

Let's talk marketing. Marketing is a big part of encouraging your locals to support you. They need to find you, like the things you're doing and then support you. Your visitors and tourists also need to find you! Marketing can help make your downtown a destination and encourage more tourism.

First, **make sure your businesses are registered with Google.**

<https://www.google.com/business/> Then talk to your SBDC folks, they do trainings on how to register your business and will come to your community. People use their cell phones to find your business, or a business like it. If you're registered with Google, you show up on the first page in the upper right-hand corner of the Google search engine. Free.

Next **let's look at how your windows look.** Are they inviting? Do you change them out at least once a month (twice would be better)? You have many vehicles that go through your downtown, are you appealing to them?

Even if you don't have a retail business, you can still change out the windows and promote other places in town. Invite a local non-profit to decorate! Maybe even create a schedule for all the nonprofits to decorate your windows.

Signage on your stores is important too, it's some of your best marketing. For people walking around town, vinyl letters at eye level work. For people driving, blade signs that say what kind of business you have are good.

Learn to tell your own story. You can start with a press release that talks about the next cool event you are doing in your business. That means you need to do a cool event, like teaching us how to make empanadas or how to refinish furniture. Customers today want to have an experience at your store! Give them one.

Social Media. If you're not going to use it, don't set up accounts. Unmanned accounts look like you don't care about your business. If you are using it, try one or two platforms that work for your business. You don't have to be everywhere. You don't

want to be where your customers are. Do you need training on Social Media? See if you community colleges offer training, ask the SBDC (Small Business Development Center) for courses, follow other business that are using it well and learn from them. Remember that social media is a marketing tool, and not the end all be all.

Make video. That's right take your smart phone and shoot video. Talk to us about your products. Show us your employees. Tell us a story. People are curious and want to see more of you. Make them short – under a minute works. I'd love to see a video about the baked goods made today from your bakery. Or perhaps instructional video on how to choose the right steak. Your wineries could create videos about choosing the right kind of wine to match that steak! Or invite locals to come and shoot Facebook Live videos at your event, like Legacy Learning Boone River Valley did. [Here's that story.](#)

Be Tech Savvy and promote it. Have an iPad for customers to look up product information. Teach them Alexa or Google dot and how-to re-order. Put a smart tv in your store to loop a presentation about your town. Have a charging station they can use while they shop. Ask your vendors for any tech tools or sites you can showcase. Today's shoppers are smart, and you want to be as smart as they are. You also want your store to be engaging and offer more of an experience for your shoppers. Tech can help with that.

Start with these ideas. It's basic stuff, and this local marketing will bring more locals to you, and some tourists too!

Thanks,
Deb
cofounder of SaveYour.Town