



Up Your On-line Marketing Game To Maintain Web Sales

Website Best Practices

- Choose a small front to sell from to start
 - Think of web pages like a display in your store
 - Displays are your best opportunity to showcase your curation skills.
 - Limiting the number of displays helps you focus.
 - Make a display schedule
 - Include the easy ideas: Black History, Women's History, Poetry, Summer Reading, Pride, Valentine's Day, Mother's Day, Father's Day, Holiday Gift Guide, etc.
 - Include the displays that make your store special to your community.
 - Make a display plan
 - Each display is a list of books. Limit the number of books you can include to force you to hone the idea.
 - Write something about each book you present that conveys your passion for the work or the subject.
 - The introduction should feel personal and conversational.
- Building good displays is a group activity
 - Solicit and discuss web displays ideas from your staff.
 - Get feedback about the books you plan to include.
 - Get feedback about what you write.
 - Harness your staff's passions and interests to make better web content
 - Engaging staff in this way will keep them aware of what you're selling online.
- Further Reading:
 - [ABA IndieCommerce Website Best Practices](#)

Social Media Best Practices

- Understand your store's customer demographics and your social media audience:
 - Age; where they live; income; spending habits; activities; education levels; time of life (parents, grandparents, students, retirees)?
 - [The Beginner's Guide to Defining Buyer Personas](#)
- Choose which networks to use (and which to ignore):
 - Research network demographics
 - Understand best uses for each network
 - Focus on a limited number of networks (Instagram and Facebook, possibly Twitter)
 - [Which Social Media Platforms are Right for Your Business](#)
 - [Which Social Media Platforms Should You Use for Your Business](#)
 - [Instagram vs Facebook: which is best for your brand's strategy?](#)



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- Have a plan
 - Set goals for your social media marketing (brand awareness, event promotion, book sales, contact generation, etc.)
 - Does your FB homepage collect email subscribers?
 - Use data/metrics to determine when and how often to post
- Evaluate your results (views, links, likes, etc.) to see what is working.
 - Use individual platform analytics
 - [Defining Social Media Success](#)
 - [Important Social Media Metrics Tracked](#)
- Understand how and when to use hashtags and tagging
 - Using the @ symbol refers to (or tags) a person/group/business in a conversation
 - Using a hashtag (#) refers to a topic of conversation
 - [How to Use Hashtags: A Quick and Simple Guide for Every Network](#)
 - [How to Use Hashtags in Social Media](#)
- Keep an eye on your colleagues, competition, and the industry
 - Inspiration, ideas, and topics can come from anywhere
 - Understand what others are talking about (big issues, big news)
- Follow mentions of your store/brand
 - Like and share positive posts and mentions
 - Respond to all comments and @mentions—promptly
 - Deal with complaints and negative comments promptly as well
- Establish your social media voice and tone
 - Each post is an extension of your brand
 - Social Media homepages and posts should feel like your store!
 - Write like you talk (avoid jargon, too many adjectives, etc.)
 - Avoid drama and sensational headlines
- Follow the social media ‘Rule of Thirds’
 - 1/3 -- share posts to promote your business, promote events, convert readers, and sell books
 - 1/3 -- share posts from you industry or like-minded businesses
 - 1/3 -- share posts of personal stories to build your brand
- Don't repost the same message across networks
 - The same content (promoting an event) is fine, but vary the message per platform
- Use Scheduling tools & Design tools
- Further Reading:
 - [14 Social Media Best Practices](#)
 - [Helpful Social Media Tips for 2020](#)
 - [11 Social Media Strategies for 2020](#)
 - [The Ultimate List of Social Media Definitions You Need to Know](#)



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Email Best Practices

- Send them!
 - Your store is a trusted source for your customers, they want to get information and suggestions from you.
 - Don't be afraid of unsubscribes. People will opt out if they're not an email customer, which will leave you with a more active email customer list.
 - Test before you send! Check spelling, make sure links work, etc.
- Be Consistent
 - Send AT LEAST one or two emails each month.
 - The more often your logo/store is visible to your customers, the more you're top-of-mind when it's time to make a purchase.
 - Is there an optimal day of the week or time of day for mailings? Not exactly, other than to keep the day and time consistent.
 - Make a plan in order to stay consistent. (Shelf Awareness sends about 30 email campaigns each month to over 6 million recipients. Editorial calendars are key!)
 - Plan content around holidays or special events as far in advance as you can. If you are sending a weekly email, map out the subject of each email over the month.
 - But, be prepared to change it up to respond to more current events.
 - If you have time and desire to segment your list, plan out all the varieties of those segments' mailings and keep your segments clear.
- Do sell books!
 - Don't just use your store mailings to promote events. You have a lot to promote and your mailings can highlight the breadth of your store.
 - Use content you have already: shelf talkers, staff recs. etc.
 - Always be sure your mailing has your store name and contact information.
 - Always link to your webpage, ideally direct to the page with the book(s) you want to promote.
 - Use images.
 - Make it clear what you're offering or asking.
 - Whether or not you segment your list, try adding wild card suggestions. Sometimes your fans will surprise you with what they want. You can track open rates, click throughs, sales, etc. to see what worked.
 - You can also track subject lines over time to see what works.
 - Try action verbs, curiosity gap and clear asks.
 - Avoid spammy urgency, excessive use of punctuation or emojis and false leads.
 - It's fine to be consistent here too. Shelf Awareness follows the consistent subject line school of emails. Readers know what to look for and the 20-50% average open rates seem to show it works.



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- Get Help
 - Is there someone on staff that would love to be the point person for the email program? Delegate! You can be one of the review readers of the test message before it goes out to your customers and not have to do all the footwork yourself.
 - Don't send regular email messages using a long list of BCC recipients. Not only will you likely end up in Spam filters, you also can't track open rates, or clean out bounces.
 - Email management programs like MailChimp and Constant Contact are tried and true and have handy templates.
 - Shelf Awareness also offers [free customizable newsletters](#) that can be branded and sent for your store, but require no work from you.
 - Shelf Awareness for Readers
 - Branded with your store's logo
 - Links to your social media and replies to your email address
 - Buy buttons point to your website
 - Can feature your RSS event feed
 - Hands-off ease if you want OR you can customize the editorial and feature ad
 - Pre-Order e-blast
 - Branded with your store's logo
 - Links to your social media and replies to your email address
 - Buy buttons point to your website
 - Hands-off if you want OR you can change titles, descriptions and links
 - ABA Indie Next List and Kids Next List
 - Branded with your store's logo
 - Links to your social media and replies to your email address
 - Buy buttons point to your website
 - MPIBA e-mail catalogs
 - Summer Reading & Holiday Gift Guide
 - Branded with your store's logo
 - Links to your social media and replies to your email address
 - Buy buttons point to your website
- Make it easy to subscribe and unsubscribe.
 - Be sure there is a prominent UNSUBSCRIBE link somewhere in the top or bottom of your message where people look for it.
 - DO NOT buy mailing lists.
 - Sign people up for your list! Don't be afraid to ask at your point of sale or on your webpage or in events. Your customers want to get reading ideas and information from you.
 - Collect emails on your website using pop ups or a box prominent on your landing page.



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- Collect emails via social media either passively with a “sign-up” button or actively with posts promoting signing up and pointing to a sign-up landing page.
 - Collect emails at your front counter. I know this is harder than it used to be right now, but a clipboard on the counter is still a great way to get subscribers. Ask at each sale.
 - Collect emails at events via sign-up sheet.
 - Collect emails via event registration
 - Do make sure, with all of these collection methods that there is clear language that the person is being added to your mailing list.
- Maintain your list
 - If you store your list somewhere other than where you send your emails be sure to update your mailing list frequently so you are sending to your most recent subscribers.
 - If your email program doesn't have an automatic bounce filter, do review bounce reports frequently to clean your lists.
 - Send emails consistently so that customers remember they signed up for your list.
 - Further Reading
 - [Ideas for Email Subject Lines](#)
 - [Mail Chimp's Best Practices for Lists](#)
 - [If you like visual inspiration for designing your emails](#)