples through the market, making everything from borrowing to stocking inventory more expensive. In 2025, smart budgeting and cash flow management are not just priorities; they’re survival tactics.

The Talent Crunch Isn’t Letting Up

Finding and keeping the right employees has become a Herculean task. The Great Resignation may have cooled off, but the demand for skilled workers remains high. Add to that the expectations of a younger workforce—think flexible hours, remote work options,

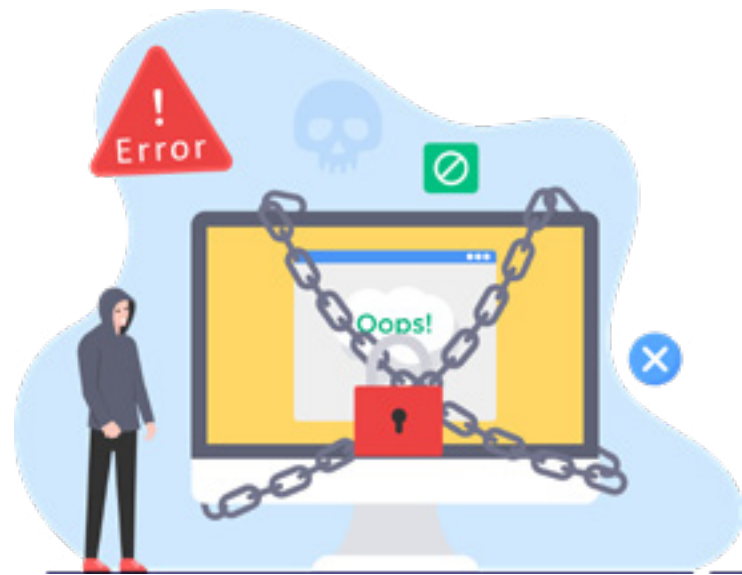
and a focus on workplace culture—and it’s clear that small businesses must evolve to compete with larger corporations for top talent.

Technology Is Moving at Warp Speed

Technology can feel like a double-edged sword. While it offers tools to streamline operations, staying on top of the latest advancements can be daunting and costly. Artificial intelligence, for example, is revolutionizing everything from customer service to inventory management. Yet, many small business owners feel overwhelmed by the pace of innovation. The challenge in 2025 will be adopting the right tech without breaking the bank—or burning out trying to learn it all.

Cybersecurity Threats Are Growing

As businesses



become more digital, cybercriminals are having a field day. From phishing attacks to ransomware, the threats are everywhere. Small businesses are particularly at risk because they often lack the robust defenses of larger organizations. In 2025, cybersecurity will no longer be optional—it will be a necessity. Investing in training and reliable security solutions is non-negotiable.

Shifting Consumer Expectations

Customers are more discerning than ever. They want personalized experiences, fast service, and ethical practices—all wrapped up in a pretty bow. Social and environmental consciousness will

play a significant role in purchasing decisions, forcing small businesses to rethink their values and how they communicate them. Meeting these demands is challenging but essential for building loyalty.

E-commerce Is Still King

Brick-and-mortar stores are no longer the backbone of retail; e-commerce reigns supreme. Small businesses must embrace online platforms to survive. Yet, managing an e-commerce presence requires time, resources, and technical know-how.

In 2025, having a slick website and engaging social media presence isn't just a nice-to-have—it's a must-have.

Supply Chain Woes Continue

If 2024 taught us anything, it's that supply chains are more fragile than they appear. Small businesses often sit at the end of the line,

meaning delays and shortages hit them the hardest. Diversifying suppliers and building stronger relationships with partners will be critical strategies to navigate this persistent challenge.

Marketing Is a Moving Target

Gone are the days when a simple ad in the local paper would do the trick. In 2025, marketing is a complex ecosystem of SEO, influencer collaborations, and short-form video content. Standing out in a sea of competitors requires creativity, data-driven strategies, and a willingness to experiment with new platforms and formats.

Sustainability Matters More Than Ever

Sustainability is no longer just a buzzword; it's a business imperative. Consumers are watching closely, favoring companies that prioritize eco-friendly practices. For small businesses, this means finding affordable ways to reduce waste, source responsibly, and operate sustainably. It's a tall order but one that pays off in brand reputation and customer loyalty.

Regulations Keep Changing

From tax policies to data privacy laws, staying compliant is a never-ending task. Small businesses often lack the





resources to navigate complex regulatory environments. In 2025, keeping up with legal requirements will require vigilance and perhaps even the help of experts to avoid costly missteps.

Rising Costs Across the Board

Everything seems to be getting more expensive—wages, utilities, raw materials. For small businesses, these rising costs can feel like death by a thousand cuts. Adjusting pricing strategies without alienating customers will be a delicate balancing act that every entrepreneur must master.

Customer Retention Is More Critical Than Acquisition

Attracting new

customers is expensive, but keeping existing ones? That's where the gold lies. In 2025, small businesses will need to double down on loyalty

programs, personalized service, and consistent communication to retain their customer base.

Health and Wellness Take Center Stage

Post-pandemic, the emphasis on health and wellness—both for employees and customers—has skyrocketed. Small businesses will need to ensure their workplaces are supportive and their products or services promote well-being. This trend isn't going anywhere.

Community Engagement Pays Dividends

Despite the digital shift, customers still value businesses that are deeply rooted in their communities. Whether it's sponsoring local

events or participating in neighborhood initiatives, being a visible, active part of the community can set small businesses apart from faceless corporations.

Adaptability Is the Name of the Game

If there's one lesson small businesses must carry into 2025, it's this: adapt or perish. The world is changing rapidly, and those who resist change risk being left behind. Flexibility, creativity, and a willingness to pivot will separate the survivors from the rest.

In conclusion, 2025 is shaping up to be a challenging yet exciting year for small businesses. While the hurdles are many, so are the opportunities. By staying informed, embracing innovation, and keeping customers at the heart of everything, small businesses can not only survive but thrive.

After all, the entrepreneurial spirit is all about turning obstacles into stepping stones, isn't it?



FUN FACTS

December was originally the 10th month of the Roman calendar until 153 BC. December comes from the Latin word decem, meaning “ten.” December originally had just 30 days according to the ancient Roman calendar. When the calendar was changed for the Julian calendar, December gained a day, making it the 7th and last month in the year with 31 days.

December Milestones:

- December 1, 1955: Rosa Parks refused to give up her seat on a Montgomery, Alabama bus, sparking the Montgomery Bus Boycott and becoming a pivotal moment in the U.S. civil rights movement.
- December 14, 1911: Norwegian explorer Roald Amundsen became the first person to reach the South Pole, beating British rival Robert Falcon Scott by just weeks.
- December 17, 1903: The Wright brothers successfully made the first powered, controlled flight in Kitty Hawk, North Carolina, launching the age of aviation.
- December 21, 1937: Walt Disney’s Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, the first full-length animated feature film, premiered, forever changing the world of animation and storytelling.
- December 24, 1968: Apollo 8 astronauts became the first humans to orbit the Moon and captured the iconic “Earthrise” photo, inspiring a new perspective on our planet.

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66%

have changed their perception of a brand in a positive way after receiving a promotional product from them



39%

wear or use items with branded logos to help them represent their personality

What's Most Important When Receiving a Promotional Product

51% care how useful the product is

39% care how unique it is

36% care if it helps support a small business

37% care about the sustainability of the product

34% care about the size of the product



44% prefer to receive promotional products for small businesses or unknown brands



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