

Driving Growth Through Customer Engagement

Research report 2016



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Author profiles



**Laura Runham, SMB
Audience Marketing Manager
for Dynamics at Microsoft**

Laura helps small and medium-sized business achieve their goals and objectives by providing best practice guidance for success. She also educates about how modern technology can enable them to overcome obstacles and empower success in today's challenging economy to achieve their growth ambitions. Microsoft's global vision is to empower every person and organisation to achieve more. Whether you're a one-person start-up or an expanding business, Microsoft can help your company succeed and grow with innovative technology that enables you to sharpen your competitive edge and build a business that matches your ambition.



**Steven Frost, Partner at
Smith & Henderson**

Steven is passionate about helping companies turn customers into fans and realise their potential. He believes this can only be achieved by engaging employees behind your vision and ensuring they have the right training, support and environment to give their best. Smith & Henderson provides customer and employee feedback solutions, research and expertise to over 120 clients, ranging from mid-size businesses to blue chip companies, including McDonald's, O2 and the Post Office.

Foreword

Customer engagement, demystified

So what exactly is customer engagement? It's just a new, fancy term for customer service, right? Wrong. Whilst it's true that great customer service is an important factor, good customer engagement is so much more than just that.

Remember when the only way you and your customers could communicate with each other was by picking up the telephone, participating in a physical face-to-face meeting or sending a letter through the post and waiting patiently for a response? Well, those days have long gone.

Today things are different. The rapid development of social and mobile technology has resulted in new online channels becoming available to businesses and customers, in addition to traditional offline channels. There's no denying that we're now living in a digital "always on" world where communications don't stop at the end of the working day and there's no cut-off time when people switch off from consuming information that is available to them.

With this increase in communications and content comes a heightened expectation from customers, who are more connected than ever before, progressively demanding that businesses provide them with the information they require, in the format they want to receive it, at a time that suits them.

That's not to say that offline channels are no longer important. They are just as important as ever. But nowadays customers expect the same responsiveness and attention they are used to receiving from you face-to-face or on the phone when they visit your website or mention your brand on a social media network. And if your customers deem your business to be lacking in these areas, all it takes is a few taps on their smartphone to find another that isn't.

Simply put, customer engagement is the ongoing and meaningful dialogue between a business and a customer that is achieved and maintained through the use of customer knowledge and integrated offline and online communication channels – resulting in the delivery of great experiences and long-term relationships.

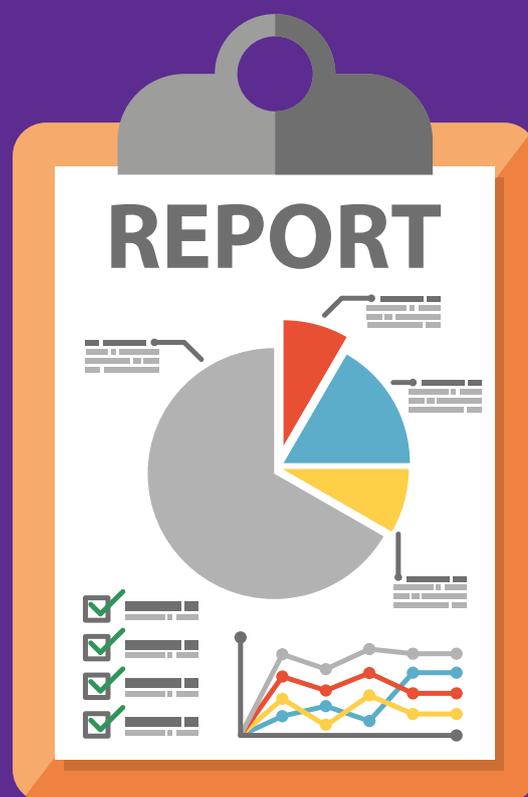
Throughout this report, I will share my thoughts on the results of the research study and provide guidance and best practice tips to help you improve engagement with your customers to grow your business and remain competitive in today's challenging and transforming economy.



Laura Runham
SMB Audience Marketing Manager
for Dynamics at Microsoft



Executive summary



Introduction

Business owners know the importance of delivering exceptional, personalised service to customers – many successful companies have been built on this. When faced with competition from larger rivals, the best small businesses play to their strengths. Think of the local butcher competing against the supermarket giants. They build great rapport with their customers; remember their last order and provide expert advice to help inform their purchases.

In recent years, the competitive landscape and customers' expectations and behaviours have evolved thanks to the rise of social media and new technology. The most successful businesses are those that adapt and embrace new technology to engage customers equally well online and offline.

This report explores the ways that small and medium-sized businesses are currently engaging

and interacting with customers. It aims to provide insight into what growing companies do differently, share best practice and ultimately help you improve customer engagement and be more successful.

Methodology

During October and November 2015, business people from a broad range of industries were invited to complete an online survey about how they were approaching customer engagement. These included business owners, marketing directors, as well as IT, finance and sales professionals.

A handful of follow-up interviews were conducted by phone to expand on the key themes identified through the survey. In total, 236 people participated from the UK, from 212 different companies. The majority (86%) of these had less than 100 employees.

Key findings

1. Small and medium-sized businesses view customer engagement as a top priority – 97% said this was ‘essential’ or ‘important’ to their business

2. Many businesses are better at engaging customers offline - 79% said they were very effective or effective at engaging customers offline compared to just 55% online

3. 4 in 5 small and medium-sized businesses have a presence on social media, with the most common platforms being Facebook (69%), Twitter (66%) and LinkedIn (56%)

4. The top challenges in engaging customers and delivering a great customer experience are effectively using social media, forecasting customer demand and a lack of customer insight

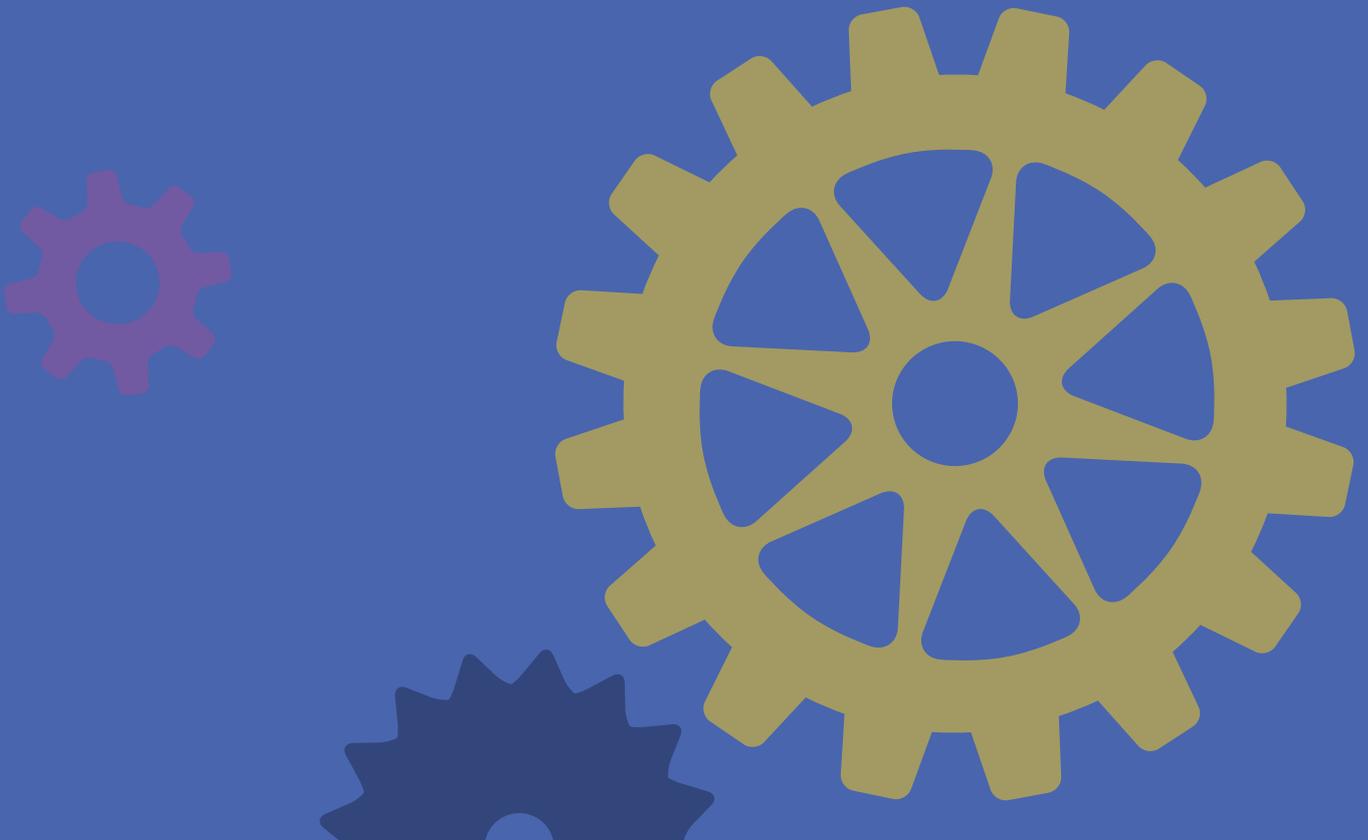
5. Growing companies make customer engagement a top priority. They effectively use social media to monitor general trends about their marketplace and engage in two-way customer conversations, building relationships. They invest in new technology like a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system to help empower front line staff to deal with customer queries. Data flows through their business processes to help better forecast and react to changes in customer demand and delivering a great customer experience

LAURA RUNHAM, SMB AUDIENCE MARKETING MANAGER FOR DYNAMICS AT MICROSOFT

Our research study has revealed that companies who make customer engagement a top priority are the ones who are experiencing the most growth. This is because engaged customers are more likely to be satisfied, purchase again and recommend the product or service to their peers – this results in more sales, driving higher revenue that lends to business growth.

Recent findings come as no surprise – studies have shown that ‘fully engaged’ customers account for a 23% increase in average business income, whilst customers who are ‘not engaged’ or ‘actively disengaged’ result in a revenue drop of 1% and 18% respectively.

Stats sourced from: <http://www.digitalservicecloud.com/insights/customer-engagement-statistics-chart.html>



How small and medium-sized businesses engage their customers



Customer engagement is a top priority

Overall, 97% of respondents said customer engagement was 'essential' or 'important' to their businesses. Not a single person in a marketing, sales or customer service role said customer engagement was a 'nice-to-have' or 'not important'. However, six business owners did and their businesses all had fewer than 10 employees.

Figure 1. How important is customer engagement to your business:

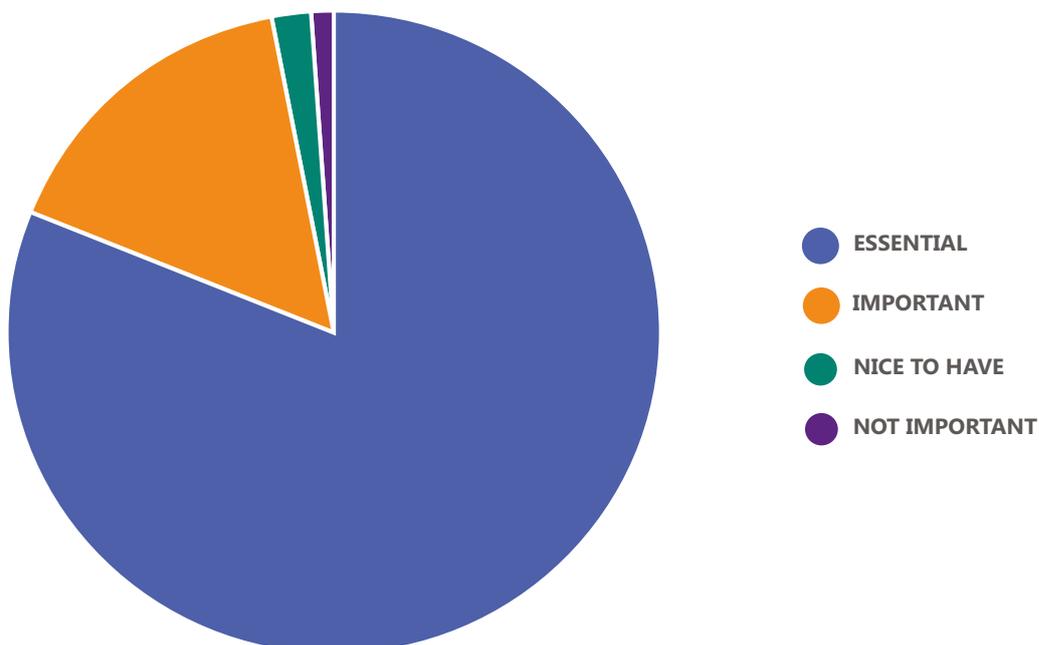
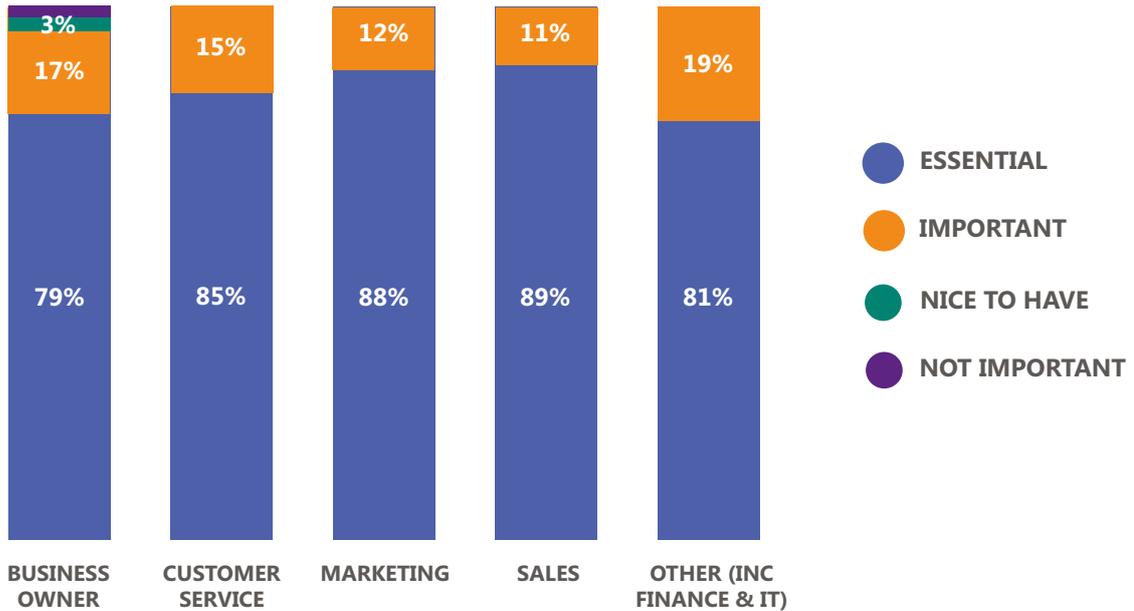


Figure 2. How important is customer engagement to your business – by role:



Businesses tend to be better at engaging customers offline than online

Around 79% said they were ‘very effective’ or ‘effective’ at engaging customers offline, compared to only 55% online. We asked participants to explain the reasons why and three themes emerged: not effectively using social media; not having enough time; and a lack of know-how. Quotes from anonymous participants:

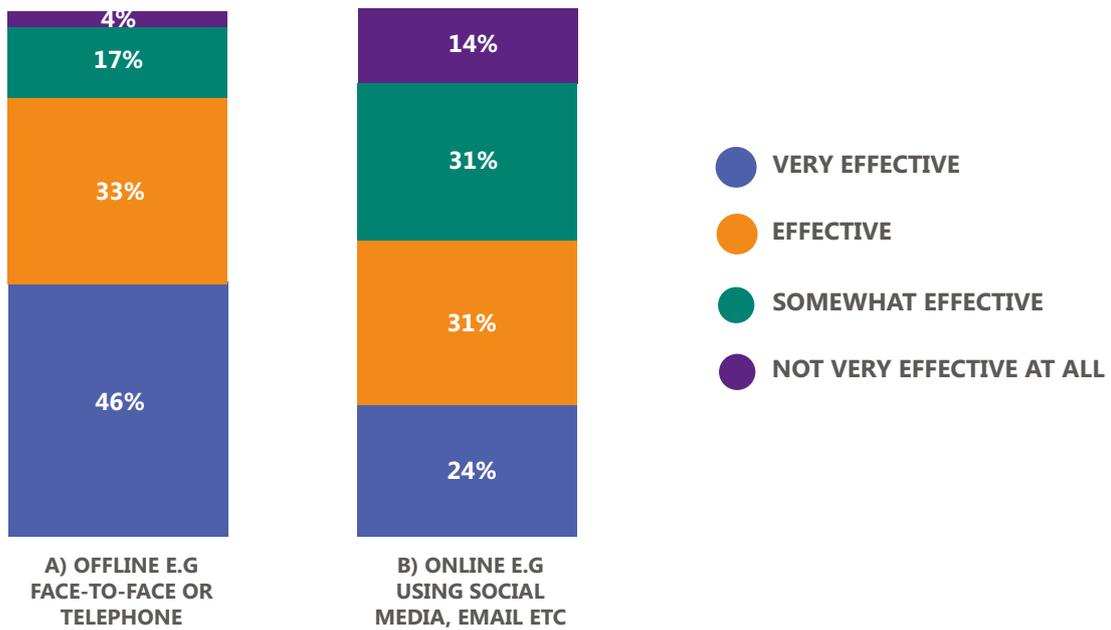
“As a small four man company, there aren’t enough hours in the day or know-how in the company to use social media.”

“The shift from the corporate world has left me without that smart marketing team I always enjoyed. So I am learning slowly, but surely have to market online.”

“We don’t spend anywhere near enough time on social media. We don’t have a proper plan for it and it tends to be haphazard. There is so much we could do - but finding time is difficult.”

“We have no Facebook or Twitter accounts as there is no one person in the position to manage them responsibly and regularly. My view is that if it isn’t monitored properly, it can be more negative than positive”

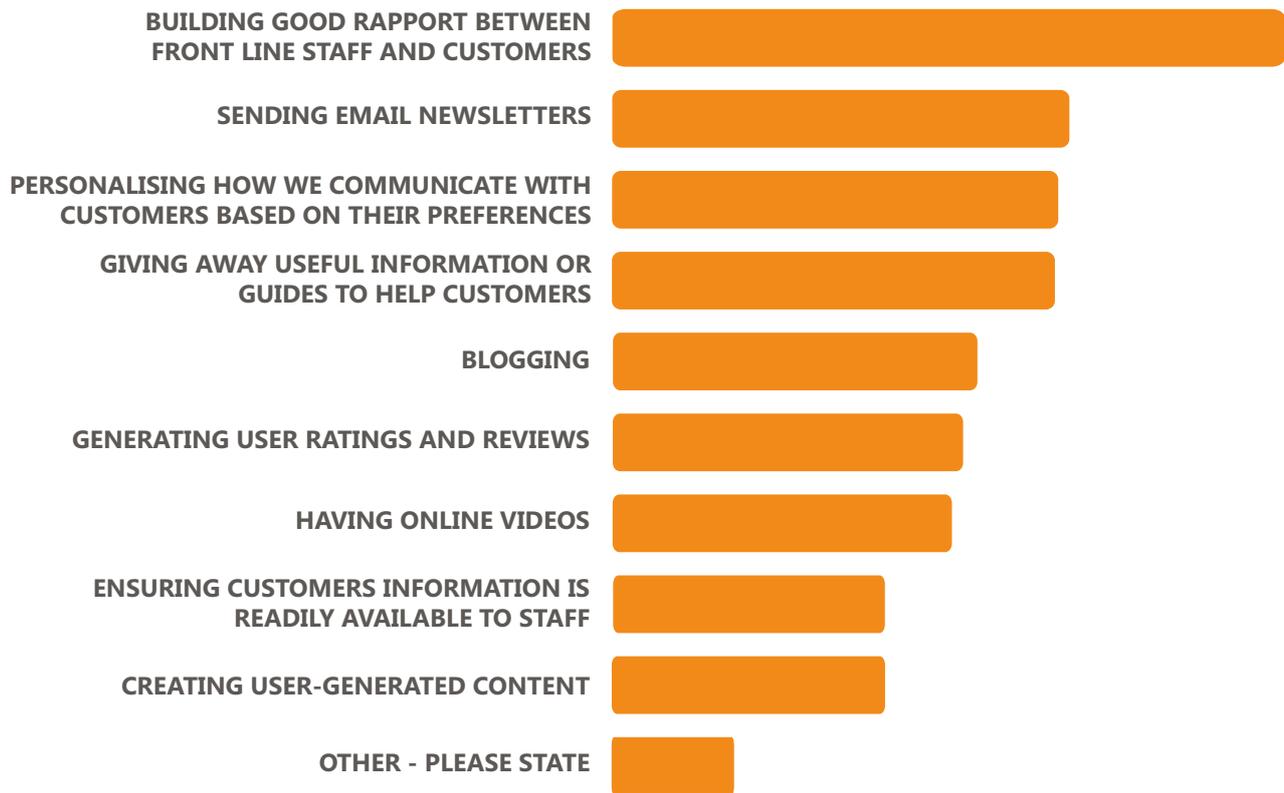
Figure 3. How effective is your company at engaging customers?



When asked about their top tactics used for engaging customers, 69% said they build good rapport between front line staff and customers, and 42% said they try to personalise how they communicate with customers based on their preferences.

In terms of engaging customers online, with the exception of social media, the most common tactics used are sending out a regular email newsletter (44%), giving away free information or guides (41%) and blogging (33%).

Figure 4. Which of the following tactics do you use to improve customer engagement:



Most businesses have a presence on social media

Overall, 83% of businesses have a presence on social media, with the most commonly used platforms being Facebook (69%), Twitter (66%) and LinkedIn (56%). However, this varies significantly by the nature of the business and whether they are focused on serving consumers (B2C) or other businesses (B2B). For example, 29% of B2C companies have a presence on Instagram compared to just 9% of B2B companies. In contrast, 68% of B2B companies use LinkedIn compared to only 39% of B2C firms.

Figure 5. Do you have a presence on social media?

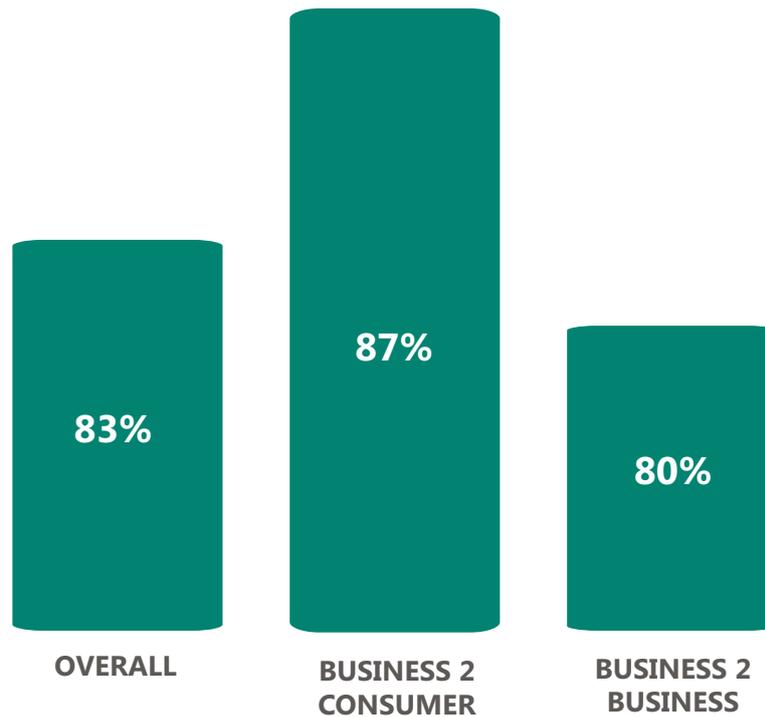
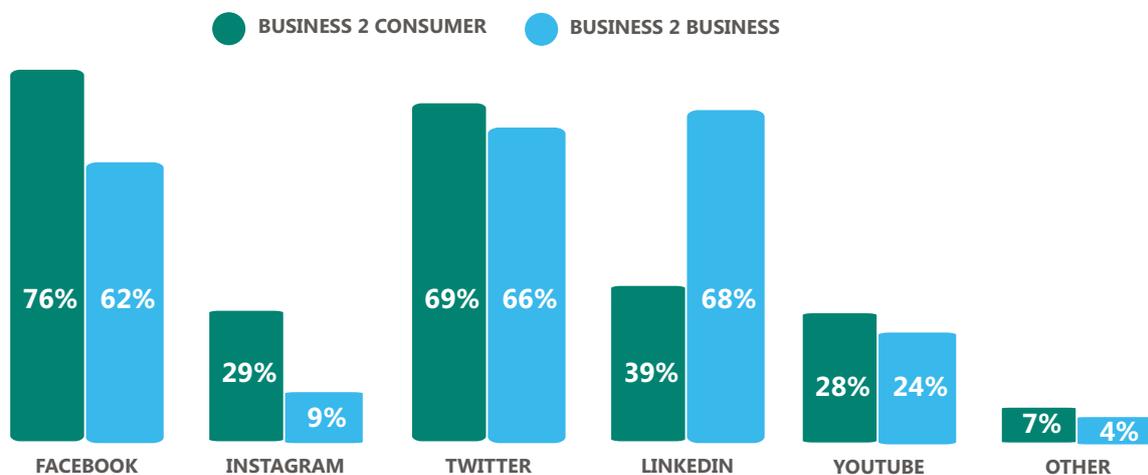
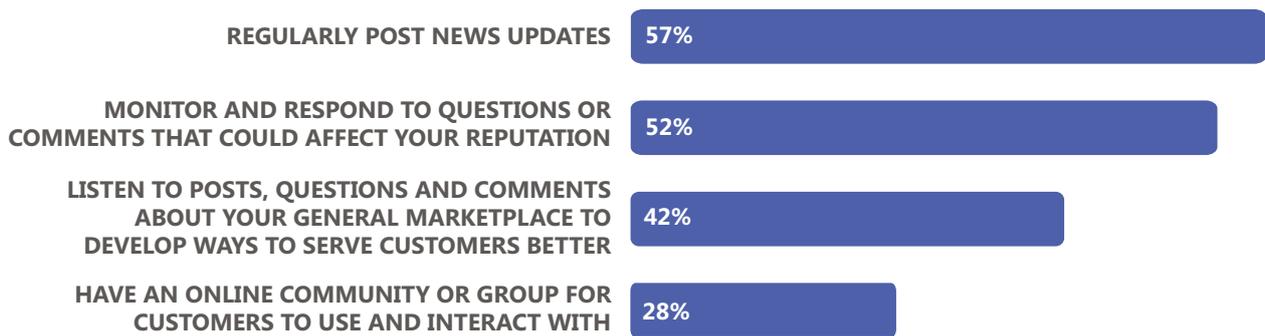


Figure 6. What social networks does your business use?



Despite having a social media presence, only 57% of these companies regularly post news updates, while 52% monitor and respond to questions or comments that could affect their reputations. Only 1 in 4 (28%) have an online community or group for customers to use and interact with.

Figure 7. When using social media networks do you:



The top challenges are effectively using social media, forecasting customer demand and a lack of customer insight

Although the majority use social media, 41% of businesses said they do not make the most of this. Alongside effectively using social media, the top challenges that either prevent businesses from engaging customers or delivering a great customer experience are forecasting customer demand (43%); a lack of customer insight (25%) and not being able to prioritise the best sales leads or high value customers (22%).

All of these challenges affect the bottom line. Firstly, being unable to forecast customer demand can result in delays serving customers or having resources and staff sitting idle during quieter times. Secondly, without truly understanding customers and their needs, businesses are hampered when trying to develop new products or knowing where to prioritise their marketing resources. Finally, being unable to identify their best leads or high value customers, it means they're unable to effectively prioritise their resources and focus on the best opportunities or retain their best customers.

Figure 8. Which of the following challenges prevent your company from engaging with customers:

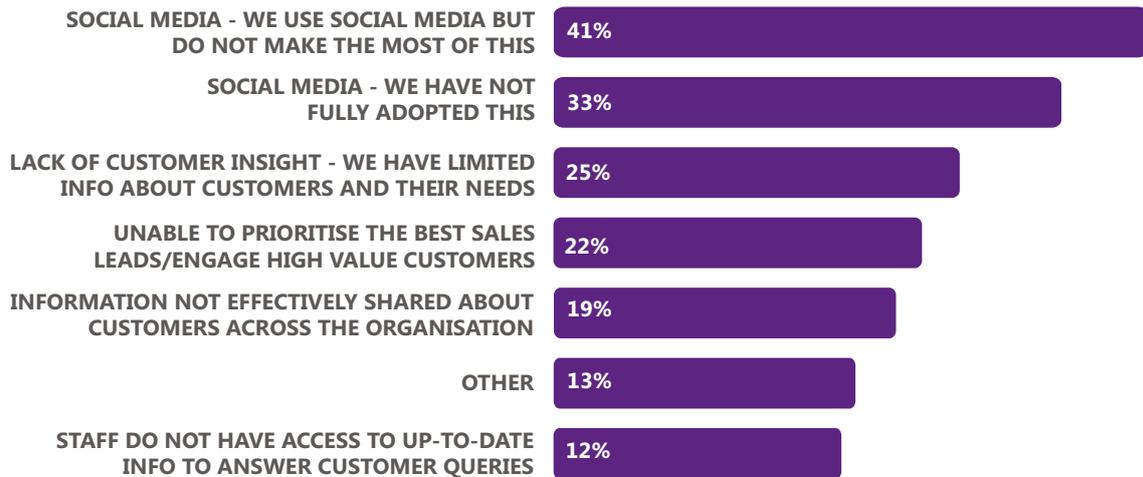


Figure 9. In terms of delivering a great customer experience, which of the following challenges does your business face:



LAURA RUNHAM, SMB AUDIENCE MARKETING MANAGER FOR DYNAMICS AT MICROSOFT

WHY SHOULD YOU, AS A SMALLER BUSINESS, CARE ABOUT IMPROVING YOUR ONLINE CUSTOMER ENGAGEMENT?

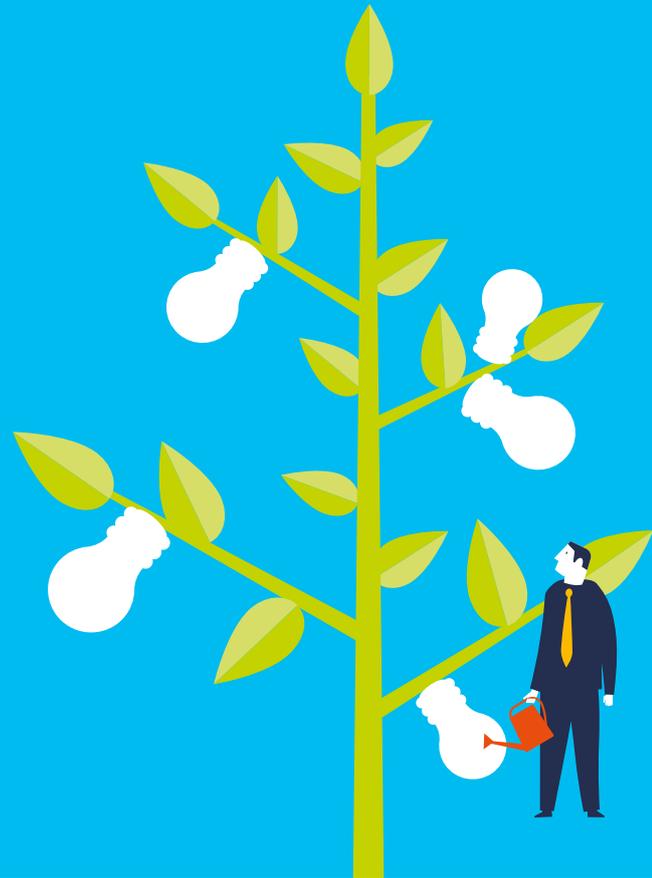
Perhaps you mainly engage with your customers offline. And maybe that's working just fine for you at the moment. You might already be the best at what you do; so good that your customers wouldn't even consider going anywhere else to get whatever it is that you have to offer them. And even if you were to consider improving your online engagement with customers, it's effort right? And is it even worth it?

Yes – it is. Let me tell you why.

Without a doubt, the rise of the internet has changed the way people source information, purchase products and services and interact with businesses. After all, the internet is open all day, every day – and you don't even need to get out of your pyjamas to visit it! However, online channels can lack the personal touch that makes a physical workplace or store so successful in terms of great customer service. Slow or uninformative service can be relatively common online, where it can be harder to provide the level of expertise or service that you can offer physically in person. But the internet is fast becoming the channel of choice for customers, due to its speed and convenience, which is why businesses that are experiencing the most growth know it's more important than ever to ensure that the level of service they offer online is consistent with the level of service they offer offline.

So why should you, as a smaller business, care about online customer engagement? Because ongoing and meaningful customer engagement across all channels, online and offline, results in long-term customer commitment and loyalty – which is key to the ongoing growth and success of your business. If you're not connecting with your customers through today's modern channels, someone else will be. It's up to businesses to adopt and embrace new ways of engaging with customers to keep up with our changing world, or risk eventually being left behind.

What growing companies do differently



We asked participants how their sales turnover had changed over the last 12 months:

- 57% said their turnover had increased
- 27% said this had stayed the same
- 17% said this have declined

Let's examine what those growing companies do differently.

Make customer engagement a priority

Around 86% of growing businesses view customer engagement as 'essential' compared to just 69% of those businesses in decline. As well as making customer engagement a priority, growing businesses are better at engaging customers both online and offline. In summary, if customer engagement is not a priority for your business, perhaps due to a lack of time or know-how, address this. Complete a SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) of both your online and offline customer engagement tactics. Are there any gaps or weaknesses to fix? Our research shows that addressing these and making improvements pays.

Figure 10. How important is customer engagement to your business – ‘essential’ answers:

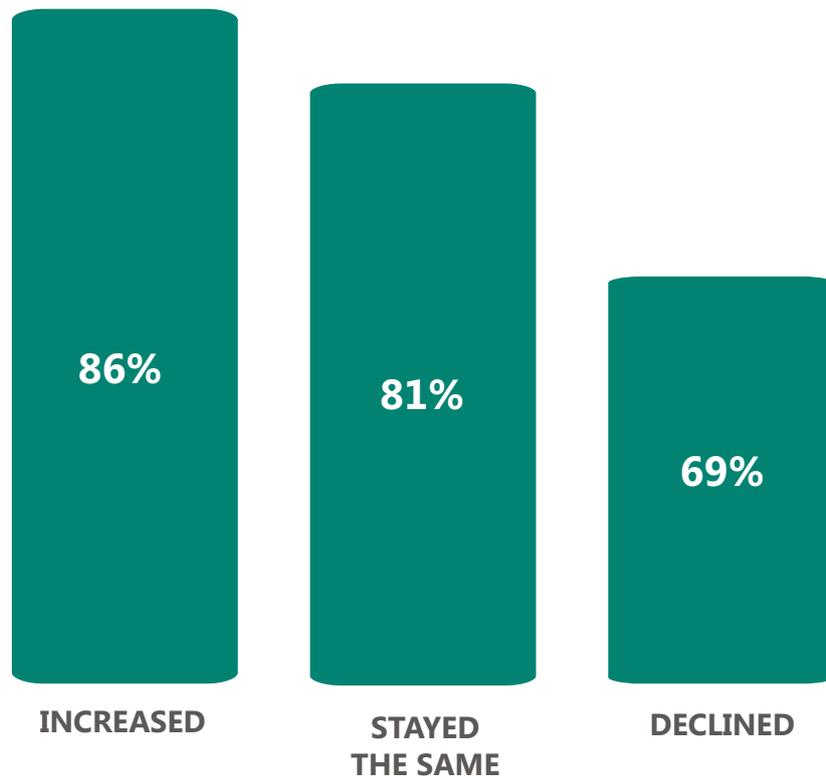
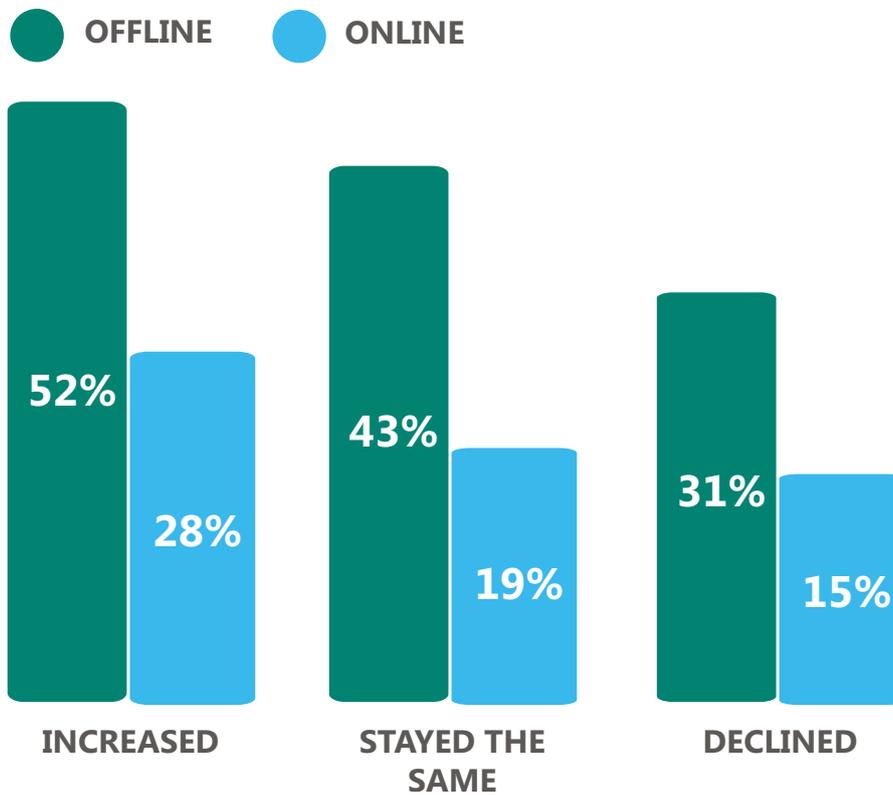


Figure 11. How effectively does your company engage customers vs company growth



Create consistent and personalised customer experiences across all channels

Customers today have much more control over the buying process. They can choose how they interact with the company and have more choice than ever before when it comes to how they access information – whether it be online, through social media or interacting with staff. Customers expect a consistent and integrated experience, so for example, they do not have to repeat themselves if being transferred from one call centre customer service adviser to another.

To deliver consistent customer experiences, it's important to get right some fundamentals:

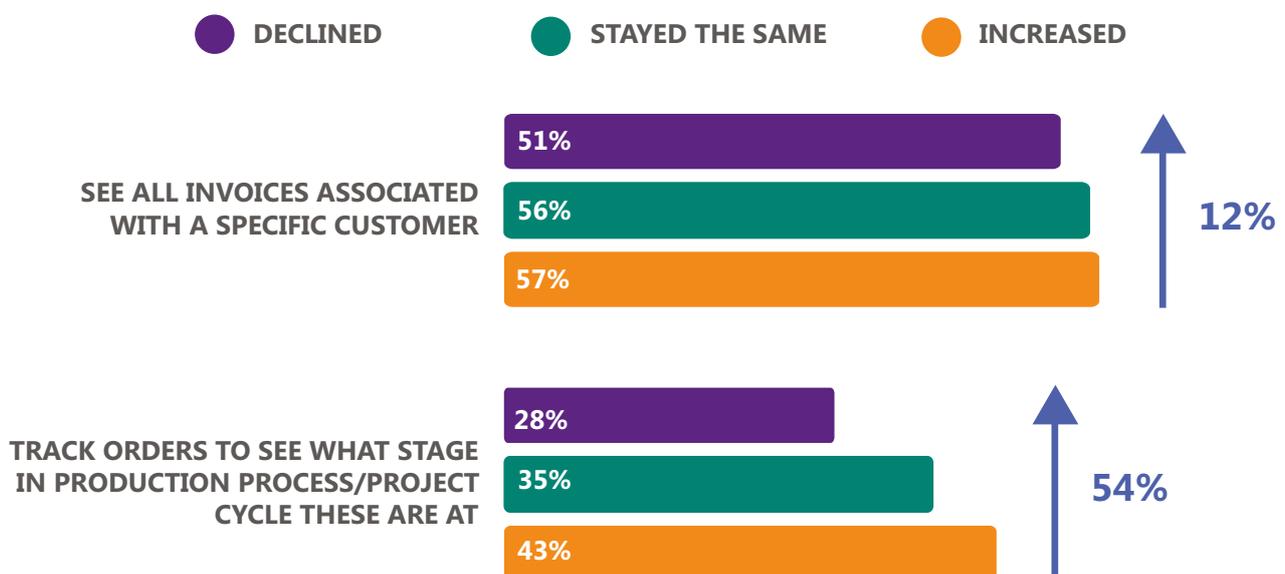
A unified view of the customer

All staff that interact with customers, whether these be face-to-face, on the phone or communicating electronically, need to a full view of all interactions with a customer. For instance, we found that in growing companies, front line staff are 12% more likely to be able to see all invoices associated with a specific customer.

Consistent knowledge and data

To reliably answer customer questions, staff need to understand relevant business processes, know whether a product is in stock and expected delivery dates. In a manufacturing or distribution setting, we found that in growing companies, staff are 54% more likely to be able to track orders to see exactly where these are in the production process.

Figure 12. When taking a customer order or enquiry front line staff can:



Intelligent and personalised interactions

Most small and medium-sized businesses are good at engaging customers offline and building great rapport. Put in place systems to enable this across all customer interactions. Record customer information, including their preferences and what sales advisors have learnt about them, such as any products they currently buy from your competitors. Empower staff throughout your business to engage in intelligent conversations based on this learning. Nothing is more un-engaging than walking into a retailer or bank, where every customer, regardless of who they are, is asked the same question, such as 'we have a special offer on home insurance, are you interested?'

Channel choice

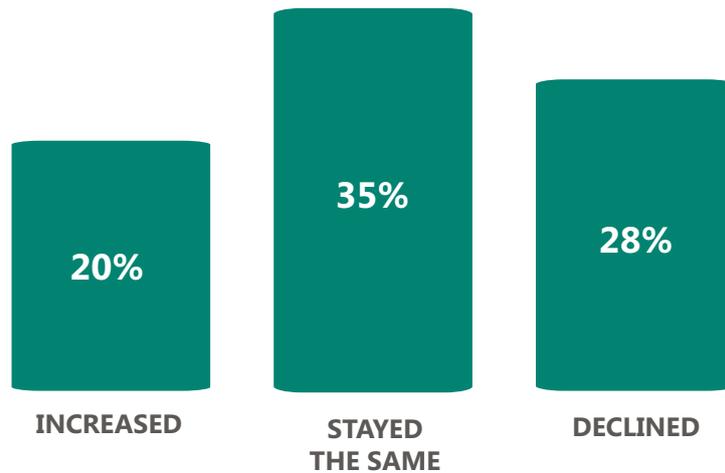
Customers expect to be able to communicate with the company on their terms, so offer them choice. If they want to interact online, offer webchat, as well as phone. If you send regular statements, ask if they would prefer to receive these by email rather than post. If your customers tend to use a certain social network, have a presence and reply to messages and relevant conversations.

"Out of all the tools we've introduced to our business, webchat has made the biggest difference. It enables us to engage our website visitors on their terms, answer their queries and help them progress through the buying process." Jason King, Head of Marketing, 4CornerNetworks

Know your customers

No matter how good your product or service, no-one will buy it if they don't want it or they believe they don't need. Similarly, if you can't effectively communicate this to the right target audience, your business won't grow and thrive. It's therefore no surprise that fewer growing businesses said a lack of customer insight was preventing them engaging customers, compared to the national averages.

Figure 13. A lack of customer insight prevents your company from engaging with customers:



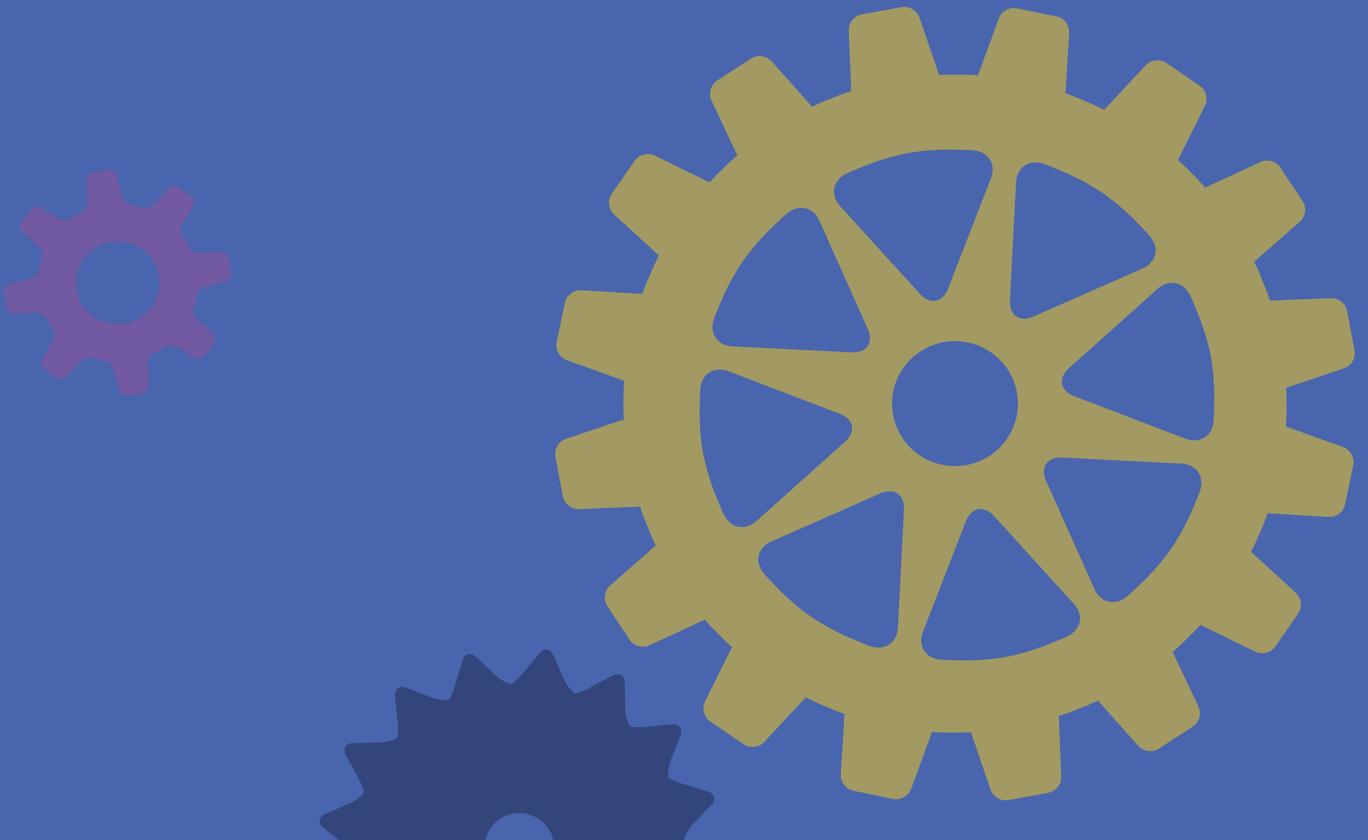
Customer insight fuels intelligent decision making, enabling growing businesses to develop new products or services that better meet customer needs and effectively prioritise their marketing resources. Knowing your customers puts you a great position to get their attention, by developing marketing communications that appeal to their needs, likes and desires.

In very small businesses, where the founder is in direct contact with every customer, it may be tempting to make decisions based on gut feeling alone. However, without robust data, the founder may not always know best or objectively be able to see key trends that they can take advantage of. In larger organisations, without the right technology and systems, this becomes even more difficult.

LAURA RUNHAM, SMB AUDIENCE MARKETING MANAGER FOR DYNAMICS AT MICROSOFT

It's great that your business has a presence on social media and is regularly sending updates to customers. But it's important to ensure you're listening as well as talking. This will help you to spot trends to understand how people are feeling about your business, product or service so that you can shape your messaging and sales conversations more effectively, and even identify your key influencers.

I know that you're busy and probably don't have the time to sit and monitor social activity all day, every day. And you don't have to! There are tools available to do this for you. Take Microsoft Social Engagement for instance. It puts cutting-edge tools in your hands to help you gain insight and proactively connect on social media with customers, fans, and critics.



Invest in a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system

To provide a unified view of the customer and generate timely customer insight, small and medium-sized businesses need to invest in technology. Almost half (47%) of businesses said they use a CRM system to manage customer information, with take up highest amongst growing companies (54%).

Figure 14. Companies using a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system:



Many of those companies that don't use a CRM system said they rely on Excel to maintain customer records, but this has major drawbacks. CRM systems are specifically designed to make it easy for staff to find the customer information they are looking for and unlike Excel, multiple users can update this at the same time.

Social media isn't the only place that you can get to know your customers. Do you have a place where you store information such as your customers' interests, important dates and previous purchases? If you don't already then you should. Having this information to hand ensures that you are having relevant conversations when you talk to customers and allows you to share targeted messages and communications to them that is relevant to their needs and interesting to them – resulting in happy and engaged customers!

You don't have to be a mind reader to get into your customers' heads. You just need the right tools to help you discover what customers want and when they want it. Microsoft Dynamics CRM Online helps you better service current customers and win new ones as well as build more loyal and profitable customer relationships through better customer intelligence and personalised experiences.

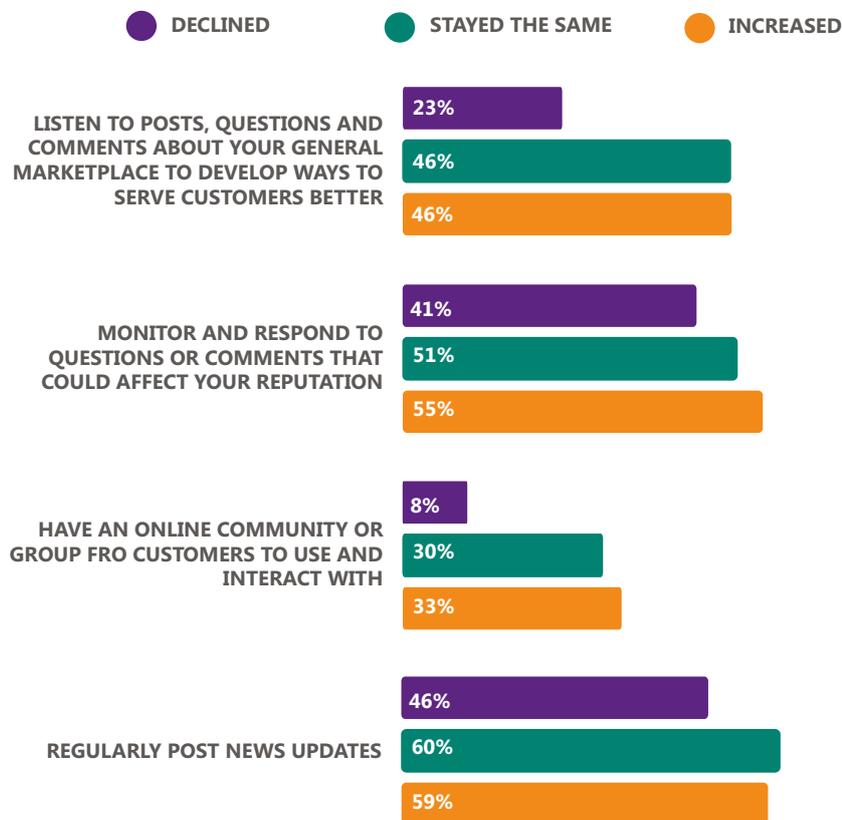
Effectively use social media

In a socially connected world, customers expect to engage with businesses on their terms – wherever they are, whenever they are. Today's customers make decisions based on user reviews and online discussions. Conversations that were once had in person now take place on Facebook or Twitter. People are more informed, and they're getting their information in new ways, from new sources.

Growing businesses understand this – 87% use social media compared to just 67% of businesses whose sales have declined. However, this doesn't tell the whole story - growing companies also use social media more effectively and extensively.

While growing companies are slightly more likely to monitor questions or comments that could affect their reputation and post news updates more frequently, what really sets them apart is how they use social media proactively and engage in two-way conversations. Firstly, they are four times more likely to have an online group or community where they can interact with customers. Secondly, they are twice as likely to monitor trends about their general marketplace in order to develop ways to serve customers better.

Figure 15. Social media activities



CASE STUDY

Dennis & Turnbull is an expanding chartered accountancy firm based in Swindon with approximately 50 employees. We talked with Carl Reader, Partner, about how they engage their customers online.

“The way we engage with our existing and prospective clients is essential to our growth. It starts from the top - our senior team and I are all active on social media and we invest time and money to stay in regular contact with our clients online.

Each year, our communication plan maps out all the opportunities we have to engage our clients. We know in advance there will be some key events like the Budget, where we can share timely and relevant information with our clients and newsletter subscribers. And the key words are timely and relevant – we don’t want to bombard clients with information about us, but instead we share information that they will find helpful and interesting.

The communication plan filters out through to our e-newsletter, blog and social media channels, so there’s some consistency. Alongside our corporate Dennis & Turnbull social media accounts, we encourage staff in senior and business development roles to be active on social media too. Instead of just broadcasting our news, we stay social – retweeting messages, sharing updates and when we’re attending industry events, we will talk about these and connect with people we’ve met.

Measuring the ROI of social is extremely difficult – we will never make a sale in 140 characters! Instead, we track our number of followers, retweets, likes and traffic back to our website to ensure we’re moving in the right direction.”

CASE STUDY

4CornerNetworks provides professional network engineering services, through a network of qualified Cisco Certified Engineers. We spoke with Jason King, Head of Marketing.

“We create interesting content to help engage our customers. This includes writing our own blogs – because of the technical nature of what we do, we could not outsource this to a marketing agency. We also use social media, reposting interesting news and re-sharing content that we think our audience will find helpful. If someone follows us, we’ll thank them and start a conversation. You have to remember social is social – you’re entering into their world so you can’t be all promotional. Overall, about 80% of all our content is social or conversational with no more than 20% promotional.

We use Google Analytics to track web visits that come through our social channels, but it’s hard to measure the return on investment because many customers who we are interacting with are in the very early stages of the buying process.”

Around 59% of the UK population have active social media accounts – and this percentage is increasing every year. The average daily use of social media is two hours and 13 minutes. If your business doesn’t have a social presence and you’re not posting regular social updates, you’re missing out on opportunities to engage with existing and new customers when they’re browsing through social feeds.

Social media provides you with a way to quickly and easily provide relevant updates about your product or service to your followers, provide an additional channel for your customers to contact you on, and find out what people are saying about your business – so you are informed to make insightful business decisions and react accordingly.

It’s not enough to just have a presence on social media and push messages out. To be effectively engaging with your customers you need to be responding to them, participating in their conversations and ensuring that what you are sharing is relevant to them. Don’t just post in your company-owned channels and groups – make sure you are going where your customers go and participate in existing discussions, conversations and threads.

Most importantly, don’t just sell your products. Think about ways that you can share your thoughts and views on the industry and other relevant topics to position yourself as an expert and thought-leader in your field to keep customers reading your posts and updates.

CASE STUDY

Ahmad Tea is a family business with three generations of tea knowledge. The company has 70 employees, with the UK acting as corporate headquarters, a central warehouse, and a factory, while its Sri Lankan facility mainly deals in the purchasing and distribution of tea, which it ships to 70 countries on six continents.

To enable this growth, Ahmad Tea uses Microsoft Dynamics NAV. Across the company, 35 employees, spanning purchasing and planning, sales, warehousing and accounting, use this software every day. In supporting its multinational organisation, the company makes particular use of the multi-language and multicurrency capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, for example, to produce sales documents in Russian or to track sales and purchase transactions in British pounds, U.S. dollars, and euros.

Peter Jacob, Corporate IT Manager at Ahmad Tea, said, "By using the manufacturing capabilities of Microsoft Dynamics NAV, we've been able to track the core components that go into our tea products, including flavouring, tea bag paper, and the tea itself. It provides a 360-degree view of the business - employees can see, for example, what products customers are buying and customer sales figures versus performance from a year before. All those reports are available at the touch of a button, whereas, before, we had to pull and consolidate that information from our separate systems.

"We're saving considerable time and are able to ensure that we produce the right amount of product, have the right amount of product in stock, and can give more accurate lead-time information to our customers. What we particularly like about Microsoft Dynamics NAV is its flexibility, enabling us to change a process within the solution to reflect a change in our business very quickly. As we have expanded the business and introduced a wider range of tea products, Microsoft Dynamics NAV has played a significant part in supporting that expansion cost-effectively."



CASE STUDY

Otterburn Mills can trace its roots back to 1782. As you can expect, a lot has changed since with this working mill being transformed into a tourism location with a retail offering, with a thriving online shop offering premium clothing. We spoke with Euan Pringle, Director.

“Currently, 25% of our sales are online but I expect this will increase to 50% in the next two years. eBay and Amazon are becoming increasingly important for our sales and core to our success are positive customer reviews – we have over 20,000 on eBay alone. One of the key things that differentiates us, is we have a 99%+ next working day delivery track record. In our online reviews, many customers rave about this.

Technology makes this all possible. We know exactly where our stock is – if it’s in a warehouse or in transit. We’re currently working on integrating this with eBay so customers will be able to see online if anything is out-of-stock and there could be a small delay. Our delivery track record has also created exciting opportunities to benefit from Amazon Prime.

I’ve been in business for a long time and I’ve seen the miners’ strike, three day week working weeks and sky high interest rates, but as a retailer the last three to four years have been the most difficult. Without having these systems in place to know our stock levels in real time, we would have gone out of business.”



Design back office processes to support customer engagement

In order to provide a unified view of the customer, data must flow throughout the organisation to enable effective decision making by both customer-facing staff and those responsible for business operations and managing capacity.

Firstly, customer facing staff need visibility into the processes performed by back-office operations, such as whether a product is in stock, order status and when it was shipped. Taking this a step further, technology can be used to automatically keep the customer updated, such as sending a text message when their order is dispatched.

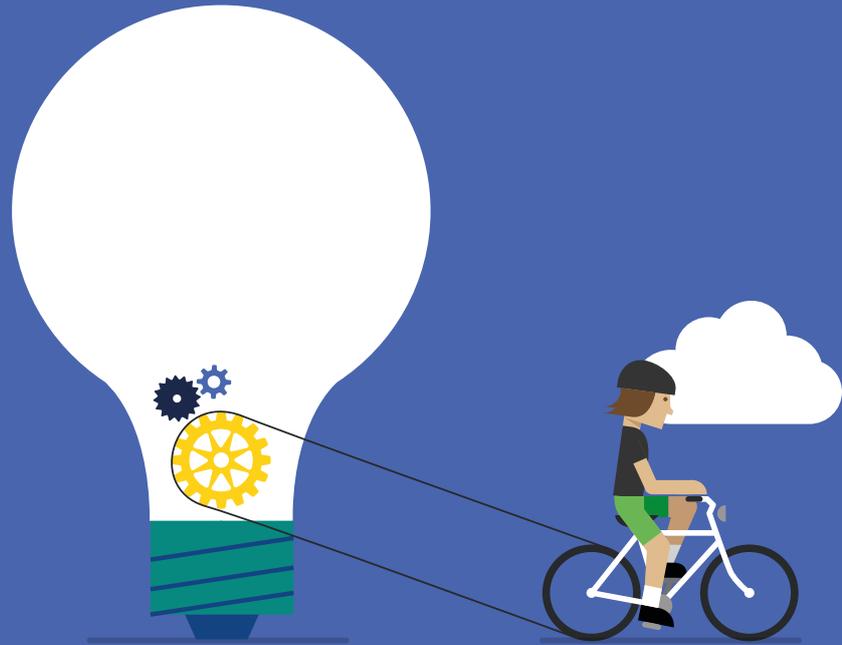
As well as data and communication following from operational areas to front line staff and customers, it should flow both ways. For example, lead indicators such as number of sales presentations, together with expected conversion rates can help predict changes in demand so the organisation and your suppliers can react accordingly.

It's great knowing that your external customer-facing departments, such as sales, marketing and service, are providing a high level of service to your customers but do you have great engagement internally too? If the departments in your business aren't working together to achieve common goals, share critical knowledge and delivering great internal customer service, the knock-on effect could result in problems that are felt by external customers.

For instance, it's important to ensure that you have enough stock to fulfil customer demand, invoice customers accurately and in a timely manner and share information about customers across departments so they receive a consistent service.

Dynamics NAV is Microsoft's ERP system for growing businesses, bringing the applications that run your finances, sales, and operations together with the familiar Microsoft Office applications you already know. Combined with the power of the cloud you can work anywhere, anytime and across all of your devices.

Summary



Business owners know that how they engage and interact with existing and potential customers affects their levels of overall satisfaction, purchase decisions and loyalty. In recent years, the competitive landscape and customers' expectations and behaviours have evolved thanks to the rise of social media and new technology.

Successful, growing businesses are those that prioritise customer engagement. They are committed to using social media to deepen customer relationships rather than just monitor comments that could affect their reputation. They're more likely to invest in a CRM system to help manage customer information and empower front line staff to deal with customer queries. Data flows through their business processes to help better forecast and react to changes in customer demand.

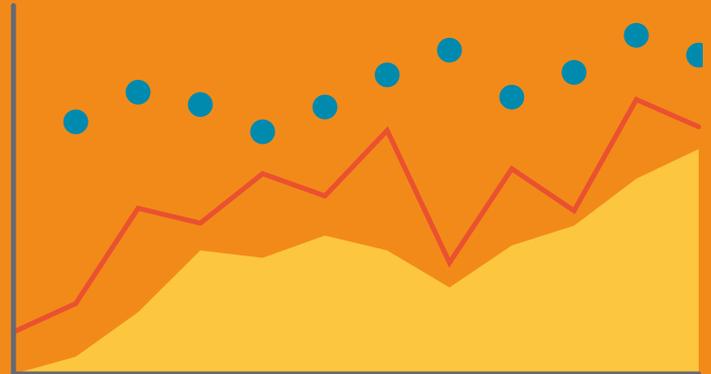
Some people think that Microsoft technology is just for big companies. But that's not the case at all. In fact, many of Microsoft's most effective and popular solutions were designed with smaller businesses in mind. In an always-on, always-mobile world, it allows them to punch above their weight without needing the kind of infrastructure or capital investment that may slow down bigger rivals.

There is a wealth of knowledge and expertise available from technology experts to help you identify the right solution for your business. At Microsoft, we call these technology experts our "partners".

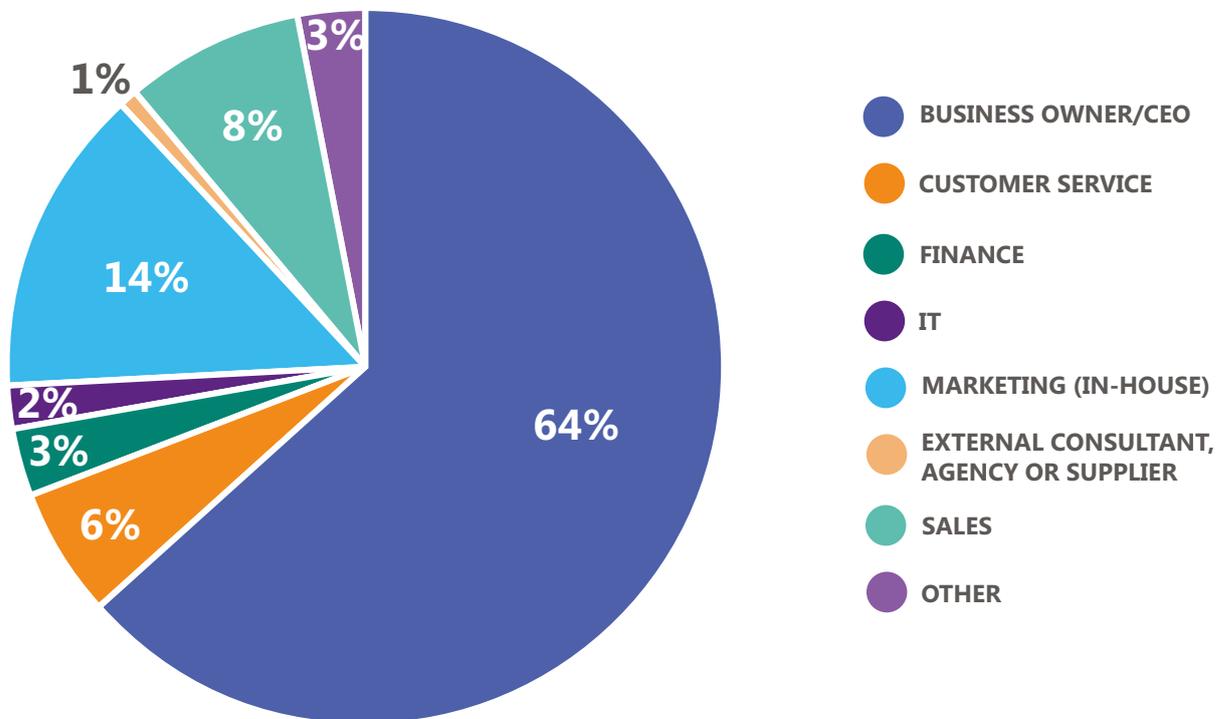
To find out how Microsoft Dynamics can help you connect with customers and achieve your business growth ambitions, or to find your nearest Microsoft Dynamics partner, visit www.microsoft.co.uk/growyourbiz

Laura Runham, SMB Audience Marketing Manager for Dynamics at Microsoft

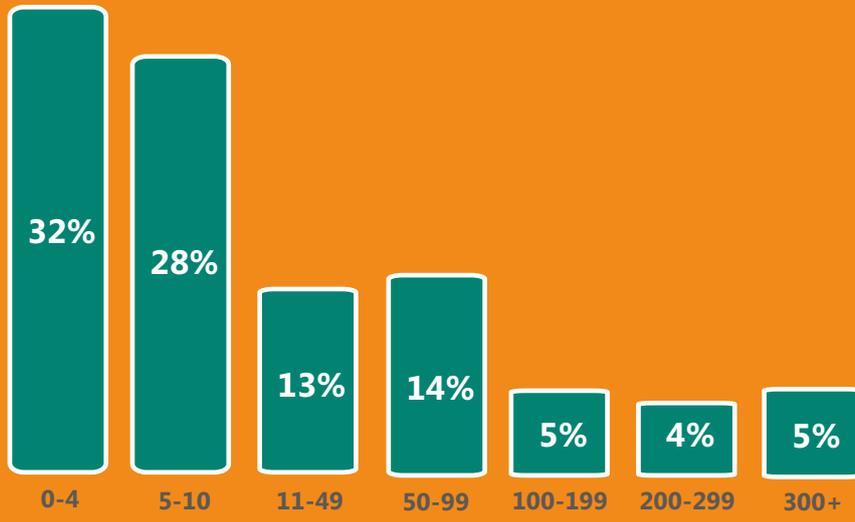
Survey information



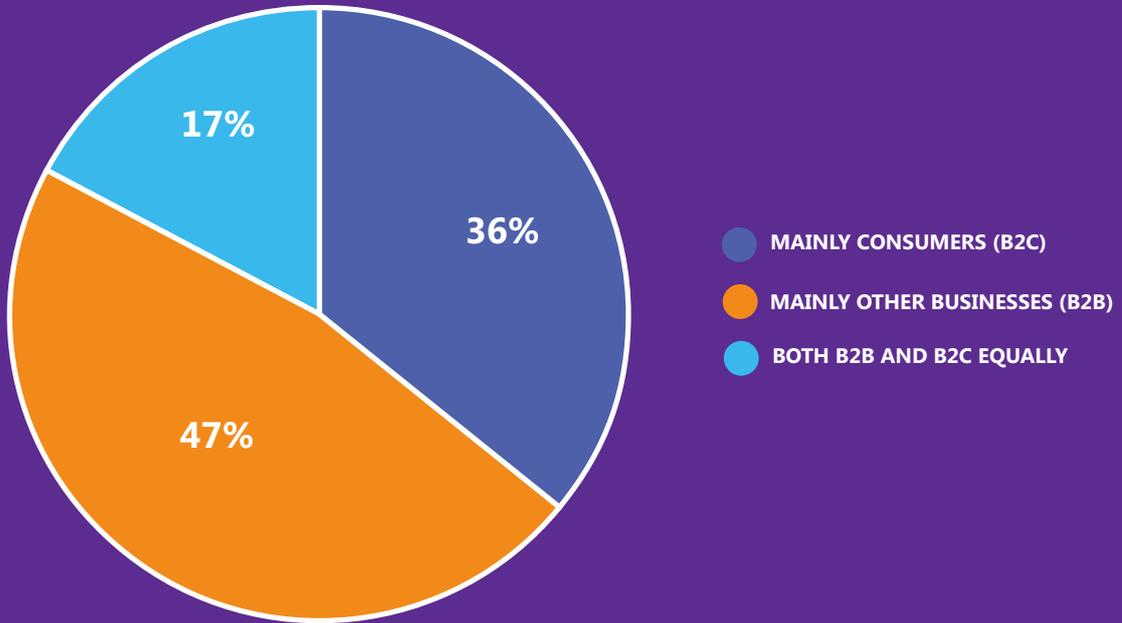
RESPONDENTS' ROLE



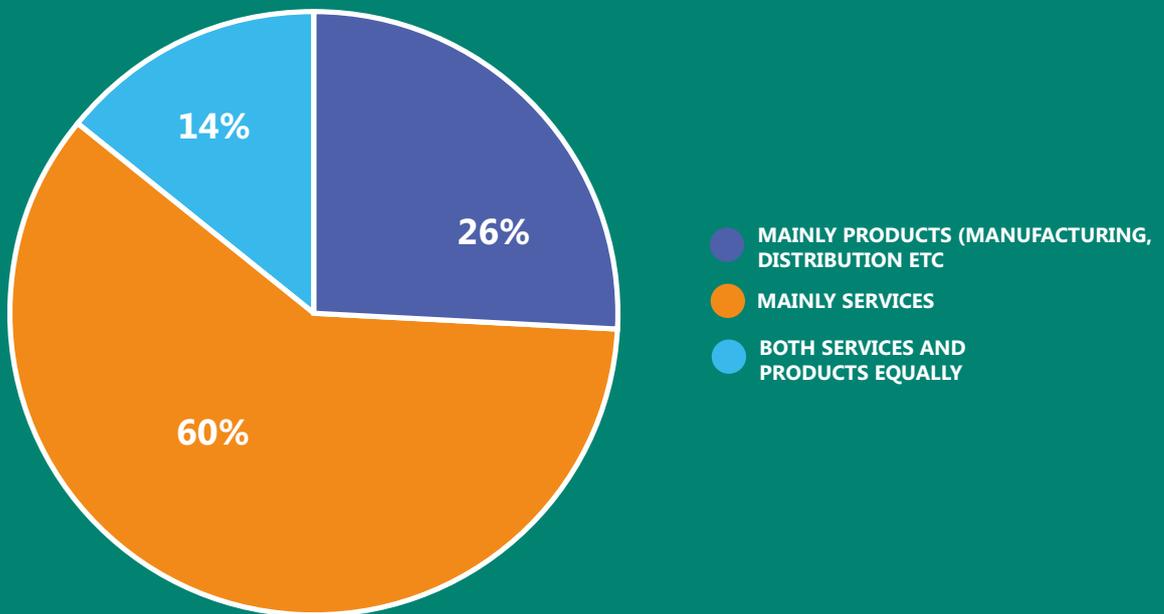
NUMBER OF EMPLOYEES



BUSINESS SERVES



BUSINESS PROVIDES



About Microsoft

Microsoft's global vision is to empower every person and organisation to achieve more. Whether you're a one-person start-up, or an expanding business, Microsoft can help your company succeed and grow with innovative technology that enables you to sharpen your competitive edge and build a business that matches your ambition.

Visit www.Microsoft.co.uk/GrowYourBiz to find out how Microsoft Dynamics technology can empower your business to connect with customers and grow efficiently

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MyCustomer is an online resource for customer-focused professionals with over 100,000 members. The only destination that provides a holistic view of the customer journey, MyCustomer shares practical advice about strategies and technologies across sales, customer service, marketing and customer experience management.

With a network of expert contributors from around the globe and a focus on strategy, technology and in-depth research, members of the MyCustomer community are able to tap into a wealth of knowledge and receive the most comprehensive view of the trends affecting and influencing the world of customer management.

Join the community at www.mycustomer.com

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BusinessZone is the go-to source of information for the owners of growth-stage businesses. We believe we are uniquely placed to provide high-quality content for these readers, who complement our existing and growing readership of small business owners. We focus on providing the right kinds of content to bring people together to create business success.

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