

# Marketing Checklist:

## Pre-Business Launch

This checklist provides low-cost or no-cost basic marketing to-do's before you launch your new business. Your business is unique, so choose options that are the right fit for your business, your skills, and your budget.

### Market Research and Strategy

- ☐ Analyze your competition to identify gaps and opportunities
- ☐ Define your unique selling proposition (USP) and key brand messaging
  - *What makes your business unique, stand out, or important and how will you showcase that to your customers?*
- ☐ Identify your ideal customer persona (age, interests, behaviors, pain points)
  - *When you begin implementing items from the checklist below, make sure those marketing to-dos align and are directed to this ideal customer.*
- ☐ Create a detailed marketing budget for the first year
  - *Think about what things you are good at and can tackle...what things can you delegate to staff and what things do you need to hire someone to do?*
  - *Determine what marketing items are necessary and what are wants. Ask yourself: if I spend money on this, will it directly correlate to bringing customers to me?*

### Branding and Identity

- ☐ Craft you and your company's story and mission
  - *See our webinar and worksheet for help with this!*
- ☐ Develop business name, logo, and brand colors
  - *Low-Budget: DIY with free platforms like Canva*
  - *Investment: Hire a local graphic designer or brand consultant*
- ☐ Develop your brand style (tone, messaging)
  - *For example: Is your business humorous or is it more serious in tone? Does audio or visual better represent your brand?*
- ☐ Develop a 30 second elevator pitch
  - *Share who you are, what you do, and most importantly how it benefits your customers, so you are ready when you are out networking.*
- ☐ Create a tagline or slogan that communicates your value
- ☐ Order business cards, signage, or other necessary promotional materials.
  - *Key word: "necessary." You need a sign for your front door so people know how to get to you, but do you need 1,000 pens with your name on it to open your doors and sell your product or service? Make sure to balance your desired outcome with the cost. Is it worth it? When would it be worth it?*

## Website

- ☐ Build and launch a website with essential pages (Home, About, Services, Contact, FAQ)
  - *Prioritize an initial website is so that people can find you if they search for you. Additional pages can continue to be added and grow as your business grows. Don't let perfection get in the way of progress.*
  - *Budget: DIY with free platforms like WIX. These are great if you are somewhat tech savvy, if you only need a simple website, or if you have the time/capacity to spend on this task.*
  - *Investment: Hire a marketing company if you need a more complex site that includes e-commerce or other variables or if you don't have the time and/or talent to complete this.*
- ☐ Create a blog with pre-launch content that builds authority and SEO (search engine optimization)
  - *This is not a priority item, but can be helpful if you have time.*
- ☐ Set up Google Business Profile and ensure accurate location & hours
  - *Double check Apple Maps, social media platforms, and other places your location is listed for accurate address and mapping directions. Your customers need to easily know how to find you so this is critical.*

## Social Media Marketing

- ☐ Create social media profiles (Facebook, Instagram, LinkedIn, etc.)
  - *Choose just one or two platforms that work best for you. It is better to be highly active on one platform than trying to utilize all platforms and do it poorly.*
- ☐ Start posting teaser content (behind-the-scenes, countdown, sneak peeks) a month or two prior to your launch
  - *Aim for at least 3 posts per week, best is one post each day. Some is better than none, so aim for progress over perfection.*

## Direct Marketing

- ☐ Start networking with local businesses and potential partners
  - *Find 1-2 local networking or small business groups you can join to start making strong connections and develop early adopters, supporters, and champions of your business. Being out and about in the community as a small business owner is vital.*
- ☐ Identify all local and regional media outlets (radio, tv, newspaper, regional magazines, local online blogs or news platforms, etc.)
- ☐ Write and send a press release to all media outlets announcing your business launch, what you have to offer, and why it is important
  - *Many media outlets are looking for content and love supporting and promoting small businesses in their communities...especially if you can share with them a compelling story or something unique.*
  - *If you get featured, make sure to share it on your website, social media, and email newsletter. It validates your business' credibility when customers see you "in the news."*
- ☐ Plan a soft opening event for family and close friends to allow you a practice run and work out any kinks
- ☐ Plan a grand opening event
  - *Make sure to take lots of photos to use for further marketing!*
- ☐ Begin collecting email addresses for future email marketing campaigns, newsletters, etc.
- ☐ Offer beta-testing or product samples to early brand advocates in exchange for them sharing your product to friends or on their social media pages