How Social Media Tools Benefit Small Businesses





FACEBOOK



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Executive Summary **

Small businesses play an indispensable role in the American economy. According to the U.S. Small Business Administration, businesses with 500 or fewer employees contribute about \$6 trillion in economic output every year and employ nearly half of the entire private-sector workforce. These businesses are a vital component of local economies around the country and a primary source of innovation and job creation.

Over the past few decades, new technologies have enabled small businesses to expand their customer base and sell products and services beyond their local communities. The internet has provided an efficient forum for businesses to sell directly to consumers, and more recently, small businesses have been able to use

digital and other technologies to enhance their marketing, customer service, and ability to create customized products and services.

In today's digital and mobile world, social networking systems have also become an important tool to help small businesses access new customers, drive sales, and increase customer satisfaction. As consumers increasingly use social networks such as Facebook and Twitter to find and compare local goods and services, small businesses have new avenues in which they can interact with customers and market themselves. In a case study, Facebook and its affiliated products— Instagram, Facebook Messenger, and WhatsApp—provide critical platforms for businesses to reach a wider audience and to connect directly with their customers.

^{1.} Small Business GDP 1998-2014. U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy. December 2018.

^{2. 2018} Small Business Profile. U.S. Small Business Administration, Office of Advocacy. April 24th, 2019

To better understand the scope of how small businesses use Facebook and its products, the U.S. Chamber's Technology Engagement Center and Facebook partnered with Ipsos, a global market and opinion research firm, to conduct a survey of almost 4,000 owners and employees of small businesses in the United States. The survey was conducted over two weeks during August and September 2019, and included businesses in urban, suburban, small town, and rural areas across the country (see the appendix for details regarding survey respondents and methodology).

The results of our survey show that Face-book is a widely used platform among small businesses, and that the majority find Facebook's products to be important to their business. Small businesses use Facebook's products for a variety of reasons, including marketing, communication with customers, and providing general

information about their business. Many small businesses report that Facebook has helped them achieve positive outcomes, including increased customer satisfaction and growing sales.

The survey also demonstrates the importance of small businesses having the necessary training and knowledge to use Facebook's suite of products. About half of small businesses report that they have employees dedicated to managing their Facebook or Instagram accounts, and businesses are increasingly seeking proficiency in online technology and applications when interviewing job applicants.



Key Findings

Facebook is a popular platform that small businesses use for a variety of reasons: Of small businesses surveyed, 44% report that they use Facebook.³

3. All survey respondents were asked if they use each of the Facebook family of apps. Only respondents that answered that they use a given app (e.g. 44% reported using Facebook) were then asked additional questions about that particular app. As such all responses on specific apps are subsets of the original sample.

Facebook products are considered by a majority of small businesses to be important to their success—these include Instagram (57% of surveyed businesses consider it to be "important" or "very important"), Facebook Messenger (54%), WhatsApp (53%), and Facebook (52%).

When asked about hiring needs,
76% of businesses in our survey
say that being proficient in the
latest online tools and apps is
important for some, if not many
or all, jobs.

Facebook and Instagram are so critical to business operations and growth that over half of small businesses surveyed have a dedicated person managing their Instagram account and almost half have someone managing their Facebook account.

Of small businesses in our survey,
74% report that discovering
new customers is a top or high
priority, and that Facebook is
a key tool used to achieve that
goal: 73% say that they are
using Facebook to market or
promote themselves to potential new customers.

For small businesses that export, they are seeing higher domestic and international sales because of Facebook products, at an increase of over 20% domestically and nearly 20% internationally.

Facebook is helping drive sales for businesses: 22% of surveyed businesses say that Facebook has helped them achieve higher sales.

24% of small businesses in our survey agree that Facebook's products and services are driving business creation in the U.S.



Use of Facebook Products by Small Businesses

Innovation in the marketplace can empower small businesses to grow, add employees, and better serve their customers. Of surveyed small businesses, 44% use Facebook for a variety of reasons, including communicating with customers,

marketing, and providing general information about the business. Facebook's suite of products helps companies address their highest priorities and provides a cost-effective way for businesses to communicate with existing and potential customers.

Facebook Helps Companies Achieve Their Top Priorities

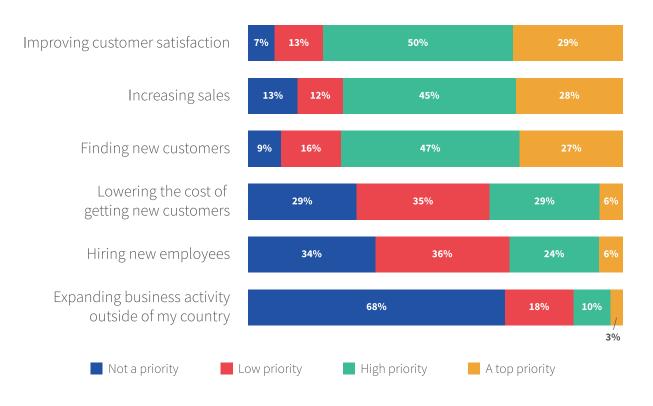
Small businesses face a wide variety of challenges that can be addressed by technology and social media tools. For small businesses surveyed, the top priorities are improving customer satisfaction, increasing sales, and finding new customers.

Our survey found that a large number of small businesses believe Facebook products help them achieve all of these goals.

For example, 74% of surveyed small businesses say that discovering new customers is a high priority. To grow their customer base, 73% say they use Facebook in order to conduct marketing and promote themselves to potential customers.

FIGURE 1

How much of a priority is each of the following to your business?



Increasing customer satisfaction, discovering new customers, and other priorities for small businesses are also aided by Facebook products. Facebook provides businesses the ability to create a customized online presence that helps them better communicate with both existing and potential customers. This can take the form of establishing a user-friendly site to provide basic information (e.g., hours of operation, services or products offered) about a business to potential customers, or allow direct communication (e.g., through Facebook Messenger) with existing customers regarding questions or issues with a specific product or service. These tools ultimately make communication between businesses and customers more effective, and help small businesses achieve some of their top priorities.

Top Reasons for Using Facebook Products

Facebook

- ► Providing basic information about the business **76%**
- ► Marketing to customers **73%**
- ► Communicating with customers **67%**

Instagram

- ► Marketing to customers 83%
- ► Communicating with customers **68%**
- Providing basic information about the business - 66%

Finding new customers is a top priority of SMBs. Nearly three-quarters of SMBs use Facebook to market themselves to potential new customers.

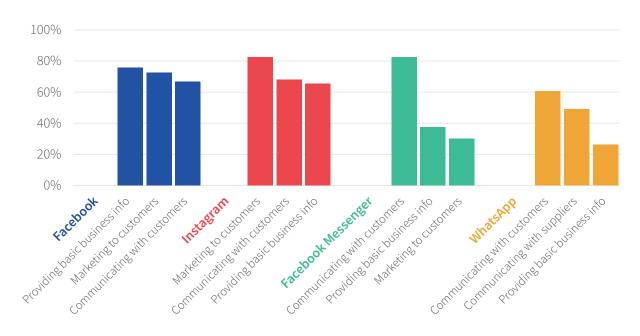
Facebook Messenger

- ► Communicating with customers 83%
- ► Providing basic information about the business **37%**
- ► Marketing to customers **30%**

WhatsApp

- ► Communicating with customers **61%**
- ► Communicating with suppliers 49%
- Providing basic information about the business - 26%

Top reasons businesses use Facebook products



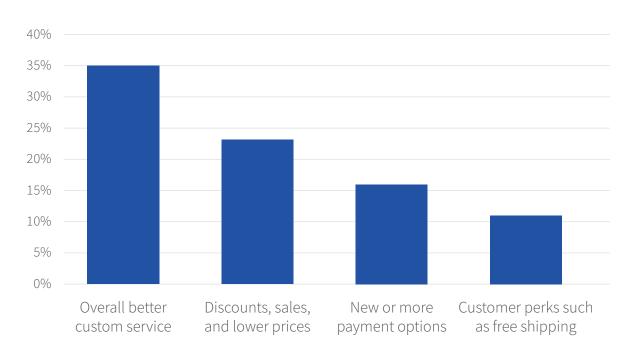
Facebook Is a Valuable Marketing Tool for Small Businesses

Of surveyed businesses, 63% say they spend at least a portion of their revenue on marketing and business promotion. Among these businesses, 72% report spending a portion of their marketing budget on online tools such as Facebook.

Moreover, many businesses that promote themselves online report that it allows them to better serve customers: Small businesses say that several aspects of customer service are enhanced by marketing online, including the following:

- ▶ Better customer service **35%**
- Discounts, sales, and lower prices 23%
- ► New or more payment options 16%
- Customer perks such as free shipping 11%

Aspects of customer service enhanced by online marketing





BoriMami Bakery: A Bakery Built on Quality, Passion, and Love

Since she was 9 years old, Andrea always had a passion for baking. Her father, a police officer, wanted to keep her from playing in the streets, and encouraged her as she learned to make desserts every night for her family.

As a Puerto Rican, Andrea received many Spanish and Italian dessert recipes, which were handed down from generation to generation. After receiving much love and adoration from her family for her baking, she decided it was time to turn her passion into a business. Without much previous experience, she started her business through a Facebook page, and that's how BoriMami Bakery was born. From there, the orders started pouring in. Her bakery officially opened in 2013.

Andrea built her bakery on the philosophy of giving each customer an experience that makes him or her feel at home. She wanted to recreate the experience of being in her mother's and grandmother's kitchens. "I try to make it special and unique for each person—I want them to feel like part of them is in the cake," she says. Before baking each cake, Andrea takes time to learn about her recipient's story to come up with the theme. She uses sketches and photos for her designs and hand-paints details onto her creations. From keto-based cupcakes to cakes decorated with unique themes including Where the Wild Things Are, casinos, and escape rooms, she's baked it all.

When Andrea started marketing her business, she didn't know where to turn except to Facebook. "Everyone I knew was on Facebook," she says. She decided to make her process simple—after baking a dessert, she would post a picture to her business and personal Facebook page, then ask people to share it. "I don't think I would be where I am today if it wasn't for Facebook, and that's the truth. It's how I started, it's what I know, and it's what works," says Andrea. She has tried traditional marketing, including mail-outs and local publishing, but she found her online

and social presence to be the most consistently effective. "Even with a storefront, I take as many orders online as I do with walk-in customers," says Andrea.

Today, Andrea continues to post her latest creations on Facebook and uses Facebook Live and Instagram Stories to add a personal touch, giving her online community a glimpse into life at a bakery. Often, sometimes immediately after posting her dessert videos, customers show up hoping to savor the featured dessert.

Blu Skin Care:

How Zondra Wilson Discovered the Fountain of Youth in Hawthorne

Zondra Wilson and Blu Skin Care are ready for their close-up. The former news reporter from Cleveland moved to Los Angeles 15 years ago to become an actress and model. She was used to getting compliments on her skin during auditions, which she always attributed to the highend products used. Her mom and aunt, who were born and raised in Alabama, would tell her about the old tried and true methods they grew up with and that had

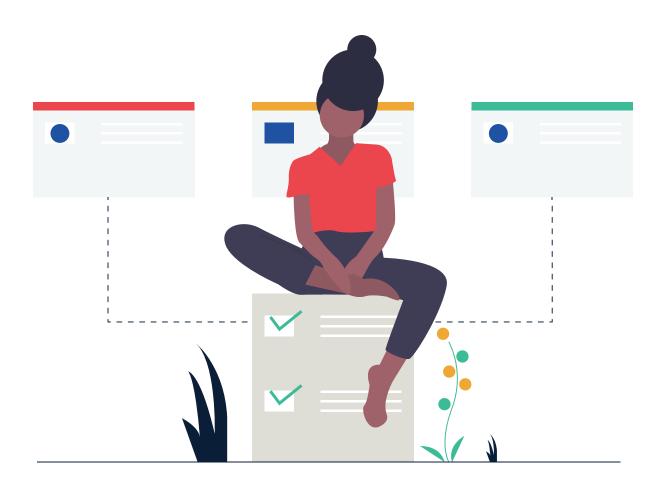
been passed down to them. "My mom would always say, 'Girl, why don't you just use some oatmeal and coconut oil?' But I couldn't see putting food on my face," says Zondra. Of course, when one is trying to make it as an actress, some seasons are slower than others, and Zondra didn't want to spend all her money on skincare products. So, she figured, why not give the family recipe a try? "That's when I got hooked," laughs Zondra.

Never one to keep a good thing to herself, Zondra decided to develop an entirely organic skincare line to share with others. She started experimenting and created seven products. She had to go through the rigorous USDA organic certification process, which took about a year, but it was well worth it, says Zondra. "My anti-aging skincare line is incredibly effective. It really works." Acne, wrinkles, skin scars, puffiness, you name it, Zondra has a product to clear it up. To meet her standards and the USDA's, she sources the highest-end ingredients she can find from local farms, which, thankfully, California has no shortage of. She remembers thinking to herself, "How am going to come up with a skincare line that you can eat?" While Zondra doesn't recommend eating any of her skincare products, the USDA says you can. As of March 2016, Blu Skin Care sells the only American-made USDA-certified organic powdered facial cleanser, and Zondra is the only African American female manufacturer and

distributor of USDA-certified organic skincare products.

Zondra says Facebook and Instagram are her main sources of social marketing. Zondra's go-to tool is Facebook Live, and her background in front of the camera has certainly served her well for promoting the business. Her Facebook page is home to countless videos in which Zondra educates her audience about the benefits of organic skincare products. She loves to post videos coming out of auditions, explaining how she did and describing what products she used that day. Health fairs, interviews, magazines, podcasts— Zondra doesn't miss a beat, and she is able to share it all on her Facebook page. Moving forward, Zondra hopes to promote the benefits of healthy living and organic skincare products while being a positive influence on those around her. "I want to encourage people to never give up, no matter how overwhelming something might seem," she says.



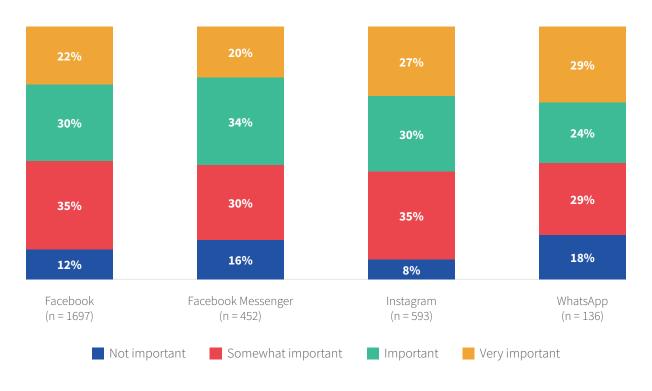


Importance of Facebook Products to Small Businesses

A majority of the small businesses in our survey that use Facebook products say that the products are important to their business. Among respondents, 57% of Instagram users, 54% of Facebook Messenger users, 53% of WhatsApp users, and 52% of Facebook users report that these products are "important" or "very important" to their business.

FIGURE 4

How important do you think the following are to your business today?



Facebook and Instagram in particular are so critical to business operations and growth that over half of surveyed businesses have employees dedicated to their Instagram account, and 47% of Facebook users have a person or team dedicated to managing their Facebook account.

Moreover, 76% of small businesses in our

survey report that proficiency in the latest online tools and apps is an important consideration for some, if not many, of the positions these businesses will hire for in the future. Small businesses recognize that online tools are only going to gain more importance and are aware of the value that an online presence can create for businesses.



Blerd City:

How Clairesa Clay Is Using Facebook to Bring Out the "Blerd" in Brooklyn

The first time Clairesa Clay came across the term "blerd" in an artist's bio, she had an epiphany. "Oh, wait a minute. Black nerd. That describes me," she laughs. The middle and high school English teacher also has worked in programming and film production, and co-founded a film festival. She remembers attending Comic Con one year and being frustrated that the panel of black artists was on a smaller side stage in competition with a popular panel on the main stage, which only featured one black artist. The self-confessed blerd had always embraced her nerdiness, but

now she was ready to share. What if there was a Comic Con that celebrated black culture? Clairesa thought to herself, "Why don't I put on my own conference?"

Blerd City Con is described as a micro-cosmic explosion that delves into the multidimensional nerd sphere, bringing together community and amplifying the global intellect. It features art, science, film, and technology, incorporating panels and workshops that focus on comic books, gaming, Afro-futurism, science fiction, horror, and fantasy. But

it's also a celebration of the nerd in you, which, according to Clairesa, is actually a nod to the intellectual in you. The conference, which started in various locations in Dumbo and is going into its fourth year, now calls St. Francis College home and has seen everyone from Broadway actors to accomplished film directors attend. For the participant, Blerd City Con provides connections to talented and cutting-edge professionals in the craft of positive image making. It's dedicated to exploring local and global artistry through the African descent lens of nerdom with stimulating educational programming, reconceptualizing and reinvigorating the multilayered black identity.

Clairesa uses Facebook and Instagram to promote the conference, events, and panels, as well as share interesting and

relevant content. She posts different content to her Facebook and Instagram pages, noting how her followers engage differently on each. She says she uses a combination of the platforms to feature a particular artist and build a story around them with videos, pictures, and a narrative. Clairesa hopes to include more virtual reality and immersive technology at the conference next year and have more people from different walks of life make connections with each other, with a focus on role models. When she's not promoting Blerd City, Clairesa uses the family of apps to promote and celebrate all African American-themed art and culture that passes through the borough.

Clairesa uses Facebook and Instagram to promote the conference, events, and panels, as well as share interesting and relevant content.

Facebook Products Improve Business Performance

Social media tools provide small businesses the capability to optimize their operations. For example, for many small businesses, use of Facebook products is leading to positive and measurable results, including increased sales, access

to new customers, and improvements in customer satisfaction. 48% of small businesses surveyed say that Facebook has allowed them to access new customers and 30% say they have a better ability to compete because of Facebook.



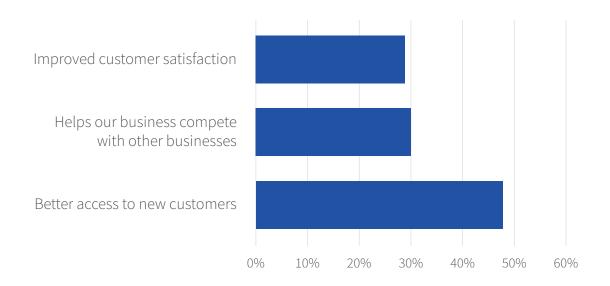
Facebook Helps Increase Customer Satisfaction and Access to New Customers

Small businesses using **Facebook** say it has benefited them in the following ways:

- ▶ Better access to new customers 48%
- ► Better ability to compete **30%**
- ► Improved customer satisfaction 29%

FIGURE 5

Has the use of Facebook for your business led to any of the following?



Small businesses using **Facebook Messenger** say it has benefited them in the following ways:

- ▶ Better access to new customers 44%
- ► Improved customer satisfaction 46%

Small businesses using **Instagram** say it has benefited them in the following ways:

- Small businesses using WhatsApp say it has benefited them in the following ways:
- ▶ Better access to new customers 49%
- ► Better ability to compete **33%**
- ► Improved customer satisfaction **33%**
- ▶ Better access to new customers 27%

► Improved customer satisfaction - 28%

FIGURE 6

Has the use of Instagram for your business led to any of the following?

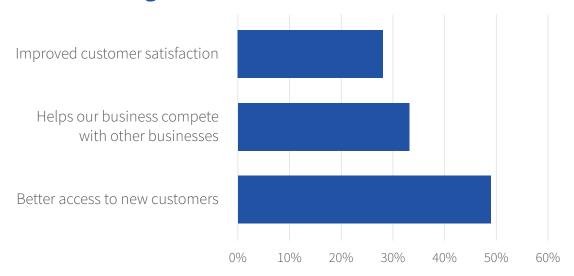
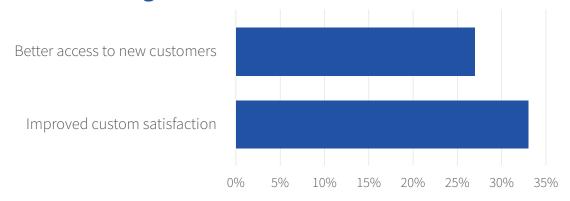


FIGURE 7

Has the use of WhatsApp for your business led to any of the following?



Nutty Farmer Chestnuts:

A Chestnut Tree in a Sea of Cornfields

Heath Stolee, the son of corn and soybean growers, was raised on his family farm in Radcliffe, Iowa. Growing up, he developed a passion for deer hunting and habitat conservation in his backyard. While in college, the events of 9/11 inspired Heath to join the service. After serving on active duty for five years, he decided he wanted to go back to life on the farm.

During one of his hunting trips, Heath came across chestnut trees and was immediately interested in adding them to his backyard habitat. He attended a Field Day in southern Iowa to find out more and discovered the agricultural value of chestnuts. He learned that the United States is a net importer of chestnuts due to extremely high demand. The next step for Heath was to determine how to produce chestnuts for commercial sale.

In the flatlands of north-central lowa, corn and soybeans are the crop of choice for every farmer. Without the expertise of another chestnut grower nearby, Heath started experimenting with a few trees in 2014. He began growing more and more until he had 25 acres in 2017. In the countryside flatlands where the only trees are near houses, his neighbors told him he was "nuts" for planting all these trees. And that is where the name Nutty Farmer was born.

In his tight-knit community of Radcliffe, locals often ask Heath how his chestnuts are doing. Taking notes from other chestnut growers he found on Facebook, he created a Facebook page in 2017 to document tree growth, share his story, and get his business name out there.

Despite the fact that it will be a few years until his trees have any marketable production, Heath has been receiving messages and calls from people looking for fresh chestnuts. These connections helped him realize the power of Facebook: Before even selling anything, he had already gained awareness and built a network of potential customers. Heath says, "Once I have the crops, I'll have that network and market opportunity available." Once his chestnuts are ready to be har-

Facebook to notify his network that he has fresh chestnuts for sale.

vested, he will be using

Facebook Helps Businesses Increase Sales

Increasing sales is essential to driving small business growth, which technology can play a key role in enabling. Our survey demonstrates that Facebook can help increase sales for small businesses, with 22% of businesses surveyed reporting higher sales with the help of Facebook. When it comes to exporting, some businesses also report that they have seen higher international and domestic sales due to the help of Facebook products.



- ► Of small businesses that export, **22%** report higher domestic sales.
- ► Of small businesses that export, **16%** report higher international sales.

Of small businesses using **Facebook Messenger**, 20% say it has helped them achieve higher sales:

- ► Of small businesses that export, **22%** report higher domestic sales.
- Of small businesses that export, 18% report higher international sales.

Of small businesses using **Instagram**, 22% say it has helped them achieve higher sales:

- ► Of small businesses that export, **26%** report higher domestic sales.
- ► Of small businesses that export, **18%** report higher international sales.

Of small businesses using **WhatsApp**, 23% say it has helped them achieve higher sales:

- Of small businesses that export, 28% report higher domestic sales.
- ► Of small businesses that export, **28%** report higher international sales.



FIGURE 8

Exporting businesses that report higher domestic sales due to use of Facebook products

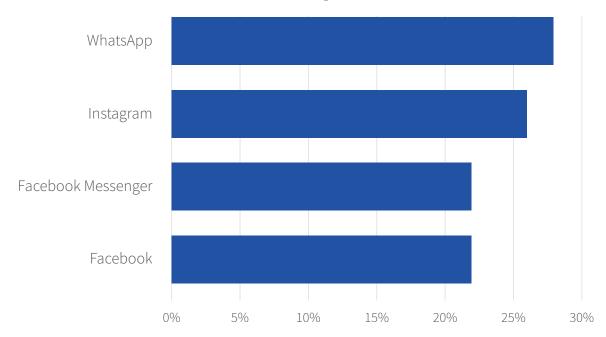
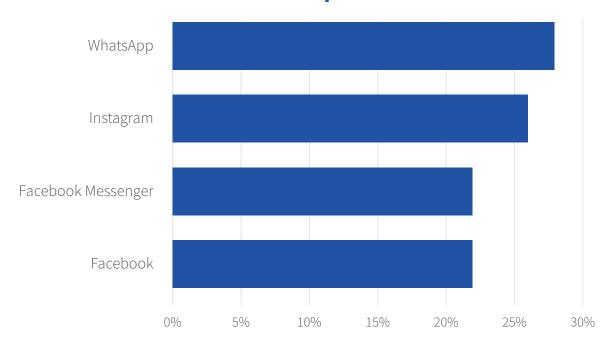


FIGURE 9

Exporting businesses that report higher international sales due to use of Facebook products



Facebook and Business Creation

Small businesses employ almost half of America's private-sector workforce and play a critical role in driving business creation. Many of the small businesses surveyed have a positive view of Facebook's impact on the startup economy: 24% of small businesses agree that Facebook's products and services are driving business creation in the U.S., while 14% of small businesses say Facebook products helped them start up their business.



OC Cryocare:

How Chris Dinicola Is Using Facebook to Relieve Southern Californians' Pain

After fighting on the amateur circuit and operating the Subfighter Mixed Martial Arts School for almost 10 years, Chris Dinicola had a few bumps and bruises to attend to. "You get injured when you

do mixed martial arts," he points out. A friend recommended cryotherapy, which in mere minutes can accomplish the same as hours spent in ice baths. We're talking subzero temperatures at negative 250

degrees. "What a scam," Chris thought. He tried it skeptically, but when the swelling in his knee went down and his range of motion came back after just a few sessions so he could continue to work out, Chris began thinking of a career change. Two years and many more cryo sessions later, he opened OC CryoCare.

from their injuries. "I couldn't run a business I didn't believe in," he says. "You put the hard work in, and you can see it growing. That's the exciting part for me."

While Chris certainly did his homework before opening, he wasn't sure how long it would take to establish the business.

Since nearly 80% of his customers are repeat, it's important to stay in front of them

Today, OC Cryocare is more than just cryotherapy. Chris operates the business with his wife, Amber, and several parttime employees. They also offer physical therapy and other techniques, such as pneumatic compression, operating as a wellness and rehabilitation center. And since a person can't be in a cryotherapy chamber 24/7, Chris sells supplements that complement the recovery process. But one doesn't have to be an athlete to benefit from cryotherapy. Nerve pain, sciatica, arthritis, muscle inflammation, "really anyone in pain" can benefit, says Chris. They take a mobile unit called GoCryo, which can perform 300 sessions a day, to events, big games, and gyms. There are plans to license the concept. Chris loves being around athletes and helping people with chronic pain recover

He credits Facebook for getting people in the doors when he opened and today estimates that roughly 50% of his clients are coming from the family of apps. Chris has since handed the social marketing responsibilities over to an outside team, letting the pros be pros. "You want someone who really knows how to work with Facebook and Instagram," he says. Since nearly 80% of his customers are repeat, it's important to stay in front of them, keeping OC CryoCare top of mind. Most of what the company posts is education based. The biggest thing Chris wants people to know is that cryotherapy is safe, and it's incredibly effective. Moving forward, he hopes to expand to more locations and advise people who are opening similar businesses.



Katherine Jean Photography:

From Passion Project to Full-Time Photographer

Katy has always had a passion for photography. Even though she loved working in the pharmaceutical industry, after her son was born she wanted to find work that allowed her more flexibility.

With her sights set on starting a wedding photography business, Katy had immense motivation to get her business off the ground. She knew she needed to build up her portfolio, so she turned to Facebook. Without even a business name, she put out a message to her network, offering

free family photo shoots to gain professional experience. People signed up right away. Six months later, she got a call from a friend to photograph her wedding.

Six years later, Katy is running a successful international photography business with a team of five employees. The market-place that Facebook opened up for Katy's business is immense. She's taken photos for clients all over the world—in places like the Cayman Islands, South Carolina, Italy, and Hawaii.

By using Facebook ads and capitalizing on the reach of Instagram, Katy is able to zero in on her target audience and potential customers. Both Facebook and Instagram have become wonderful showcases for Katy's talents. By being visually based, both platforms perfectly convey the beauty and artistry of her photographs. Clients agreed and began booking her for weddings and events.

Earlier on in her photography career, Katy joined a supportive group of savvy social media experts who taught her how to use this platform to transform her business. It gave her a place to not only learn valuable skills, but also to network with like-minded individuals. Once she learned the basics

of social media marketing—properly targeting audiences and how to form the right messaging and content—she started getting more business calls. For instance, the group showed her the power of using hashtags to broaden her connections.

Now, Katy is a hashtag maven—every photograph she posts on Instagram has targeted links that produce tangible results. "Millennials want instant gratification, tangible products, something they can feel and share. I don't have a wedding that doesn't have a hashtag associated with it," she says. Katy now has over 12,000 followers on Instagram.

By using Facebook ads and capitalizing on the reach of Instagram, Katy is able to zero in on her target audience and potential customers.

Appendix

Survey and Methodology

The small business survey among owners and employees was conducted by Ipsos Public Affairs using its KnowledgePanel® (KP) as a sampling frame. KP is the only large-scale representative panel of the adult population in the U.S., for which members are recruited using a probability-based address sampling methodology. In order to ensure full representation of all adults, even households without internet access are provided internet-enabled devices and ISP. From August 20 to September 3, 2019, a random sample of 3914 respondents representing businesses across the U.S. were interviewed. In order to qualify for this study, respondents were required to own or work for a for-profit company with fewer than 500 employees (per definition of small businesses by the U.S. Small Business Administration). The starting sample from which these qualified respondents were identified comprised a general population sample of adults in the U.S. Survey participants included approximately 1,000 owners and 3,000 employees, including representatives from a variety of minority-owned and/or -operated businesses, such as the following:

- ► Women (n = 372 owned, n = 1,352 owned or operated)
- ► **Hispanics** (n = 65 owned, n = 250 owned or operated)
- ► African Americans (n = 58 owned, n = 202 owned or operated)
- ➤ Asian Americans/Pacific Islanders (n = 33 owned, n = 174 owned or operated)
- ► **Veterans** (n = 96 owned, n = 298 owned or operated)
- ► **LGBTQ** (n = 33 owned, n = 110 owned or operated)

Subsequent to data collection, a multistep process was used for weighting to remove bias due to nonresponse. In the first step, design weights were computed to reflect selection probabilities for all survey assignees. In the second step, design weights of all respondents—qualified or otherwise—were adjusted to the population benchmarks of the U.S. adults, for whom the needed benchmarks were secured from the latest Current Population Survey (CPS). These CPS benchmarks also included company size for for-profit organizations as well.

Company size by number of employees:

- **▶ 1-20 employees**—51%
- **21-99 employees**—28%
- ► **100-500** employees—21%

Operating geographies:

- ► Urban area—42%
- **▶ Suburb**—29%
- ► Small town—18%
- ► Rural area—9%

Business classification:

- ► Startup—7%
- ► Past startup—10%
- ► Maintaining—77%
- ► Winding down—4%

All survey respondents were asked if they use each of the Facebook family of apps. Only respondents that answered that they use a given app were then asked additional questions about that particular app. As such, all responses on specific apps are subsets of the original sample.

Using the resulting weights, the benchmarks for the qualified subpopulation then comprised adults owning or working for a for-profit company with fewer than 500 employees were generated. In the final step, qualified respondents were weighted to the generated benchmarks from the previous step to produce survey analysis weights. Final weights for qualified respondents included geo-demographic and company size adjustments, all obtained from the previous weighting step.



FACEBOOK

