

thebestofwalsall

the **LOCAL**
BUSINESS
SURVIVAL
GUIDE

The **Five 'ENGINES'**
that your business
must have in 2020

(you might be surprised...)

As the Old Chinese Proverb Says:

***He who stand on side
of hill waiting for roast
duck to fly in mouth
soon starve.***

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this book is to help you.

It's to help you rise to the top of your niche in terms of brand awareness, sales, and reputation.

It goes without saying that to do that, you have to be good at what you do. No amount of marketing and smart business thinking can compensate for a poor quality service or product. If you're shoddy and sloppy at what you do, stop reading now. I can't help you.

OK, you're still with me. In that case, the biggest benefit, when you utilise the five strategies that I show you is that you'll become magnetic to your ideal customers.

You'll find yourself in greater demand with the key foundation blocks in place to achieve the holy grail of business: the Rhythmic Acquisition of Customers.

You see, most businesses are stuck.

Most business owners are 'getting by' but they're not where they want to be – especially in terms of profit.

Most businesses do a great job for their customers but the drawings that the owner takes out, and the hours that they put in are at (the wrong) opposite ends of the spectrum.

It doesn't have to be that way.

But doing the things that got you stuck won't get you unstuck – and that's what this book is all about.

We know of a new thebestof member who joined recently and they said...

"My business partner and I have been running the business for over 15 years. We started with nothing and have generated hundreds of thousands of pounds of revenues in that time. But despite the investment of our time and all of our energy, we've gone stagnant. We've stopped moving forward and it's harder than ever to get new customers..."

I hear this **a lot.**

Success followed by stagnation. Getting stuck in the mud.

You keep working harder and harder, but the returns get smaller and smaller.

Because when you're stuck in the mud, revving your engine is the worst thing you can do.

You just get mired deeper and deeper.

So what should you do?

Stop firing the engine that got you where you are... and find the engines you need to get you out!

There are DISTINCT ENGINES that, when you get them working together, at once, are an incredibly powerful set of business strategies.

When you use them you never get "stuck in the mud."

And they multiply. They're exponential.

If you're running four of these engines and you add the fifth, you get a multiplier effect.

Power plus traction.

No more stuck in the mud.

More customers. More money. More pride.

Less stress.

That's what this book is all about.

Let's go and meet the engines.

Alex Murray
Sarah Rhodes

Alex Murray & Sarah Rhodes
thebestof Walsall

ENGINE ONE: YOUR POSITIONING

Right, let's not beat about the bush. Answer me this:

Why should your hard-working customer dip into their hard-earned cash and spend some money with you – as opposed to any or all of the other choices they have?

Fundamentally, I'm asking you why your potential customers should choose you over all the other people that do what you do – and most businesses have a very poor answer to that question.

"I'm an estate agent/tree surgeon/dentist/accountant..."

OK – so why should I come to you to sell my house, chop down my trees, fix my teeth or sort my tax – rather than one of your competitors?

When you have a great answer to this question – when people know not just what you do but why you're the best fit and/or obvious choice for them – it has a profound impact on the number of enquiries and calls and leads that you get, AND on the prices that they're willing to pay.

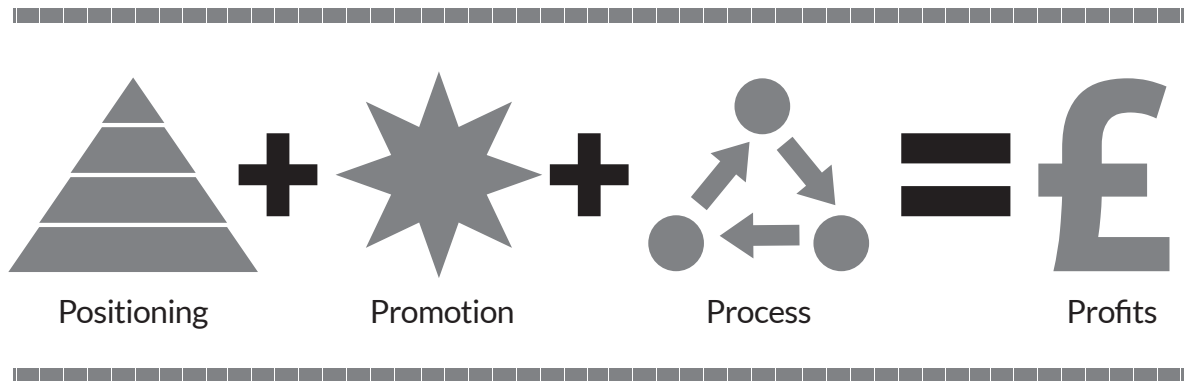
Answering this question properly helps to create your 'positioning'.

Most business owners give zero thought to how they are 'positioned' in their market – yet your positioning, when you get it right, gives you huge advantages not just in your capacity to attract and get (lots) more of the right customers but also to charge better prices – which, of course, has a big impact on your profit.

Let me explain it another way:

There is an equation - a formula - that defines the pathway to profit for any business anywhere, whatever market or industry you're in.

Here it is:



Positioning, plus promotion, plus process equals profit.

So, for instance, you could improve your sales process - meaning, for example, that you get better at converting enquiries into sales or you do more follow-up. The good news is that your profits would go up, and this is the area that most people focus on. But the bad news is that it's the least profitable place for you to focus, at least initially.

Because, what most people overlook is that, in order to increase profits, you could simply get more money for the same sale.

FACT:

The fastest thing to affect your bottom line is your price.

Think about it, if everything else stayed the same but you simply doubled your price, then you'd double your business instantly, and more than double your profits.

I'm not suggesting you do that, by the way, I'm just using it to explain the point that the price you charge has the biggest single impact on the profit that you make – and the biggest single impact on the price you can charge is your 'position' in your market. That's why this matters.

So price is worth working on, and your positioning plays a big part in determining the prices you can charge.

There's a pyramid in every industry or sector. I didn't create this. It's a generally accepted rule.



At the bottom, we have the generalist. The guy that does everything. In medicine, for instance, the GP doesn't get paid as much as the specialist. The heart surgeon commands a higher price than the guy you go to see when you have a cold.

So the specialist commands higher prices than the generalist.

Next, you have an authority. You have the heart surgeon who is the number one heart surgeon in the country, the one that everyone recommends as the 'go to guy'. And guess what, he (or she) is going to get paid even more. They're in even greater demand because they are the authority.

And at the next level, is the celebrity.

Celebrity positioning is very magnetic to money. Just think about the prices charged by famous hairdressers, compared to their high-street compatriots. It happens in all markets. From film stars to divorce lawyers. Fashion designers to dentists. The ones with 'celebrity' get paid more. Often a lot more.

So if you want to increase the success and profitability of your business over the next 12 months, giving some thought to where you are in this triangle, and how you can move up it, would be a really smart thing to do.

But how do you do it?

STEP ONE: HOW TO CREATE YOUR IDEAL POSITIONING.

Your positioning will be centred around what you want your marketplace to think about you.

Here's a good way to think about it: imagine that I have managed to pull together 500 ideal prospects for you and your business. They're all in a room, and in a few minutes, you're going to get the chance to speak to them all and 'pitch' what you do.

How would you want to be introduced to those people?

If I'm the guy bringing you on stage to talk to them, what do you want me to say about you as I introduce you?

This is a really great way to hone in on what you want your desired position to be.

Here's a very straightforward way to work it out.

Just complete the blanks in this sentence.

"[Your name] is known as the most sought-after [insert identity] in [location]."

That's sentence number one.

(Incidentally, you could be known as something other than "most sought-after," I've just used that as an example.)

So, for instance:

“Bob’s Electricals are known as the most sought-after electricians in Walsall...”

The next sentence says

“[He/she/they] are famous for...”

Now you fill in this blank with a thing that you do that matters most to your target market. So,

“Bob’s Electricals are known as the most sought-after electricians in Walsall. They’re famous for their 100% reliability...”

And then you’re going to wrap this sentence up with what you stand for, AND what you stand against.

So it might look something like this:

“Bob’s Electricals are known as the most sought-after electricians in Walsall.

They’re famous for their 100% reliability that gets jobs done quickly and to the highest standards, without overcharging or ever leaving a mess.”

Now that’s a ‘position’ that properly answers our opening question about why should your potential customers choose you over your competitors.

With a ‘position’ like this, Bob’s Electricals will get more opportunities to quote because lots of people want reliability, high standards, fair prices and no mess.

To be clear, you don't actually have to use this statement in your marketing, but you want to frame all of your advertising and promotional materials around it.

When you do this exercise, you get really clear on how you want to be seen by your target customers and, crucially, what you want them to think about you before they even have a chance to talk or meet with you or one of your team.

STEP TWO: HOW TO DEPLOY YOUR IDEAL POSITIONING.

Once you've established your desired position, it's time to deploy it, which is where the middle part of the equation comes in (i.e. the promotion).

Most people think about promotion as running ads and doing marketing. Whether it's leaflets through doors, Google AdWords, putting an ad in the paper, signs on vans etc. and, to some extent, that is right.

But...

You want your marketing message to position you properly and that means using your marketing to control the opinions and feelings that people have about you before they even have a chance to read your sales message or speak with you.

In many ways it is just like when I introduced you on stage.

If it's done properly, by the time people are ready to speak with you, most of your battle is already won.

Ways in which you 'pre-frame' or 'position' yourself include:

REVIEWS

(These are very important as you'll see in Engine Two).

AWARDS

(Just being short-listed and then using the 'Finalist' logo in your marketing helps a lot).

MEMBERSHIPS

(That show you have certain standards, or accreditations).

CONTENT AND INFORMATION.

(Writing articles or recording home-made videos that genuinely help and inform people that sit on your website or on your YouTube channel).

So, for instance, going back to Bob's Electricals, if on all Bob's marketing material, on his website, and on the advertising that he does are the logos and details of the awards that he has won, that helps pre-frame him and supports his desired position.

If when people visit Bob's website they find useful information, in language that they understand, then further confidence and trust is built and the pre-framing continues.

If Bob is then featured in an article in a local magazine, or is interviewed, then all of this is pre-framing and reinforcing his position as a business that is higher up that triangle. He becomes a specialist, an authority, a celebrity even.

And people are seeing these messages, these reviews, these accreditations with no pitch or attempt of a sale included.

The vast majority of small businesses are ignorant of this and don't do it. Which is excellent news for you, because, I promise, if you give some thought to your positioning and do the few simple things I've talked about here, it will have a dramatic impact on the promotion and process parts of your equation when it comes to building your profits.

That's why this is so important, and why it's Engine One.

ENGINE TWO: WHAT OTHER PEOPLE SAY ABOUT YOU...

Consumer opinion now travels faster and further than ever before.

88% of people trust online reviews as much as a personal recommendation.

90% of people read business reviews online before they visit a business.

Customers are more likely to spend 31% more with a business with numerous high scoring reviews.

Social media search engines and countless online review sites form the medium by which traditional “word of mouth” is now broadcast globally, shared easily and never, ever forgotten.

I talk to business owners all the time who either assume that there’s nothing they can do about customer reviews or have given it no thought whatsoever.

They think that reviews “just happen”. If the business is well run and the product and service is good then positive reviews might follow. But things do go wrong sometimes and there are those customers who are never really satisfied. So, isn’t winning online customer reviews a bit like winning on the roulette table?

‘No’, is the short answer. There’s a lot you can do to get a lot of great reviews.

FACT:

Almost everybody reads online reviews, at least some of the time, and there are simple things that you can do to get more of the right reviews, in the right places, for your business.

And doing so will help and support your positioning, and will lead to more enquiries, more sales and more profit.

What other people say about you is many times more important than what you say about yourself!

The truth is consumers have access to a wide range of information and opinions about products, services, companies and individuals and we use these data sources to discover, evaluate and compare the things that we're interested in.

In this context, reviews are worth more than their face value.

What people say about a business online matters, obviously. But that they say anything at all matters even more.

You see, in the UK and Ireland, when we're looking for something online, most people go straight to Google, and the businesses we consider and look at are the ones that appear on the first page of the search results.

And reviews help you get on that first page. They can create visibility. Especially in smaller, local markets.

In truth, getting online reviews is one of the most effective and inexpensive search engine optimisation tactics you can implement.

We know of a physiotherapist who joined thebestof and two weeks later, after he got his first Google+ review he sent us an email that said:

"It's incredible. That single review has finally got me showing up on the front page of Google. I was never there before and I've had two calls today from people who found me that way."

Google wants to see signs of life in a business and a legitimate review on an authoritative third party review site is one of the most powerful signals that you can send to Google.

And the more reviews you have, the more visible your business becomes across the web, whether that's through better ranking and visibility on the search engines or more prominence on the review sites themselves.

In that regard, the collecting of 'testimonials' and displaying them on your own website is now, well and truly, a thing of the past. Oh sure, it's not unhelpful but it comes nowhere close to being helpful enough in terms of getting your sales and your profits to where you want them to be.

Reviews are where it's at. And for the switched on business owner, testimonials are dead.

A well-managed strategy that builds you a steady flow of positive reviews online, on the websites that matter most to your potential customers, is one of, if not the, most useful thing you can do.

Of course, it also supports your positioning – and it can be a LOT easier to make happen than many people realise.

COMMON MYTHS AND TRUTHS ABOUT REVIEWS.

MYTH #1: ONLY UNHAPPY CUSTOMERS BOTHER TO WRITE REVIEWS.

Customers have a wide variety of motivations for rating and reviewing the products and services they buy. Honestly, it runs quite deep into our psychology.

A recent academic study found that if posting a review is relatively easy, the review distribution tends to follow a "J-curve" with positive reviews outweighing negative reviews eight to one.

However, negative reviews are over-represented on review sites largely because disgruntled customers know that complaining publicly creates attention for them and pain for the business that "wronged" them.

Truth: Plenty of your happy customers will say great things about you if you ask them in the right way and make it really easy for them.

The value of this to your business in terms of visibility and reputation and positioning can be massive.

MYTH #2: CUSTOMERS ONLY CARE ABOUT THE NUMBER OF STARS.

A four or five-star rating on a review site can seem a very satisfying achievement for a business owner. But really, we should know better.

Customers who look to reviews for insight aren't stupid.

The majority of them actually read the reviews and consider the star-ratings in context. They're most likely to cast a critical eye on both the star-rating AND what the review says.

That means they probably view a blank or flimsy five-star review with lots of suspicion (and rightly so because fake reviews are all too common these days).

Fortunately, these same customers will also scrutinise negative reviews.

Truth: Customers consider star-ratings in context.

People know that very low ratings typically reflect just a single aspect of the customer experience.

MYTH #3: NEGATIVE REVIEWS WILL HURT MY REPUTATION.

Most of us appreciate constructive criticism – although we much prefer it to be given in private!

Negative reviews online, however, are not always constructive; and they're never private!

For business owners, getting a bad review can literally ruin your day. You find yourself getting angry at the reviewer, your staff, yourself. And you worry. A lot. You worry about the consequence of a bad review just sitting there.

The good news about bad reviews is that they can actually help your reputation.

They can help you correct issues that need correcting, and they can steer away the kinds of customers who might be a bad fit for your business.

They also allow you to demonstrate care and service by how you respond to the review.

Keep in mind that extremely positive and extremely negative reviews are never the most persuasive. A review that gushes about a particular restaurant might be read as the reviewer's self-administered pat on the back for his fine tastes. A review that rues over a shoddy trim job by an otherwise respectable lawn care service might be seen as a whinge by one of those people who is never satisfied.

The reality is that it's the diversity of voices and opinions that create authenticity and, ultimately, value in a business's online reputation.

When evaluating a business or a product, consumers want to hear from more than just its ranters and ravers. They triangulate on the truth from many points of view.

And if all this sounds like wishful thinking and theory, I promise you it isn't. There's plenty of research that corroborates the fact that readers of mixed reviews tend to form more positive judgements of a brand and business than those that are exposed to positive reviews alone.

Truth: All reviews can help your reputation.

Unless they completely overwhelm the conversation about a business, negative reviews create opportunities to build your reputation way more than they dismantle it. Providing you're paying attention and respond.

MYTH #4: THE MORE POSITIVE THE REVIEW THE BETTER.

Everybody likes praise and the more glowing it is the more we might think we outshine our competition, but in reality there's more to it than this.

Truth: Positive reviews are good, but substantive reviews are better.

To be meaningful, a review should relate a real story about how a customer experienced a particular product or service. It's the gritty detail that such reviews often highlight – and which you, as a business owner, may never have thought about – that make a real difference.

These details provide additional hooks to get customers in the door and to steer them towards what they're looking for.

It's reviews with substance that do the most for customers and therefore for the business under review. (Not to mention that richer reviews also make better search engine fodder).

MYTH #5: MY REPUTATION WILL TAKE CARE OF ITSELF.

No it won't.

If that's what you really think then you are stupid.

In this age of the customer, your reputation really matters and what other people say about you is way more important than what you say about yourself.

Just consider what we've discovered so far:

- Customers trust each other's opinions more than yours, or any form of advertising
- Everyone turns to customer reviews to help them make purchase decisions at some point
- Most customer reviews tend to be favourable
- Some negative reviews help a business look more authentic and provide a chance for it to- showcase its customer service with its response
- All reviews can help qualify customer leads and boost the visibility of a business

To repeat, online reviews have the potential to be the single most effective and rewarding marketing channel for small and medium size businesses. They get you seen online and they build your reputation.

Yet most business owners are doing nothing to foster and shape the reviews because they assume it's out of their hands.

They are unequivocally wrong and it's those that exploit this opportunity that will make the most progress in terms of their market positioning, their sales growth and their profits in the months and years ahead.

The prize is big. You have to do this.

And if you haven't got the time to do it yourself then you can take advantage of services like thebestof which does it all for you.

ENGINE THREE: FACEBOOK ADS

It's a fact that we have the ability, right now, to reach more people than ever before at any point in human history. And that we can do so for next to nothing.

But be honest with yourself. Are you getting enough new leads and new customers?

Enough sales?

Are you getting enough phone calls?

Does your demand exceed supply?

Are you able to acquire new customers AT WILL so that you are able to turn away business you don't want?

Is the answer YES? Or is the answer NO?

Listen, things are NOT going to somehow magically get better next week or next month or next year.

In fact, it's probably going to get worse. Until you fire the right engines.

Facebook Ads is a hugely powerful engine right now – even for B2B businesses. It can provide a steady stream of leads and enquiries and, crucially, Facebook traffic CAN be super-high quality.

If you can tap into the Facebook jet stream where your ads, your offer and your 'lookalike audience' is properly 'dialled in', then you can buy new customers AT WILL and you are no longer hostage to the limitations, strangulation and limited oxygen of your existing customer base and your under-powered, worn out, existing marketing engine.

But 99% of businesses haven't even tried Facebook Ads yet (which is good news for you!).

THE BAD NEWS though is that Facebook traffic prices are going up roughly three percent EVERY month.

That means three months from now, it will be 10% more.

That means six months from now, it will be 20% more.

Two years from now, it will be double.

That means that the longer you leave it before you try, the harder it will be to get Facebook Ads right; the more expensive it will become to do your testing and the more likely you are to miss out completely on what is currently the single most powerful media available to affordably get new leads and new customers.

FACT:

*99% of local businesses – including yours –
SHOULD be running Facebook Ads NOW.*

FACT:

*Most of them aren't – and won't –
which gives you a B-I-G advantage.*

There are three stages of running Facebook Ads.

Stage One is called ***'Sowing Your Seeds'.***

Stage Two is called ***'Pricking Out'.***

...and Stage Three we call ***'Fire Up the Quattro'.***



RULE NO. 1:

Never 'Fire up the Quattro without first sowing your seeds and then pricking out!



Now, there are three main components that impact the success of any Facebook Ad campaign.

1. Your audience – who you're showing the ad to.
2. The image or video that you're using in the ad.
3. Your copy – the words that you use.

Most people, when they try Facebook Ads for the first time, do it wrong. They do it the hard way.

They choose one super targeted audience.

e.g. Married men aged 35-45 who live in Walsall with an income of £60-£80,000 and an interest in Golden Retrievers and Weetabix (this is a real-life example!).

Then, they create one 'perfect' ad for that audience. They slave over the ad. They're like, ***"I'm going to use this picture because it's perfect and I'm going to write this copy..."*** and then they spend their entire ad budget testing that ad.

They set it live and sit there; ***"come on baby, come on baby,"*** willing their ad to work and when the response they get totally sucks and it doesn't make any money or generate any leads they decide that Facebook Ads doesn't work and they walk away.

BONKERS.

The reason it played out like that is because you tried to do it all yourself – and that's where people are going wrong because the trick is to stop trying to guess the perfect combination of audience to image to copy – and let Facebook do all the work.

You see, Facebook has spent tens of millions of dollars on their algorithm, that's the little computer programme that actually tells Facebook who to show your ads to, so when you tell Facebook that you're running an ad, and you want that ad to sell something, their algorithm, if given enough time, can actually go and look, and see all the people who are clicking, all the people who are reading, all the people who are buying, and they'll only show ads to those people.

Facebook **want** our ads to work, because they know that if our ads work – we'll buy some more!

The smart thing is to let Facebook's multi-gazillion dollar investment in that algorithm actually work for us.

To do that we need to understand how those three stages of ads work.

Remember, the sowing, the pricking out and then the firing up of the Quattro.

The way we do it right in the sowing seeds phases, instead of taking one little, tiny audience and running one ad to them, we choose multiple audiences.

Then, instead of showing those people just one ad, we show them ads with different images and different copy angles...

...and instead of spending all of our test budget on just one ad to one audience, we break it up.

Let me give you an example.

Let's say that we're selling a dance class (why not!) and so you think that people who follow Strictly Come Dancing is one audience that you want to test. After all, there are lots of them, they're interested in dancing and it might seem like a pretty good idea. (It's actually a pretty horrible idea because there's lots of people who watch Strictly and yet have zero interest in learning to dance themselves – but for this example let's roll with it!).

So now, instead of showing just one ad to those people, we're going to take five or six different images, some about Strictly and some that aren't, and we're going to come up with five or six different copy angles and then we're going to test different combinations of the images and the words so we might test as many as 20 or even 30 different combinations.



Then we do the same thing with a different audience, people who are interested in ballet, and what's going to happen is Facebook's algorithm is going to run all this stuff.

In simple terms, it's going to throw all these ads against the wall, but with some sort of scientific mathematical process, and at the end of the day, some of the stuff is going to work and some of it is not.

And we're going to look at the results and that leads us to the second stage, which is called, 'Pricking Out'.

As a child, I used to love helping my mum in her greenhouse with the pricking out each Spring. Pricking out is an essential part of propagating plants that are sown in seed trays. You have to **'prick-out'** the weak seedlings so that the strong ones have space to establish strong roots. Just like with your Facebook Ads.

So we take a look at the results. The click through rates, the conversions etc. and after the Facebook algorithm did all the work and we say, **"Okay, these worked well, these didn't. That's fine."**

Now our job is to take the ones that worked and expand them.

To **'Fire up the Quattro'**.

We start adding more to the budget for the ads that are already working.

In simple terms, we spent a little bit of money testing, we let Facebook tell us what worked, and now it's just time to scale those ads up.

This is exactly what we do in our office – and for our members of thebestof Walsall who ask us to run Facebook Ads for them.

We start very, very small, sowing seeds and pricking out and we only **'Fire up the Quattro'** when we have ads that are delivering a consistent profitable return.

The truth is that there are lots of your potential customers that you can reach via Facebook Ads. Its impact on your sales and your profits can be significant. IF you do it.

You can do it yourself; sow your seeds, prick out and only then, fire up the Quattro.

Or you can get someone to do it for you.

It doesn't matter how. But it matters that you do...

ENGINE FOUR: GOOGLE MY BUSINESS

In the UK & Ireland, only one search engine matters. Google.

We all use it and right now, today, within just a few miles of where you're sat reading this, people are searching online, on Google, for what you do.

'Google My Business' is designed to complement your existing website and give your business a public identity and presence that gets found and seen via Google Search. And it works.

Google are trying to streamline and make coherent the process of managing local business information, reviews and social interactions and it all resonates out of Google My Business.

Google My Business is completely free but despite this there are still millions of businesses that have not yet claimed their Google My Business listing and there are many, many more who, although they have claimed it, have done little or nothing to optimise it. Big mistake.

In simple terms, the more information you add to your Google My Business listing, the more frequent you will turn up on the front page of search results.

Done well, it ought to mean that you appear on the front page of Google to relevant people who are searching for what you've got, every single day.

Now whilst Google My Business won't, on its own, make you a millionaire, not doing it properly is the metaphorical equivalent of tying one arm behind your back whilst trying to get dressed in the morning.

It's bonkers to be trying to build a business, especially one that serves a relatively local or regional geography, without doing Google My Business properly.

When your listing is set up and done properly, you'll appear prominently not just on Google Search, but also on Google Maps so that you get found by people looking for what you do, and generate new enquiries and customers.

An example of a well-completed Google My Business listing is shown below. You can see that it incorporates photos, address, links to maps and directions, phone numbers, hours of opening, reviews, popular times that people visit etc.

It's a very rich source of information for local people
AND it takes up a big chunk of real estate on that
first page of the search results.

Your Google My Business **'engine'** sits congruently
alongside both your positioning 'engine' and your
reviews 'engine' and when you add them together,
the impact is multiplied.

Power plus traction.

No more stuck in the mud.

More customers. More money.
More pride. Less stress.

Having a fully optimised Google My Business listing
(key words there **"fully optimised"**!!) should
be as essential to any business as having a bank
account.

As my old football coach used to say:

"Simple things, done well, look good."

It's true on the football pitch and it's true in business.

Google My Business is a simple thing. And when it's
done well it makes you look good AND brings you
new enquiries.

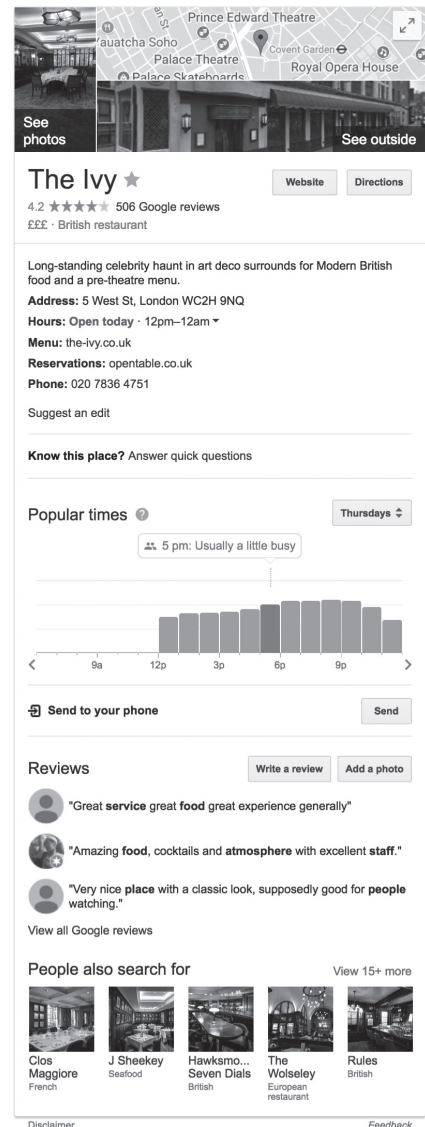
Statistically you are likely to be one of the 81% of
UK businesses that have either not yet claimed
their listing or, more likely, haven't yet completed it
properly and so you are not reaping the full benefits.

Fire up that engine.

Do it now. Today.

Or get an expert to do it for you.

It costs you nothing and can help you loads...



ENGINE FIVE: OLDIES BUT GOODIES...

Most small business advertising and marketing stinks.

Monstrous sums are wasted and opportunities lost every single day.

Most business owners are floundering around, uncertain of even the difference between 'good' marketing and 'bad' marketing.

There are plenty of so called 'experts', no doubt well-intentioned but sadly mis-informed, who'll tell you that EVERYTHING nowadays is about online and social. They are wrong.

As we've discovered with the previous four 'engines', online and social do have a big part to play for businesses that want to flourish and thrive, but they are not a panacea. In truth they are just 'media'.

Any successful Marketing Plan will have at it's core the triumvirate of:

1. Market

2. Message

3. Media

(in that order!)

Understanding exactly who your target market are and what your compelling message is are the first two steps.

Then it's a case of working out the best 'media' to convey the 'message' to the 'market'.

In that context, online and social are just 'media'.

We can't, in this book, come up with a specific marketing plan for your business, but we can give you these five underlying principles – the engines – that can move you to where you want to be.

The cartoon on this page is incredibly pertinent to the world we live in today.

Isn't it fascinating how congested and overflowing our email inboxes are today, yet how spartan our letterboxes have become?

For smart marketers this is a tremendous opportunity.

Putting physical pieces of paper in the hands of a potential consumer creates a lasting impression that is simply not available and not possible by viewing pages on a screen – or a phone!



Physical stuff that arrives through your door is much harder to ignore. It has no delete buttons.

61% of consumers say they enjoy checking their mail and receiving things in the post.

Contrast this with a fast growing percentage of people who express frustration and resentment at the volume of emails they receive.

The Royal Mail tell us that 98% of households retrieve their mail from the letterbox on the day it is delivered and 77% of people sort through it that same day.

A study by Epsilon says that 64% of consumers say they pay more attention to physical things they receive in the post than they do to email.

This cocktail of facts and figures leads you to only one place: ***having a physical presence in front of people is more likely to get their attention and more likely to be used than anything you can do electronically by email or social.***

Now I'm not saying that you should stop all those other things, but I am saying it's worth giving thought as to how you can get physical printed stuff into the homes and the hands of the people who are your potential customers in your area. Because it's a really great 'media' with which to reach your target market.

A carpet cleaner who is a thebestof member covers five counties in the heart of England and his single most powerful marketing pillar is the leaflets that he drops through doors every week.

He rotates across his area but the leaflets that are dropped each week provide him with a steady recurring flow of new enquiries and new customers.

It's a classic case of old traditional marketing spanking the new young online upstarts in terms of the returns that it generates.

And it's **ONLY** the return that it generates that matters.

There's no other reason to spend money on marketing than to get more money back in.

It's the understanding of this that led to the introduction of Our Recent mailer. It's delivered to tens of thousands of homes in each area and it's designed to hang on notice boards and be used as a reference point when people need someone great locally.

Works like a dream.

An international business growth expert we know well left the corporate world around 17 years ago and started out as an entrepreneur, the first business with which he had real big success, indeed, the first of his million pound businesses, was the establishment of a network of local community magazines.

More than 15 years on, hundreds of these magazines continue to flourish and many of them are the dominant marketing pillar for great local businesses. In essence, they are a manifestation of exactly what we've just been talking about; i.e. printed material delivered through doors, to the right people, with the right marketing message.

That's the fifth engine that you need.

SUMMARY

So there you have it. Five things that make ALL the difference.

Done together, properly, they can double, triple or quadruple your leads and enquiries.

They can have an exponential impact on your profit. On your lifestyle. On your life.

IF you do them.

I know how to use Facebook Ads to drown out your competitors.

I know how to find the passionate sweet spot in your market, to find that secret combination of images, headlines, offers and proof so that you chisel your way into markets that you didn't know you could penetrate.

I know how to position you appropriately;

How to get the steady flow of reviews that give people confidence and trust in you;

How to get you on the front page of Google most days;

And how to leverage the old-fashioned stuff, like print, that still works and gets your phone to ring.

These are the differences that make the difference.

The gap between success and failure, between getting the call or enquiry and not, is often tiny. Inches.

All you have to do is just be a little bit better than your competitors and you can dominate your market. You don't have to be world class to win gold. Just (a bit) better than the others.

But it's the gold medallists who gets the accolades and the endorsements. In business terms: the customers and the profits.

If you're silver or bronze... forget it. Olympics is over and you're back to scraping to get by.

"0.3 seconds and I would have won the gold. Instead of HIM." You're the only one who cares. The world has moved on. It was inches that made the difference.

I don't make the rules. I only tell you what they are.

As a business owner, if you're not in the leading pack, you make minimum wage.

Are you going to lead the pack?

Or are you content to stay mired in mediocrity?

The difference are the five 'engines' that you now know all about.

You have two choices, only two.

thebestof Walsall members get help with almost all of this stuff. Five engines implemented and ready to be fired up. For you.

Non-members don't.

It's up to you.

Thanks so much for taking the time to read through this Local Business Survival Guide.

Having done so, it shows that you are aware enough and serious enough to want to make changes to your business and your lifestyle - for the better!

And we want to help you do that.



thebestof is an award winning marketing business, set up in 2005 with one aim to represent the very best local businesses in every town in the UK.

thebestof Walsall work as your outsourced marketing team, dedicated to: raising your profile within the local community and helping your business to Get Found, generating enquiries for your business and differentiating you from your competitors to help you Get Noticed.

Through our platform of multimedia marketing opportunities, including offline and online tools, we help to connect your business to the local community.

We truly do care about all of our business members and we have a team here to support you.

*So give me and my team a call on **01922 430829** about moving your business to the next level*

Alex Murray
Sarah Rhodes

Alex Murray & Sarah Rhodes
thebestof Walsall



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