



GROW YOUR BUSINESS

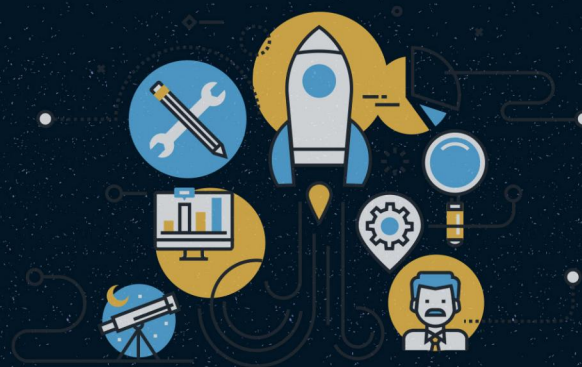
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START UP GROWTH HACKS

Startup Growth Hacks

Startups tend to spend a lot of their initial time and energy focusing on growth: when it will happen, how to make it happen, what happens afterward, etc. Basically you plant the seed, then focus everything on watching it grow!

So what happens when the growth feels stunted and you aren't sure how to keep spreading those roots? Try some of these simple hacks:

1. **Take a look at your growth plan** (or develop one). This could be part of your overall business strategy, but should also stand on its own—meaning it should be fully fleshed out—think of it as a branch of your business plan. While it's important to map out how you plan to grow, it's just as vital to consistently tend to the plan, molding it and changing it based on the realities of your business development, not just the projections.
2. **Enlist users and fans to create UGC** (User generated content).

Content makes the small business world go round these days but it's a huge commitment of time and resources. In this rare instance both quality and quantity matter equally so don't skimp in either area. Turning to your user base to create content is a simple hack that ensures your content has the voice of your customer, without breaking the bank.

3. **Employ early engagement and exit-intent strategies to your online presence.** Targeting your first time visitor with an offer they cannot refuse turns them into a repeat customer—engagement should aim to produce repeat business, not just one-time deal-seekers. Exit-intent can help build email databases and increase customer engagement, both of which can assist with growth. Exit-intent is when you hit a redirecting visitor with an engaging pop-up, developed specifically to keep them on the site, or returning as a buyer.

4. **Automate everything and consider AI tactics.** As a small business, it would be great to be able to remain people-driven and organic, but the reality is that you will quickly fall behind competitors if you cannot keep up with a wave of growth. Before you grow, make sure your operations are set up to handle the surge by automating anything and everywhere you can, while preparing to embrace what those robots (think chatbots) can do for you!
5. **Return to the basics of business and reconsidering your funds.** If you want to grow, it may be a good time to do a financial check-up and consider reallocating funds to directly impact growth abilities. These are the times to consider good old-fashioned ROI—what can take a backseat while you focus efforts on growth? Be sure to build these fund changes into the growth plan, including plans on how and when to payback or reallocate once more.



FB Advertising Best Practices

It's 2019 and yes- Facebook is STILL relevant. Sure, its changed a lot and sure its influences have ebbed and flowed and changed over the years, but at the end of the day, advertising on Facebook is still worthwhile for small business owners.

But its been 15 years since its inception- so its definitely a good time to examine the up-to-date best practices when it comes to Facebook advertising...

After a scandal rocked Facebook in 2017 regarding data sharing, they implemented a new algorithm, aiming to "encourage meaningful interactions between people". This may not sound like it, but if you are paying attention, this new algorithm could be great for small businesses.

In 2019, it will technically be harder for brands to find their way into your feed, so the challenge here is to make more organic connections, ask for personal referrals and rely on existing personal connections to stay relevant with the new algorithm.

Start by heading into the Settings and updating your template. The new templates are customized to be targeted and to work with the algorithm changes. Also ensure you are utilizing the best call-to-action button function- another new offering on the platform. The CTA buttons are what you see appear like Donate Now, Sign Up, Book Now, Watch Video, etc.

Its time to take a look at your profile image and cover photo as well. These should be professional, polished, and sleek along with eye-catching, relevant and unique. These images are often what will lead potential clients to make a snap decision about your business. Harsh, but true!

The most visited section of a business page profile is the ABOUT page. If this page does not offer up your business in a nutshell while being engaging, helpful and interesting while also answering basic questions, then its not doing you justice.

Take some time to research competitors pages or take note of the ABOUT pages on businesses you like or support.

Research is showing that the best performing posts over the last year are video posts, so if that is something that could find relevance on your business page than invest in some polished and professional video content and build it into your posting schedule.

Give it some time- it may feel like since the changes just over a year ago that business pages are not feeling the significance that they were a few years back- but as we have seen, the social media veteran is fighting to keep its place at the table and is continuing to find ways to support small business development.



Going Green in 2019

Not only does going green in the workplace play a part in sustainability and environmental awareness, but it's a great way to present an opportunity for employees to feel like they are giving back.

Simple changes around the office can make a large impact and its important in today's climate that we all play our part. Representing your business as green is a great way to attract a dedicated customer base as well.

If you haven't yet- start by minimizing with your paper use. Anything that can be digitalized needs to be digitalized. Now. The amount of paper waste small business owners burn through is shocking, considering the scale of the operation. If you need to use paper, use recycled and recyclable versions.

Make it easy- set up recycling stations for aluminums, plastics and paper products. Offer three separate bins so

that sorting is easy- the easier you make it, the better chance of staff complying.

Try and incentivize your team to play their part- set up a fun rewards system or allot simple prizes for reaching milestones in reducing waste.

Don't forget about your hazardous waste items like batteries, toner cartridges, and anything else with chemicals. Find a local service that will pick up monthly or look into drop off options. Most Staples and Best Buy stores offer a battery and printer/ electronics recycling option in-store.

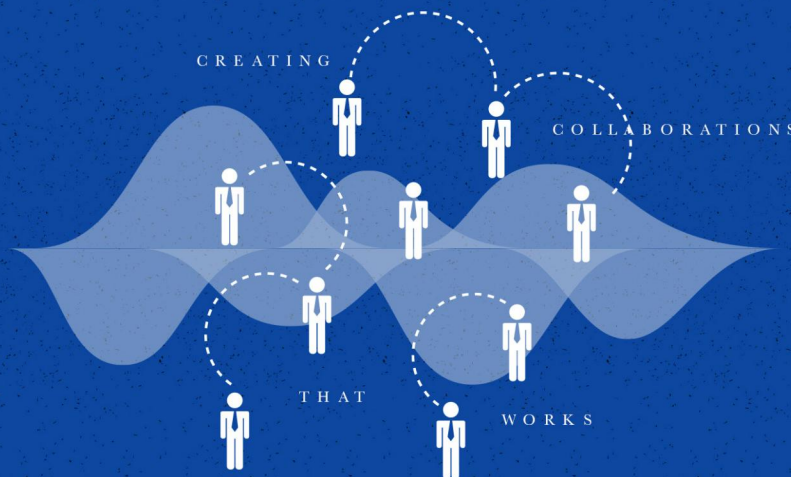
Have old office furniture and or supplies? Don't chuck it in the dumpster- lots of organizations will pick up your used items and refurbish them to be used again.

Don't forget about energy conservation as part of the plan. Shutting down workstations is

something that many employees don't feel is important- after all- they don't pay the power bill!

Again, offer gentle encouragement and incentives for shutting off lights and powering down electronics (don't forget the big stuff like printing devices). Use sleep mode whenever possible or even unplug on the weekends if possible.

It's 2019- lets embrace our freedom to work where and when we can. Offer remote work options help cut down on power use during the week and also encourages less transportation waste. Carpool options should also be embraced or consider a company ride share account that encourages employees to cut down on carbon emissions whenever possible.



Creating Collaborations that WORK

Collaboration for a small business owner may seem like a gargantuan task that never seems to find its way to the top of the to-do list. But in fact, partnering with others (whether it be businesses, like minded-individuals, clients, users, etc) has powerful growth potential and should slowly make its way up to the top of the list.

It doesn't have to feel huge- partnerships are about connections and communication. Start with what you have at your fingertips and look at your current client base, your social media following and your local chamber of commerce to find potential.

A good collaboration will inspire you, grow your network, problem-solve, educate and introduce new knowledge, is cost-effective, and organic. What's not to like?

When considering partnerships seek out complementary products and services, creative parallels and/or local favorites.

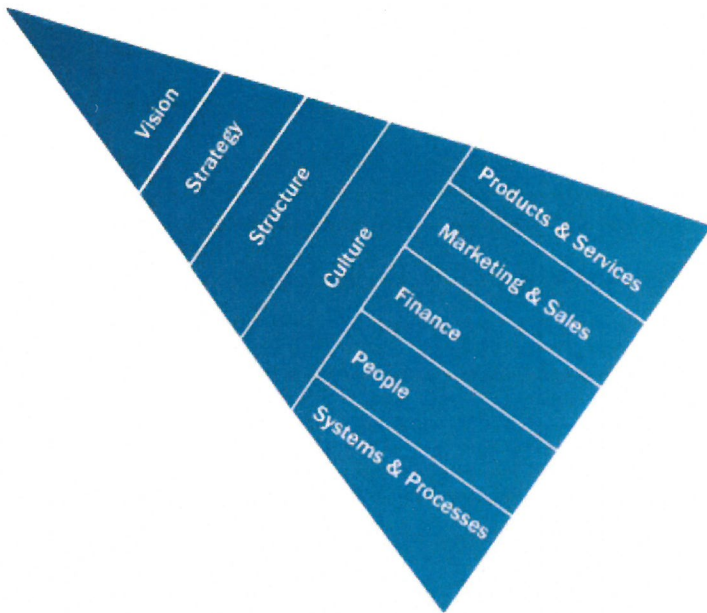
Sounds counter-intuitive but even considering partnerships with the competition has proven to be beneficial for both businesses.

Once you've found a partner...now what? A few ideas for collaboration:

1. Sponsor a local event together
2. Cross-promote offers or discounts
3. Develop and promote product or service packages
4. Create video content, webinars or ebooks
5. Co-brand a product or service
6. Run a contest together
7. Co-write a newsletter or chain of social media posts
8. Conduct social media take over's of each others platforms
9. Work out in-trade or swaps that make sense for both parties

10. Collaborate with an influencer- probably 2019's hottest branding trend.

Make sure to take on a partnership with a person or business you respect and like, and do your research before you jump in bed with anyone! Effective collaborations widen networks, lower overhead marketing costs and product more creative and inspired content.



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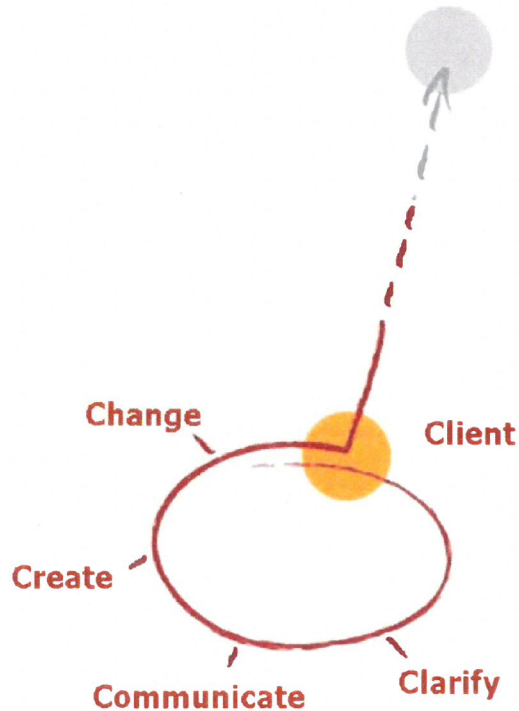
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