

How to Organically Find Prospects (No Ad Spend Required)

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When it comes to organic reach and connecting with prospects or potential customers, many small-business owners believe that ad spend is not a matter of if they need it, but when they should invest in it. This isn't always the case. There are many entrepreneurs who strictly use organic reach to connect with prospects, and can then reinvest the money that they would spend on ads back into their business.

This can certainly add up. Libby Bierman, an analyst at SageWorks, reported in an article for Small Business Trends that the average company allocates about 1 percent of their annual revenue on ad spend. "It may not sound like a significant expense," she commented in the article, "but the rate has been steady for the past few years."

It's certainly significant if it can be avoided, too. Think of it this way: if your business brings in even just \$100,000 per year, that's still \$1,000 that could've been allotted towards a virtual assistant or to cover your website's overhead.

In the interest of bootstrapping and working "smarter not harder," here are some tried-and-tested ways to organically connect with prospects.

1. Post consistently on your website's blog

Think about your ideal prospect and what they're looking for. If they need your services, they're likely searching online for some guidance until they hire someone to help. So, posting consistent blog posts and articles offering free value in alignment with your service is always a compelling way to build trust organically with a prospect, especially if those blog posts featured well-researched keywords. (In fact, that's a must for organic exposure.)

Kathy Heil, partner at StoryTeller Media + Communications, shared in a company blog post that keyword research is always a first step for organic reach. "Organic traffic relies on your ability to understand what search terms your customers and prospects are using to navigate the search engines," she wrote. Hence, keyword research. From there, she added, "You can deploy a strategic content creation strategy to elevate your organic rankings."

Related: How to Scale Your Blog Like a Startup

2. Optimize your Facebook page and chat with new friends

Despite what some might say, Facebook certainly isn't dead, and more business owners and ideal prospects are still using it daily than you'd think. Victoria Kennedy, social-growth expert and founder of Social Prospecting 101, cracked how to reach six figures in nine months organically and names Facebook as a secret weapon.

"Treat your Facebook profile as a sales funnel," she shares. "Do this by changing your cover photo to say what it is that you do (you can fit a lot on there if you design it in

Canva!)), then taking full advantage of your bio. That is critical real estate for a call to action.”

According to Kennedy, the average Facebook user or prospect commits a whopping three seconds to assessing your profile. “They need to know what you do and who you are within these three seconds,” she continues. “Otherwise, they’ll move on.”

From there, once you are Facebook friends with prospects, the conversation happens more organically. “Build relationships by Facebook messaging,” she advises. “Which isn’t a ‘cold intro’ anymore since you’re already Facebook friends.”

Related: 3 Little-Known Metrics That Can Help Optimize Your Facebook Page

3. Create a LinkedIn content strategy

If we’re talking about Facebook, LinkedIn should be in the conversation too, because of its unparalleled ability to reach new eyeballs. In fact, according to Robben Media, more than half of all B2B social media traffic is driven by LinkedIn. This is almost always done by posting compelling content. Because the algorithm boosts a post out to the connections of your connections, a web of potential prospects begins to take form. To take full advantage of this, consistently posting value-packed content is a must.

One company I’ve been seeing a lot lately in my LinkedIn feed posting engaging content is BurstIQ. I reached out to their account manager, Angie Gallagher, to get an inside look into her company’s LinkedIn strategy. “The best content on LinkedIn educates and inspires your prospects without having to do a product slam,” she explains. “Our content strategy for LinkedIn includes posting videos from our team of experts, blog posts, our media appearances, videos and more. Be sure to

keep track of your metrics to learn what your audience appreciates most from your shares.”

Make sure to incorporate a CTA in the post so prospects know what it is that you offer and that your inbox is open. If you’re going to add a link to your website or to book a demo call with you, make sure to do so in the comments section. LinkedIn is like Facebook in that it demotes posts with links to other sites, but posting in the comments is a great way to circumvent the algorithm police. These posts are great starting points for conversations with prospects. Ask questions and spark discussion.

Here’s another trick: Your LinkedIn posts can be taken straight from your company’s blog postings. Every time you post, take a paragraph and turn it into a LinkedIn discussion or question. Covering both Facebook and LinkedIn while boosting your ranking in Google is a foolproof way to organically attract the attention of prospects without spending a dollar.

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