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## Sites and Services Every Small Business Should Consider

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### Real Estate

Get a Site: <http://www.sauropol.com/>

Sell products online: <http://www.shopify.com/>

Get Listed on Google Local: <http://www.google.com/local/add>

Or check in on a bunch at once: <http://getlisted.org/>

### Start the Conversation

Start a micro-blog: <http://twitter.com/>

Promote traffic to your website: <http://twitter.com/>

Share ideas and links that help your customers: <http://twitter.com/>

Join the conversation with customers and others in your industry: <http://twitter.com/>

Make a Facebook Page for you company: <http://tinyurl.com/2u5yd6>

Showcase your unique knowledge:

<http://wordpress.com/>

<http://www.typepad.com/>

<https://www.blogger.com/start>

<http://www.squarespace.com/>

### Build on the Conversation

Email Newsletters: <http://www.mailchimp.com/index.phtml>

Make forms for customer response, surveys, registrations, etc: <http://wufoo.com/>



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Share photos: <http://flickr.com/>  
Keep track of leads: <http://www.highrisehq.com/>  
Share your video content with stats and helpful tools: <http://www.ooyala.com/>  
Open an online helpdesk: <http://www.zendesk.com/>  
Share Documents: <http://www.scribd.com/>  
Encourage people to share your site/content: <http://www.addthis.com/>  
Collaborate and share info: <http://pbwiki.com/>

## **Understand and Analyze the Conversation**

Keep tabs on your company, your customers, and your industry:  
<http://www.google.com/alerts>  
See what's happening on your site: <http://www.google.com/analytics/>  
Visualize how people interact with your site: <http://crazyegg.com/>



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## **Don't Be Content with Your \*Content\* — 10 Tips for Small Business Owners**

By: DAVID MIHM

With all of the buzz surrounding meta tags, social media, and reciprocal links floating around the small business web community today, it's important to separate the wheat from the chaff. Small business search engine optimization still boils down to two things:

- A) Great content
- B) Some links pointing to that content

With that in mind, here are some strategies to help you with Component A!

0 - If you have the money, hire a professional SEO copywriter like Miriam Ellis, Carolyn Shelby, or Paul Robb to help you brainstorm or to refine your content for the search engines.

1 - Do some keyword research and brainstorming to know what people are searching for & what are potentially lucrative content areas for your business. You'll want your content to include (and be linked to with) some of these keywords.

2 - Think about your key messaging—what kinds of content are going to amplify & enhance your “value proposition”? I.e. why people should hire you or buy from you as opposed to someone else?

3 - Use your competitors to brainstorm content areas. If there are areas of their sites that you like, develop something similar, or better yet, use it as a stepping stone to develop a newer, better version. This doesn't work for all industries, but it's important to know what the basic “must-haves” are for your industry.



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4 - Use checklists to compare yourself to, and differentiate yourself from, competitors. These can be really effective at condensing your value proposition into an easily digestible format.

5 - Consider as many customer preferences as you can. A certain set of visitors will be looking for top-line summaries. Another set of visitors is looking for as many minutiae as they can find before they make a decision to give you a call or send you an email. Use bold & bullet points to capture the former, and longer copy about each of these bullet points for the latter.

6 - Use a voice transcript service to transcribe your thoughts on each of the major areas of content, once you've determined the major areas you want to include. It'll make the development process a lot easier, and a conversational tone, as opposed to a formal written one, often converts online visitors at a higher rate.

7 - Think about how you can engage your users/visitors/customers directly. Incorporating a blog or forum for user-generated content can really help, particularly with long-tail searches and business credibility. Use email marketing to encourage participation (& also for G & Yelp Reviews). Matt McGee gave a great presentation on UGC for small businesses which I'd highly recommend checking out.

8 - Have an idea of the type and depth of content you want BEFORE you hire a designer. Even if it's not good at "marketing" your business, it'll give you a place to start with respect to a site outline and areas you need to improve.

9 - Don't stop developing content once you've launched your site. Search engines and visitors are always looking for fresh thoughts and information — make the time to blog!

<http://www.davidmihm.com/blog/general-marketing/content-development-ideas-for-small-businesses/>