



Yahoo Small Business empowers business owners to launch and scale their ideas online. From creating a website to promoting a brand, our products help entrepreneurs succeed.

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A 5-STEP GUIDE FOR BUILDING A BRAND ONLINE

A 5-Step Guide for Building a Brand Online

Are you an entrepreneur who just came up with your next big idea? Or maybe a small business owner who has been operating for over 10 years? Whether you're just getting started or celebrating your 1,000th customer, you should know that getting online is crucial for your business.

Turning an idea into a recognizable brand doesn't happen overnight, but with a little care and work over time, your digital brand can help you stand out from the crowd. This guide lays out five essential steps that will give your brand the professional online presence it deserves.

Let's get started.

STEP 1: Create an appealing brand

How your brand looks online, even from a quick glance, is very important for attracting new customers and even retaining old ones. Your online and offline look needs to be enticing, consistent, and memorable. After all, it's a big part of your brand.

Name

If you haven't picked your company name yet, take a look at our "Guide to naming your business." It's got all the guidance you'll need for making a smart, simple and effective choice.

Logo

Your logo works hand-in-hand with your company name. Think about the Nike swoosh or the McDonald's golden arches. The right shape and design can make your brand instantly recognizable. What is a shape that can help define your business while being easily recognizable to passers-by?

Beyond the shape, take the time to think about your logo's color (or colors). The colors that you choose will help create a cohesive look across all of your collateral, from business cards to your website to signs in front of your business. Pick three colors that go well together and make them your signature look.

Here are some color combinations to think about:

1. Blue and green
2. Black and yellow
3. Purple and pink
4. Yellow and red
5. Blue and turquoise
6. Yellow and green

Your web address (or “domain”)

What is a domain? It’s the address of your website — like facebook.com, espn.com, or target.com.

You’ll need to choose and register your domain in order for your website to have a place to live. Make sure that your chosen domain matches your business name. That will make you easier to find online.

We’ll dig into the topic of domains a bit more in the section on protection your brand.

Hosting

You’ll also need web hosting, the service that allows you to post a website on your swanky new domain. Think of web hosting as your home on the internet where your website, blog, and files are stored and secured.

Yahoo Small Business Web Hosting, for example, comes with features that help businesses grow like publishing a website, creating custom web-based apps, storing files and enhancing ‘searchability’ — making your site easy for customers to find via search engine.

Yahoo Small Business also demonstrates two features you should require, no matter what hosting service you choose.

First is reliability. Our 99.99% uptime means your visitors will always have a smooth online experience — a swanky website isn’t so swanky if it often doesn’t work.

Second is security. Websites are more secure when the address starts with “https:” instead of plain old “http:”. The extra -s shows that the site uses a technology called Secure Sockets Layer (SSL), which encrypts data going back and forth between the site and each visitor’s computer making it more secure. Good website building tools like Yahoo Small Business always offer SSL protection for your website.

Website

Imagine, for a moment, that you are browsing the web. What do you think when you visit an older, outdated website compared to scrolling through a modern, sleek online experience? Remember the old saying, “You never have a second chance to make a first impression.” That first impression makes the difference between someone exploring your website, or just closing it right away.

The traditional way of creating and launching a website, even just a few years ago, was to hire a developer, designer, and coder. You would have to painstakingly describe what you wanted to this website team, and then hope they could get it right without too much back-and-forth.

The good news is that now there are fast, easy tools to create and launch a website, without writing any code at all. You can be in control of the entire process.

Make sure you pick an online tool that offers lots of themes to choose from and customize, plus a free trial so you can test out all the features before you commit to purchase.

Yahoo Small Business Websites’ site-building tool is easy to use and can help you launch a professional, fully functioning website in minutes that is also very search engine optimization (SEO) friendly.

Analytics

Any website building tool worth its while will include options for web analytics, tools that help you measure how many visitors are coming to your site, where they come from, how they found you, and more.

Some products, like those offered by Yahoo Small Business, even include live insights which gives you a real-time view of how customers are navigating your website, and makes personalized recommendations to help improve traffic.

STEP 2: Protect your brand

If someone were to ask you right now what your brand is, could you answer them? Whether you have a plumbing business or a fashion blog, your brand is that special thing that makes you unequivocally you, and it's really going to help you stand out online.

Truth is, you probably aren't the only person doing what it is that you do. But you can easily have a better brand than your competition. Here are two important ways you can get in front of your competitors.

Defend your domain

The familiar '.com' part of a web address is called a top-level domain, or TLD for short, and these days, there are many more options available besides .com. There are actually hundreds TLDs that you can choose from and they are a great way to educate website visitors about what your business does. For example, a restaurant can use a web address ending in .food or .cafe. This gives you a larger pool of domain options to choose from.

Fun and plentiful, TLD options make it easier to shine a light on what your business does. Here are some examples.

.xyz	.guru	.blog
A domain fit for every generation	For the ultimate entrepreneur	Great for your business or personal blog
.store	.kitchen	.delivery
When you want to sell goods online	From food sites to blogs, this is the right fit	Perfect for companies that deliver

But domains also play a key role in protecting your brand. It's valuable for you to own multiple domains that are associated or closely related to your business name.

For example, if you own tylerstoys.com, you might also want tylerstoys.net, tyler.toys, tylertoy.store, and tylerstoys.shop. Each of these addresses can be set up to redirect web visitors to the same site.

By owning all these domains, you prevent anyone else snatching up those domains and trying to piggyback off your success by imitating your brand. You want to be the only one that has ownership. If you don't own those related domains, that might confuse potential website visitors who could end up on someone else's site, even though they were looking for your business.

Take control of your local directory listings

When you want to find a new store or restaurant in your area, what do you do? Chances are pretty good you search online using directories and services such as Google or Yelp.

Make sure potential website and in-store visitors can easily find information about your business on these sites. Local business directories, review sites, maps, and social media channels might already have your business listing information available for the public. But are you the one controlling it? On some of these sites, consumers can update your listings without you even knowing.

Directories are also a great way to monitor reviews from customers. You can see exactly how people rate your business, and even respond directly to any questions or comments about their experience.

A service like Yahoo Small Business' Local Works can help manage your information across many different directories, making it much easier to keep everything up to date, everywhere that customers can look for you. You want to guarantee that you're the only one controlling your business listings. It is also important to enhance your listings with helpful information like hours of operation, contact information, promotions, and pictures. This will help your local listings stand out on search engines.

When you have a great listing, more customers will see it, which means more customers will visit your website or store.

STEP 3: Set up ecommerce, if needed

If you're selling (or billing) online, you'll need a secure and trusted way to accept payments.

Happily, this function is also built into good website builder tools.

Things to consider in making your choices in the area of ecommerce:

- Which payment types do you want or need to accept? This is not the same for every business, depending on whom you sell to — consumers, small companies, and large organizations may all have different preferences. Options include:
 - Credit/debit cards
 - PayPal, Apple Pay, Venmo, and other “digital wallets”
 - Gift cards
 - Electronic Fund Transfers
- What transaction or fulfillment fees will you or your customer pay?
- How smoothly does the payment system integrated with the order system? Once a customer has chosen their products or services, you want paying to be simple and painless.

As you're searching for an easy solution to sell online, consider ones that come with shipping integration, inventory management, credit card processing, live insights, and apps to help your business grow.

STEP 4: Put your brand on all your communications

Alt: Nail the details everywhere

Your website isn't the only thing you need to look professional online. Apply branding wherever you interact with customers, such as:

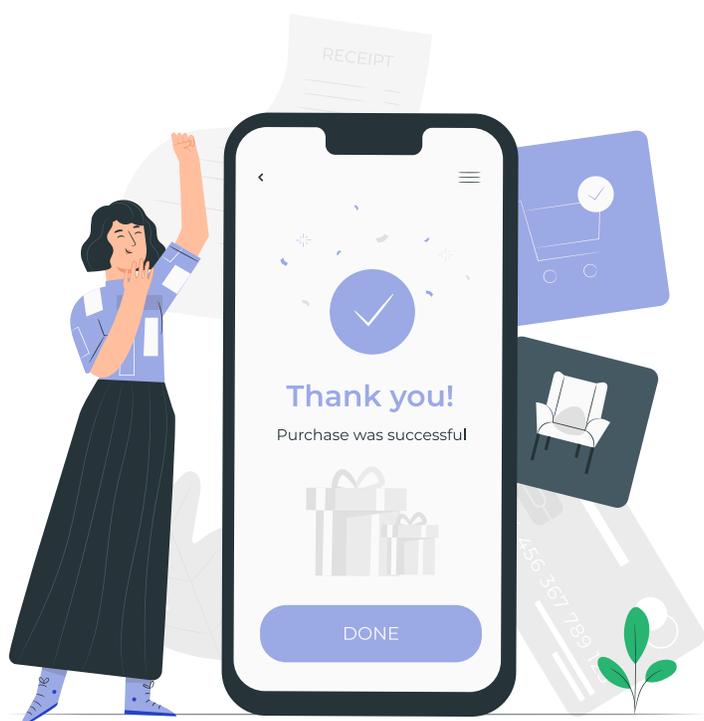
Email

Another tool that is really simple to set up and gives you tons of credibility is custom business email. People will take you more seriously when you are communicating through a business email address, as opposed to your personal email address. This instantly makes your business more legitimate to potential customers and partners.

75% of consumers say professional email is key when trusting a business.

You can get more customers with a custom email address that matches your domain. Think fred@fredslawncare.com — Fred's customers can tell that's a professional email from Fred's business.

Imagine a custom email address for you and all your employees. With the low cost of business email, this doesn't have to be a 'what if?' Creating business email addresses is one of the easiest and least expensive ways to solidify your brand online.



Social media

Today's consumers and business customers alike take social media for granted. As with your email address, it's best to register social media accounts that closely match your business and domain name.

There are so many social channels available today — from Facebook to LinkedIn to Instagram, Twitter, SnapChat, and more — that it may look tough for a small business to be active on all of them. Two important points on that: A good website builder tool should also offer you the ability to easily post the same information to multiple social accounts. And, circling back to the idea of protecting your brand, registering accounts on each platform can help prevent a competitor, customer, or someone else from using an account name that tries to piggyback off of your success or hijack your brand.

STEP 5: Get the word out about your brand

If you have followed the first three steps, then a congratulations is in order. You got your business online and you're rocking and rolling as an entrepreneur.

You have your digital presence taken care of, but what's next? Now is the time to get the word out about your business so you can flourish. Here are five ways to let everyone know about your business and new website.

Go to local events and network, network, network

Do some searching online and figure out what nearby events align with your product or service. Check out local Chamber of Commerce events, industry-specific networking opportunities, and meetups related to your interests. Be friendly and tell the tale of growing your business. These local events are a great way to meet people who can introduce you to potential customers and website visitors.

Direct customers to your website via advertising

Don't underestimate the impact in-person networking can have on your digital growth. Keep talking about your website both in person and online. Start advertising to your target audience using tools like Google AdWords, Bing, and Facebook ads. Creating accounts for these services is easy and a great way to get more people to visit your new website. Think about hiring a local agency to help with your ad spend and set-up.

Use those social media accounts

Social media is a great way to keep people up to date on what your business is doing. Make sure you post frequently so customers know you are active and understand that they can engage with you on that platform. Include links to all of your social media pages prominently on your website. The website builder tool you picked should make this easy.

Consider giveaways and swag

Giveaways help you leave an impression on people that interact with your business. Some ‘swag’ ideas include pens, flash drives, water bottles, tshirts, hats, and tote bags. Always distribute swag at events and have it handy in the office or store for visitors.

Write and distribute a press release

Your website launch is a big deal. Why not write a press release about it and distribute it to local press outlets and journalists? This might seem like a stretch, but if you hit the right news outlet on the right day, they just might interview you and publish an article about your local business. Either way, it’s good to get your name in their inboxes of more local consumers. Getting into the habit of writing and distributing press releases after big accomplishments is a great way to help your business.

Local Listings

Customers can use dozens of applications, directories, search engines (and more) to find local services. This is great news for small businesses — but it can be overwhelming to try to keep listings up-to-date in so many places. As noted above, Local Works from Yahoo Small Business is one option for simplifying that task, while putting you in control of public information and facts about your business.

And finally... keep your brand up to date!

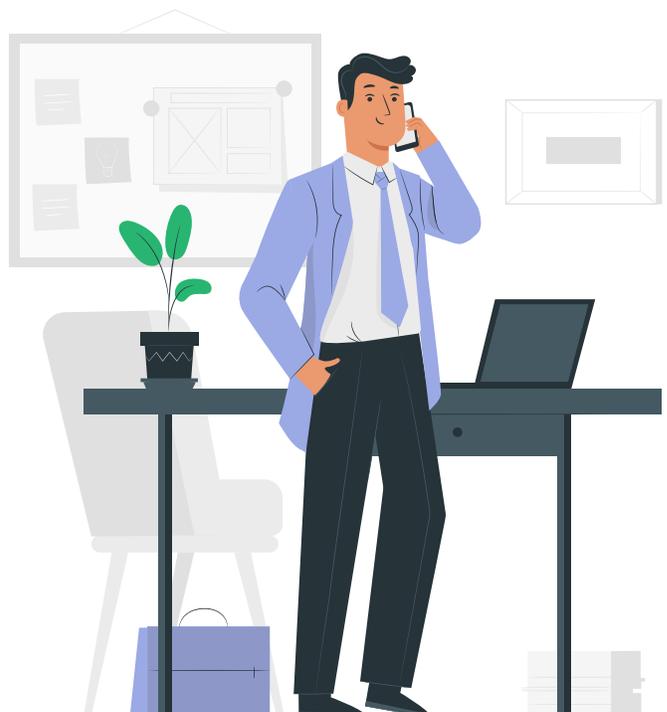
Getting your brand online isn’t as hard as you may have thought. Follow the steps above, and you’re on your way.

Remember: One rule of business is that when you think you’re done, you’re never done. Just because the website is live doesn’t mean your work is finished. Website updates could be required from time to time, for a variety of reasons, ranging from changing your phone number to adding a new product.

Posting regularly to your social media accounts will attract more attention and help customers know what you’re up to. Those same also will give you feedback to help you keep your company and your site on point. Make sure you stay current and read and respond to every review someone leaves on your local business listings.

All of these steps will help your business look sharp, get more customers, and create a stronger brand.

<https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/advisor/resource-center/a-5-step-guide-for-building-a-brand-online/>



BRAND IDENTITY AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Brand Identity and Social Media

In today's competitive marketplace, a social media presence is often needed in order to reach a larger, more focused target audience. But before you just go and create a Facebook or Twitter account, there are a few things that you should keep in mind.

Which Social Media Networks Should You Prioritize

Figure out which networks your core audience is likely to visit based on age group, gender, etc. You can get a lot of this information through Google Analytics, and if you already have social networks set up, see which are referring the most traffic already.

In most cases you will want a Facebook account at least, but let's say your brand has a dedicated spokesperson, then a platform like Snapchat or Twitter may also be a good choice.

Naming Your Social Identity

There's a lot of names already taken for social media accounts, so make sure to look through all potential options and settle on a single name that your brand will be known by on social media.

Sites like [Namechk](#) do an excellent job of searching through most of the popular social media platforms and will let you know if the username you are looking for has already been taken. In some cases you may get lucky, while in others you may need to hunt around a bit until you find a name that resonates with you.

Once you have your new social identity picked, register it on all social channels that you determined to prioritize, but also consider reserving the name on channels you don't intend to spend time on just in case.

Visual Style

The visual design of your branding needs to be consistent across all networks. If you have one style on YouTube, another on Facebook, and yet another on Twitter this can confuse your customers and be a detriment to building brand trust and loyalty.

So when you are working on your various profiles, make sure that you always match your theme across all social sites.

Do a search and find out what the default profile images sizes are for each site you are going to work with, and tailor your images for each of them. Having malformed or cut-off images is another potential loss in trust and sales.

Your Voice

You need to maintain a public identity for your brand. Posts should be relevant to your store and when at all possible stay away from hot-button topics likely to accidentally turn off a portion of your audience. There are some businesses where hot-button topics can be polarizing in a good way if you've already decided who your customers aren't and thus aren't concerned about offending them, otherwise try to avoid sticky issues and stay on topic.

Always Post

You need to always post, sometimes every day, rarely several times a day. Keep your content on point and relevant to your store and voice. This may seem rather easy, but keeping up on social media can be a demanding task, so know what you're signing up for and don't over-commit.

Social media managers (like [Hootsuite](#)) help you control your presence, schedule posts, and manage your contacts within those various platforms. Social media is huge, and it is only getting bigger. How you represent your brand is important and in some cases, your handling of these channels can drive or diminish sales.

<https://help.smallbusiness.yahoo.net/s/blog/brand-identity-and-social-media-20Y2L000000TN28UAG>



RECIPE FOR YOUR CONTENT MARKETING COCKTAIL

Recipe For Your Content Marketing Cocktail

Almost everyone undertaking a content marketing program wonders what they should talk about. Not only what but how much of each type of content they should include in the mix. The content marketing strategy you decide on for your business should be an appropriate combination of different forms of content (articles, blog posts, infographics, videos, podcasts, webcasts) that speak to your audience while achieving your branding and marketing goals.

Here's a recipe for your Content Marketing program:

Two Parts Original Content

Blog posts, articles, white papers or videos that reflect your knowledge of your business. You present solutions to the challenges your customers face every day. You provide “how-tos” for dealing with issues they encounter. Presenting your opinion and perspective about your industry and processes fits here. Posts can take the form of a numbered list, an essay, an interview with an industry standout, an infographic or a short video. Readers and viewers want to be educated, entertained and engaged. Give ‘em what they want...and need.

One Part Curated Content

Researching and posting content created by others can also build your expert status. Followers will look to your posts to find information relative to their

interests or industry. There is a “built by association” function here — if you're trying to expand your audience or you'd like to bring in more work in a certain area, post related content. I'm a big believer in “What you put out there is what you'll get in.”

Add a Wedge of Company News

Be sure to talk about what's going on with your company — new projects, completed sales or projects, new hires, awards, achievements, pro bono projects you've taken on. Be sure to add: visuals (where applicable), the budget (when appropriate), the scope of the project and team members involved. Remember to give credit where credit is due; kudos to someone who referred you to the project or to the client who headed it up. Always be sure to get appropriate permission from your client as to what information you can share, and when.

Sprinkle with Some Industry News

This goes to building expert status. When you read trade and industry publications, watch a related documentary, see something in the newspaper or hear it on the radio, post the link and a short intro (which could also be your opinion on the particular piece of news). Your followers will find it helpful when you tell them about a new regulation, guideline, software update or policy that could affect their business.

Add a Dash of Personality

While professional, a working relationship is also personal. Companies, especially when looking for a new partner, want to understand the “personality” of the business they are about to work with. Periodic posts about staff activities like recent travels, a new family addition, the company barbecue or volunteer activities give a peek into company culture. Is your company hiring? Posts that feature staff and their achievements let potential candidates get a feel for what it would be like to work at your company.

And Garnish with a Pitch

This is the part where you straight-up make the ask. Promoting your business is inherently a pitch, but not an obvious one. Your pitch should let prospects know the value you offer and benefits of working with your business — what they stand to gain by hiring you.

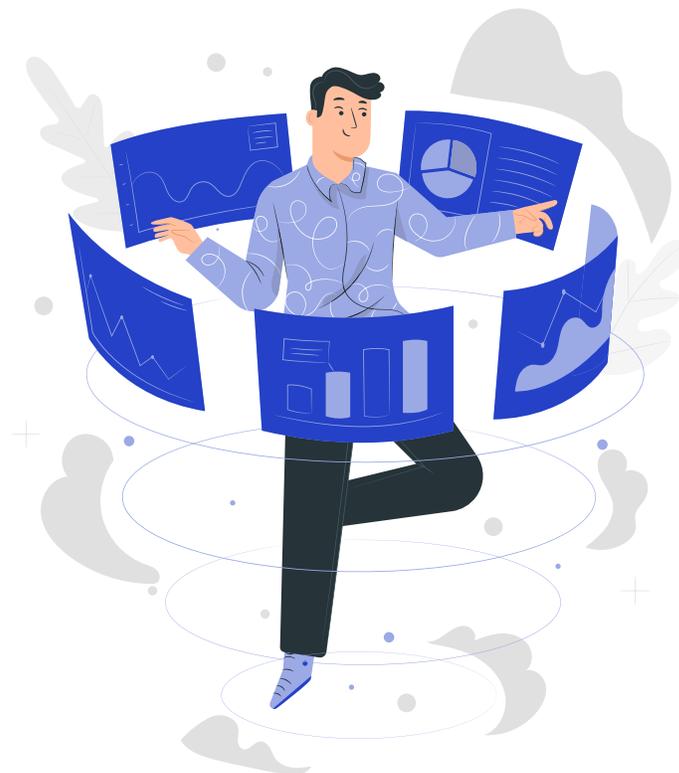
These are only estimates of the content marketing mix, of course —you can specify your own ingredients. What’s important is that you are using

content marketing to build your brand, to boost your “go-to expert” status, reinforce SEO and stay top of mind with existing and prospective customers.

The ultimate is creating original content. Well-written, relevant and helpful to your audience, it should be the star of the show. But, because it is time-consuming to research and create, there are limits on how much you can generate. On the other end is “pitch” content; like a call-to-action where you let people know why they should call you — and why. But too much pitching will have the opposite effect — your followers will opt-out and ignore what you have to say.

Once you’ve created and curated, don’t forget to promote. The content you have amassed should be distributed across multiple channels: your website blog, email marketing, on LinkedIn Pulse, as a guest blog and in social media updates on Facebook, LinkedIn, Google + Twitter, YouTube, Instagram, and others. There is a lot of marketing mileage you can get out of all of your content.

<https://smallbusiness.yahoo.com/advisor/resource-center/almost-everyone-undertaking-a-content-marketing/>



Our solutions

What does Yahoo Small Business do?

Yahoo Small Business empowers business owners to launch and scale their ideas online. From creating a website to promoting a brand, our products help entrepreneurs succeed.

The tools offered by Yahoo Small Business include:

Websites: An easy-to-use, drag-and-drop website building tool. Choose from 150+ themes, customize, and publish in just minutes.

Ecommerce: Online stores that come with shipping integration, inventory management, credit card processing, live insights, and apps to help your business grow.

Domains: Choose from a huge selection of domain extensions with the industry's most competitive prices.

Web Hosting: We can host your website on our own servers. Our hosting system also comes with site building tools.

Wordpress Hosting: Take control of your business listings on 70+ local directories from a single dashboard and be discovered by potential customers near you.

Business Mail: Increase your credibility with business email that uses your domain name

Website Design

Professional designers and writers are waiting to build your site. Get a team that designs, builds, and manages a website that grows your business.

[Get Started](#)

Business Maker

Business Maker takes the guesswork out of starting your own company. Handle every part of your business from one easy-to-use dashboard.

[Get Started](#)

Localworks

Localworks puts you in control of your business across 70+ online local listings. Being found has never been so easy.

[Get free report](#)

What's next

let's talk about the Resource Center

With well over 20,000 articles, videos, webinars, tools, news, and much more our resource center is a one-stop-shop for SMB information

[Find out more](#)