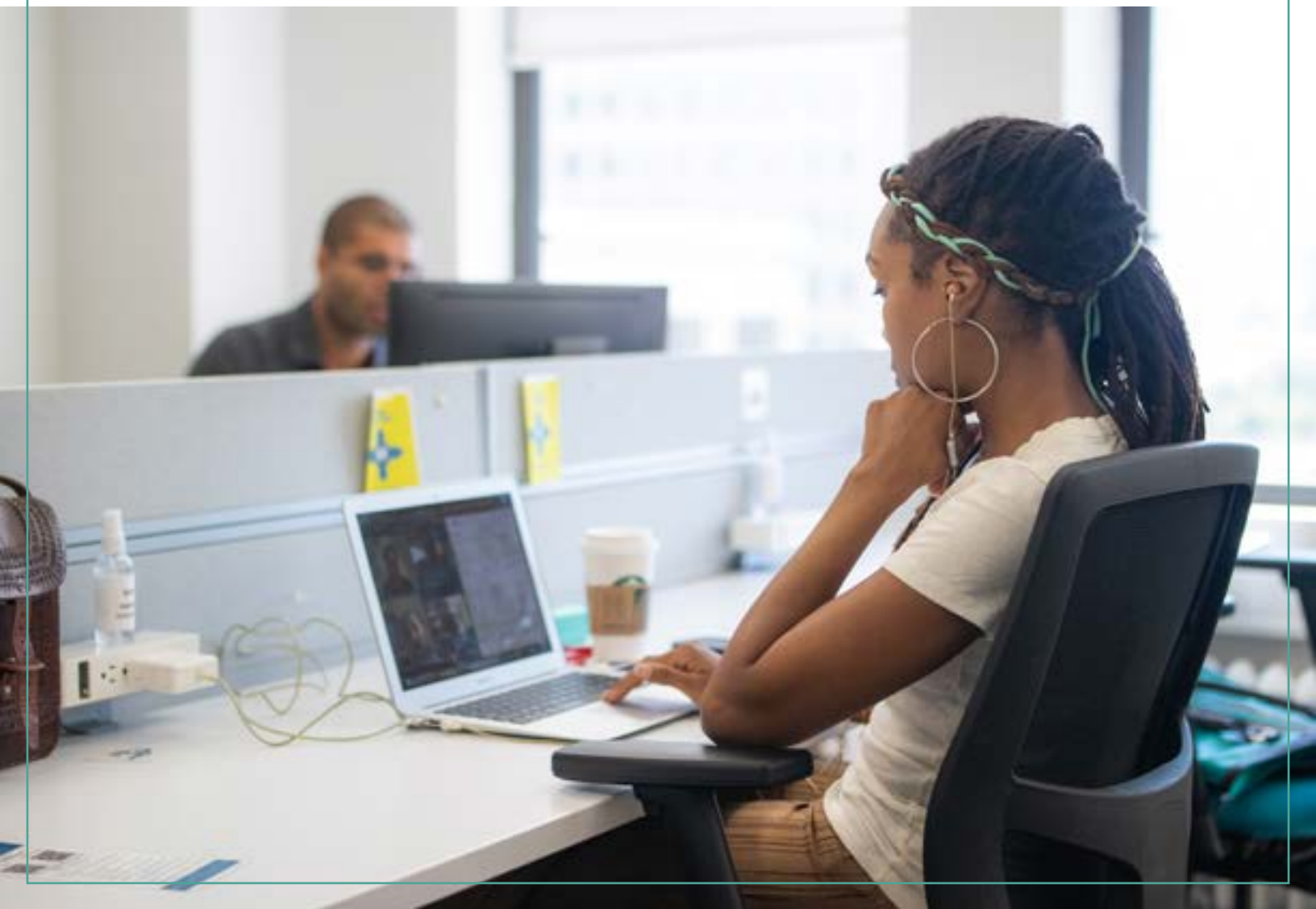# A Do-It-Yourself Digital Resource Guide for Detroit Small Businesses

Dear Business Owners

The COVID-19 pandemic has revealed how essential it is for businesses to be able to be found online. It has also made it more important than ever for businesses to be able to use technology to make things easier, faster, and more efficient.

Members of the NBI Worktable's Digital Divide committee heard from you that you did not have time to watch 30 hours of YouTube to learn how to use social media or incorporate technology in your business: you wanted a curated list of easy-to-follow resources that could help you go from tech-novice to tech-savvy NOW.

This guide is an attempt to answer that call.

In these pages you will find links to resources in most of the areas affecting micro-businesses. It begins with some resources to help business owners get access to the internet. From there, it moves in a progression one might follow when starting a business: establishing a company name and brand, selling online, and then incorporating software or apps into other business functions to save you time and money. Each section begins with testimonials from business owners like you who were willing to share their pain points or the solutions that worked for them. Where there are organizations within our ecosystem who specialize in offering support for a problem, we have listed them.

This guide is not intended to be read like a book. It is more like a collection of field notes and self-assessment quizzes, where we have captured the best digital resources we know of for business owners, sorted by topic. Please jump from section to section as you encounter challenges in your business.

With this first edition, we have undoubtedly missed some great resources. If you have additions or corrections, please email your edits to lmanigault@degc.org.

To keep up to date on information about digital tools and resources to help your business thrive, please visit www.detroitmeansbusiness.org.

Presented by

June 2022

Contents

Getting Online

> *"Connect 313 is a city-wide, data-driven digital inclusion strategy that brings countless organizations together with the bold goal to make Detroit a national model for digital inclusion and ensure all Detroiters can access the digital world and the opportunity it brings. Ensuring that small business owners and entrepreneurs have the digital resources they need to compete in a global economy and reach their aspirations for their businesses will remain a focus of the ecosystem."*
>
> Autumn Evans
> Operations Director, Connect 313
> Deputy Director of Digital Inclusion, City of Detroit
>
> **CONNECT 313**

How to Get Access to a Computer 💻

While some digital tools for small businesses can be accessed directly from a smartphone or tablet, sometimes website pages or features can only be seen on a computer. Here's where to go if you need access to a computer:

- ***Connect 313***
  Started in 2020, this City of Detroit initiative helps residents receive affordable devices, sign up for low-cost internet service, and upgrade their digital skills through year-round trainings.

- ***Libraries***
  The Detroit Public Library provides free wifi and workspaces in its 6 branches. To find the library closest to you, go to their website.

- ***Build Institute***
  Loans free computers to some businesses

How to Get Access to the Internet 📶

If you have a computer or device, but do not have internet service at your business, here are some places you can go to access free wifi:

- ***Community Development Organizations & Neighborhood Associations***: Grandmont Rosedale Development Corporation, Jefferson East, Inc. and some others offer free wifi to its small business members.

- **The *Equitable Internet Initiative* of the *Grace in Action Collectives***
  provide free wi-fi installations for residents of neighborhoods surrounding the Grace in Action. They also provide free workshops on internet use, Google Docs, and social media.

- ***U.S. Affordable Connectivity Program***
  Administered by the USAC, with oversight from the FCC, this program helps low-income households pay for internet services and connected devices.

- ***Coworking Spaces***
  Shared spaces that people rent to use by the day, week, or month so that they can have access to technology, amenities, and networking opportunities. Coworking spaces in the Detroit area that include wifi with rental (you must provide your own computer or device) (MDBBA, Bamboo, TechTown, Space Lab, WeWork, Build Institute)

- ***Wayne State University*** has a public wifi network (WSU-Public) for guests to connect.

- Most ***coffee shops*** offer free wi-fi with purchase. These include Detroit Sip (Livernois), The Gathering Coffee Co. (E. Grand Blvd), Narrow Way Cafe (Livernois), Great Lakes Coffee (Eastern Market), The Red Hook (Ferndale), Public Square Coffee Co. (Grandmont Rosedale).

Access to People Who Can Show You How to Use Technology

- **Connect 313**.
  This City initiative offers year-round trainings ranging from how to use a Chromebook and basic computer skills to how to do coding in Python, HTML, or Java.

- **Grace in Action Collectives**.
  Nonprofit group that provides digital training and access to cable.

- **Detroit Equitable Interest Initiative**.
  This program provides programming and training for Detroit residents to become "Digital Stewards," among other things.

- **Detroit Community Technology Project**.
  This program has trained 45 Digital Stewards across Detroit who offer community workshops and training to demystify technology.

- **Tech Town Ask an Expert Program.**
  Tech Town offers 25-minute sessions with experts in technology, websites, e-commerce, accounting, retail, and marketing.

- **Osborn Business Association**.
  This community development organization offers a pilot program that will include both in-person workshops on website design and management, social media marketing, and electronic payment systems. The program will also offer on-demand virtual trainings in capital readiness and credit building. For more information, email Paul Garrison at pgarrison@onaoba.org.

- **Jefferson East, Inc./University of Michigan Community Tech Worker project**.
  Six Community Tech Workers will provide 1:1 tech support onsite in the East Jefferson corridor beginning June 2022; some virtual appointments available will be available for business owners outside those five neighborhoods later in 2022. Email questions to DNEP-CTW-research@umich.edu.

- Build Institute Entrepreneurs-in-Residence or Masterclasses.
  Free office hours or short, intensive classes on a variety of subjects, including technology issues.

Access to Technology Training Videos

- **Tech Town.**
  Has an on-demand video series about videos on websites, ecommerce, marketing and social media.

- **Verizon Small Business Digital Ready**. This online curriculum helps small businesses go digital. Short instructional videos include topics like Search Engine Optimization (SEO), working remotely, and financial management.

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Establishing and Building a Brand

"As stewards of Detroit's UNESCO City of Design designation, Design Core believes strongly in the power of brand design to strengthen individual businesses and help preserve the overall historical and cultural identity of Detroit's commercial corridors and neighborhoods."

Bonnie Fahoome
Design Core Detroit

Choosing a Company Name

Your business' name signals to customers what your business stands for. It is often the first thing that potential customers will encounter. You want it to be memorable and distinctive.

Strategies for Choosing a Business Name
- Use a free online business name generating tool like Business Name Zone or Business Name Generator
- Experiment with different word combinations using a thesaurus (www.thesaurus.com). E.g., if you sell baked goods, think beyond "bakery" to options like confectionery, pastry shop, or patisserie
- Make up a new word using WordMerge or a fake name generator

Is this name already in use?
Before you buy the domain name and print out t-shirts, you might want to make sure your business name does not infringe upon any trademarks or have wide usage near you. To find out:
- ☐ Search U.S. Patent and Trademark Office database
- ☐ Search Existing patented names on Google
- ☐ Search the Michigan Department of Licensing & Regulatory Affairs corporations website

Are you thinking outside the box? Creative names can pique potential customers' interest by signaling that your business is unlike the others.

Conversations with Strangers (a simple, free way to test out different business names)
For a week, everywhere you go, while you are near people who are like your target customer, ask strangers for input. ("Hi, I have a small business and I'm trying to figure out if I have the right name. The name of my business is _____. What kind of business do you think it is? Knowing only the name, what assumptions would you make about it?") Write down the answers. What did you learn?

Changing Your Company's Name

"Change is inevitable, and that is both a challenge and an opportunity. A challenge to grow and leave behind that which isn't beneficial, and an opportunity to grow into a vision of the future. What started as Featherstone Moments was only the beginning, the catalyst for something else. Our mission, our team, our focus evolved. We couldn't leave our brand behind."

Juan Carlos Dueweke-Perez
Owner, Featherstone, on why Featherstone Moments became Featherstone Agency

When might you want to change your company name? (No matter how long you've been in business!)

- ☐ Name is not distinctive or no one can remember it (most common offender: company names with the initials of the founders)
- ☐ There's a competitor name that is similar that causes customer confusion
- ☐ Name is tied to geography and your business is expanding to a new market
- ☐ Your product/service offerings have changed
- ☐ Your tastes have changed
- ☐ Your business name is closely tied to a massive scandal, bankruptcy, or unflattering news event
- ☐ Your business goals changed and you want your name to reflect your new business identity

Examples of a business adopting a new name:

- ***Dunkin' Donuts → Dunkin***: Dunkin' Donuts wanted their company name to show that their company offered more than doughnuts and wanted to increase emphasis on non-doughnut items, such as coffee and sandwiches. As such, they dropped "Donuts" from their name to better reflect what their business has to offer.
- ***Featherstone Moments → Featherstone:*** The new brand better reflects the company's marketing and public relations services with expertise working with immigrant, BIPoC and LGBTQ-owned businesses.

For exercises in how to define your brand strategy and work with designers, download Design Core Detroit's free e-book, Design Guide: Neighborhood Business. Design Core also provides recurring opportunities to meet local designers for hire and build on your own design skills.

Additionally, University of Michigan students involved with the Detroit Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Project often take on naming and re-branding projects for free through semester-long engagements. To learn more, contact Aaron Jackson at dnepdetroit@umich.edu.

Creating a Logo �

Creating a Logo

Along with the business name, your company logo is one of the first things that your potential customers encounter about your business. Through a logo, you can visually communicate to your customers what your name alone can't communicate: the feel, concept, and values of your company. It also helps your customers to instantly identify your products.

Can You Say "YES" to all of these statements about your logo?

☐ My logo is visually pleasing.

☐ My logo is not confusing.

☐ My logo is legible in multiple formats (website, social media, signage, merchandise).

☐ My logo combines the right colors, typeface, proportion, and size.

☐ My logo reflects the values of my company.

☐ When I ask someone to recall my logo, they can remember what it looks like.

☐ My logo hints at what my business is about.

☐ My logo was not made from clip art.

☐ My logo reflects the core part of what my business does/sells now.

If not, it might be worth getting a second opinion about whether it's time to make a change.

Bookmark these design websites for help with logo creation:

- **Canva**. Free graphic design software that can be used to design logos, social media content, documents, etc. Offers free templates as well. Make sure you set up your brand colors & fonts!
- **Squoosh.app**. Free website used to resize images.
- **99designs**. Low-cost website where designers compete to design your logo through multiple versions with feedback from you.
- **Canny Creative**. Offers a step-by-step guide to create your own logo.

Bookmark these websites for free images that can be used on your website or social media (make sure you follow copyright and attribution rules!)

- pexels.com
- pixabay.com
- infogram.com (for creating infographics)
- storyblocks.com
- thenounproject.com

Storytelling

To truly connect to your customers, it is important to tell a story about your business. Telling a story helps to humanize your business, allowing customers to form emotional and personal connections to your business. Business stories tell customers that your business is more than an entity that makes a profit; it is an entity that creates value for employees and the greater communities. They communicate why your business should stay and your consumers should continue to support your business.

Acvitity: Rehearsing your brand story

Good story telling takes practice. Here are some questions business owners are often asked. It might be worth writing out answers to these and rehearsing saying them out loud (and including them on the "About Us" page of your website):

- How did your business start?
- What values does your business stand for?
- What does the business mean to you?
- What does the business mean to the greater community?
- What inspires you to keep your business going?

Advanced Level Communications: work with a design team to make a storytelling "kit" that includes stock language and images that are always approved for use when talking to potential customers or the media about your company.

PR pro tip: Know your audience! How would you change the language you use to communicate your business story to …

- Potential/current customers?
- Investors?
- Potential business partners?

How Strong is your Branding?

To further develop and define your brand, consider the following statements. If you can answer YES to these statements, you are on track to having a strong and well-defined brand.

- ☐ I have a strong sense of who my target customers are.
- ☐ I know what my target customers like, want, and need from my business.
- ☐ I am able to articulate my business's unique value proposition in the marketplace.
- ☐ I know the competitors I have in the marketplace
- ☐ My business consistently uses the same visual elements (logo, color palette, typeface, photography style, etc.) in our messaging across platforms.
- ☐ My business consistently uses the same tone in our messaging (ads, social media, blog posts, etc.).
- ☐ The customer experience consistently reflects who we are and how we want to be perceived as a company.
- ☐ I have a plan for managing and strengthening my brand.

To Learn More About How To Build A Strong Brand:

- "*Design Guide for Neighborhood Business*" by Design Core Detroit

- *Got Branding? with Tom Nixon of Harrington* - Podcast Episode 21.4 – SCORE Southeast Michigan

- "*A Beginner's Guide to Branding Your Business*" – CO by U.S. Chamber of Commerce – webinar - https://www.uschamber.com/co/grow/marketing/guide-to-business-branding

- "*The Definitive Guide to Branding*" – Olive & Co. – article - https://www.oliveandcompany.com/blog/branding

- More on branding and storytelling from the University of Michigan +Impact Studio for Local Business

- Additional ideas on how to create and tell your business story

Need 1:1 help? *Sign up for Free Advising*

- TechTown Ask an Expert - Meet for 25 minutes with an industry expert from TechTown's Professional Services Network.

- MI SBDC - Meet with a professional small business consultant.
- SCORE SEM - Meet with an experienced business mentor.

- Build Institute - Get free 1:1 coaching from an Entrepreneur-in-Residence.
- DNEP's Marketing or Ross School of Business classes at the University of Michigan - contact Aaron Jackson (awjack@umich.edu) for more information

Ready to hire someone to help?

Student interns can be a low-cost, valuable resource for getting recurring help. Consider reaching out to Wayne State, University of Detroit Mercy, or the University of Michigan to recruit one.

Design Core Detroit connects business owners to local, vetted branding professionals. Visit designcore.org to learn more.

Website Building

> "Rebrand Cities was able to take my business from an idea to a thriving small business by helping to create an exceptional website! The very day the website was launched, we were contacted by Pepsi Cola and able to secure a contract with them. To date, Believe 313 Staffing has been able to provide adequate job opportunities to thousands of applicants with ease with the use of our website."
>
> Mario Kelly on working with Rebrand Detroit
> Founder, Believe 313 Staffing

A website signals to potential and current customers that your business is legitimate and established. According to the Google Digital Essentials Guide, 70% of consumers agree that they expect all businesses, including small businesses, to have a website. In the 21st century economy, a website is a crucial promotional and marketing tool.

Building and maintaining a website can seem intimidating at first. But it is very doable. With the right knowledge and tools, you can build and manage an effective website for your business.

How to Get Started

1) Decide your website objective.
Is it a store, a place to share updates, or provide information to people who want to visit your storefront? How does your website contribute to your revenue or business goals?

2) Outline the pages you will want on your website.
Common pages include About us, Services/Products, Hours, Contact us/Feedback, Location. Consider what you want the customer to learn/do on each page.

3) Select your website platform and template.
More information on common platforms below. The template for your website should fall in line with your brand objectives.

4) Build your website.
Tutorials for how to do this are linked below.

5) Publish your website.
Double check your Search Engine Optimization settings, proofread everything, and ensure that all the links work. Link your website to your google business listing, social media, etc.

6) Update and maintain your website regularly.
Schedule a regular reminder to revisit your website and make any necessary changes. This should be simple if you selected the appropriate platform/website builder for your skillset.

7) Do user testing.
Can your customers find things quickly and easily? If not, revise.

What are the common platforms & when they might make sense for you? See:

- 10 Best Website Builders for Small Business: Grow in 2021
- Selling Online — +Impact Studio for Local Business (scroll down for website resources)

Popular Website Building Platforms

- *Wix* (Easy to use, good value, less design flexibility)

  Full Wix video tutorial

- *Squarespace* (More complicated; greater design flexibility; search engine optimization, and integration with social media for building your brand)

  Full Squarespace video tutorial

- *Shopify* - (Great for ecommerce; ideal if you use Shopify's inventory management system already)

  Full Shopify video tutorial

- *GoDaddy* - (Can be set up entirely using a mobile phone; affordable; quick to get started but restrictive to update later; not ideal for ecommerce)

  Full GoDaddy Video tutorial

- *Weebly* (Great value for money but not intuitive to build and maintain websites)

  Full Weebly video tutorial

Need 1:1 help?

Build Institute's Empower by GoDaddy program offers digital education and hands-on website building.

The Underdog Foundation has expanded to Detroit! Skilled volunteers with this organization will help you set up a new website and teach you to maintain it over a one year period for free.

Or, if Shopify is what your business needs, sign up for a new program sponsored by Shopify and the Detroit Pistons. New Shopify merchants receive a free 60 day trail and store build; owners learn about branding best practices and marketing strategies from the associated Shopify GO Growth program.

Setting up a website is a huge amount of work, but maintaining it is a weekly commitment. Schedule time each week to do website updates, or consider hiring someone to do this for you!

Learn more:

- Design Guide for Neighborhood Business – Design Core Detroit
- Digital Essentials Guide – Google
- Selling Online - University of Michigan DNEP +Impact Studio for Business
- Grow with Google: A guide to navigating your business through uncertain times – Google

Social Media

Social media is a digital platform where online users can connect. On social media, you can share messages, pictures, events, business information and products, and much more. According to the Google Digital Essentials Guide, over 70% of consumers use Google Search to research before they make a purchase, which means that they will not only look at your website but social media accounts to learn about your business. Social media accounts are often free, with options for paid upgrades to access additional features

Which social media platforms make sense for your business (if any)?

Largest demographic group of Facebook users is between the ages of 25 and 35 years. Recently, seniors are its fastest growing age range, while younger users have turned away from facebook.

42% of Twitter users are between 18 and 29 years old. Twitter is also popular with white collar workers.

Yelp's user base is evenly spread across different age ranges.

25-34 year olds represent the largest advertising audience on Instagram, followed by the 18-24 years group.

Half of the users are under 29 years old. Adult users have grown 5 times in past months.

What platform is best for what you are trying to post?

- Do you want to share long posts?

- Do you want to post quick and engaging pieces of information?

- Do you sell products or services?

- Do you want to post pictures?

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Are you a social media guru?

- ☐ I have claimed my [free Google Business profile](#).
- ☐ I have added my company logo, updated business hours, and photos to my free Google Business profile.
- ☐ I am active on social media platform(s) that I know my target customers are most likely to use.
- ☐ I have identified social media marketing goals as well as key performance indicators (KPIs) that will help me measure my success.
- ☐ I have a system in place to manage all of my company's social media pages.
- ☐ I have a social media person who posts.
- ☐ I have a social media calendar.
- ☐ I track my key performance indicators (KPIs).
- ☐ I use tools such as sproutsocial or Hootsuite to manage all of my company's social media pages and to track my key performance indicators (KPIs).

Social media can be time-consuming, as it invites continuous engagement with customers. If you don't have a communications staffer or a social media intern, you might consider using a social media management tool to pre-schedule posts. Over time, you can look at the analytics for your social media channels to learn what times, dates, and content types attract the most engagement, and schedule posts accordingly.

The most common social media management tools:

- *Unum* allows users to layout social media posts, schedule future posts, and gain insights. Commonly used for Instagram
- *Hootsuite* is a comprehensive social media management platform that offers social media monitoring and social media analytics
- *Later* offers social media streaming services to focus on visual scheduling, media management, marketing and analytics
- *Tweetdeck* allows viewing multiple twitter accounts at once, scheduling of tweets in advance, and building twitter connections
- *Buffer* allows scheduling posts on various social media platforms, such as Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram, in advance. Also provides social media analytics
- *Content Cal* provides services for creating, managing, and posting social media posts

Resources

- "[Design Guide for Neighborhood Business](#)" – Design Core Detroit
- [Digital Essentials Guide](#) – Google

Selling Online

> "I want to expand my customer base to include customers who cannot come to my store. I want to use the web to sell my goods online. I want to better understand the different web platforms I can use, and which is the best fit for me."
>
> Anonymous

The pandemic helped push e-commerce retail sales above $210 billion in the second quarter of 2020, an increase of over 30% from the previous quarter, according to Commerce Department data.

Small businesses can sell on existing platforms, or consider building their own E-commerce site. Existing platforms can be more simple to manage and are easier to attract new customers, but platforms often charge a percentage of sales. Building your own E-commerce site can be more affordable, but requires a higher level of tech savvy and requires you to drive traffic to your own taste.

Should you sell on an existing platform or build your own e-commerce site?

Key things to consider before you build your own e-commerce website:

Do you know how to build a website, or have someone who can do it for you?

Do you have someone who can do website updates for you quickly?

Do you have a point of sale system in place? *If yes, which website builders does it integrate with?*

Do you have an accounting system in place? *If yes, which website builders does it integrate with?*

Do you have someone who can serve a customer service role to answer customer questions and resolve issues?

Do you have the capacity to package and ship/deliver new customer orders at least every other day?

Do you know who your customers are, and do they shop online on independent websites?

Do you have a marketing plan that will help drive traffic to your own website?

Do you have a marketing budget that will help you test your marketing plan?

Have you done user testing on your website to ensure that your customers can navigate the site?

Do you have someone who can help you set up automations to email customers with abandoned shopping carts?

If you answer NO to any of these questions, you might want to start by selling on an existing high-traffic website.

Selling (non-food) products on existing platforms:

- Amazon (largest web platform, sells new and used products of all types)
- Etsy (handmade or unique items, art)
- Ebay (collectibles, consignment)
- Poshmark (clothes)
- Facebook Marketplace (used, or sometimes new items for sale locally)
- Instagram (beauty, fashion, lifestyle products)
- Mercari (consignment, collectibles)

Selling food products through third-party apps:

	DOORDASH	GRUBHUB	UBEREATS
No Start-Up Costs	✓	✓	✗
No Tablet Rental	✗	✓	✓
Adjustable Level of Marketing & Commision	✓	✓	✗
No Commission on Restaurant Website Orders	✗	✓	✗
Delivery Fees paid only by Customer	✓	✗	✗
No Commission on Pick-Up Orders	✗	✗	✓

5 Ways to Keep Your Restaurant Safe & Profitable - A website from the University of Michigan +Impact Studio for Local Business that compares traditional indoor dining, outdoor dining, curbside pickup, third party delivery apps, in-house delivery, and third party hybrid delivery options.

Delivery Service App Revenue Calculator. - An excel spreadsheet created by University of Michigan students to help business decide which third-party delivery service would be the most profitable for them.

Tips if you build your own e-commerce website:
- Remember to test it on multiple devices and browsers.
- Perform user testing. University of Michigan's UX Lab offers free personalized consultations for entrepreneurs seeking UX help.

Accounting

> *"One of the things we saw over and over throughout the pandemic is that business owners were not able to apply for grants or loans because they did not have accounting systems in place that would allow them to quickly generate the financial statements they needed. Through DNEP Free Accounting, we provide one-on-one support to help business owners with issues like this."*
>
> Aaron W. Jackson
> Program Manager, Detroit Neighborhood Entrepreneurs Project
> University of Michigan

Accounting Systems Can Help:
manage your books, cash flow, financial reports, invoices, and payment processing; keep track of expenses and profit. Options range from free to subscription-based tools.

How to decide which accounting software to use?
- Information about Common Accounting Software
- NerdWallet Comparison of Accounting Software

Popular Options:
- *Wave* (Only free option but has limited features. Ideal for businesses that only need to track income and expenses)

  Full video tutorial for Wave

  Comprehensive guide to using Wave
- *GoDaddy* (low-cost; best option for anyone who pays platform fees, eg., Amazon, etsy, PayPal, or eBay fees)
- *Freshbooks* (More affordable than Quickbooks with great mobile accessibility for those without computers)

  Full video tutorial of Freshbooks

  How to Get Started with Freshbooks

  Getting the most out of Freshbooks webinar
- *Quickbooks* (well known, lots of features like reporting, inventory, and time logging, but pricey)

  Full video tutorial of Quickbooks

Need free 1:1 support in preparing or reading financial statements, setting up/ maintaining good accounting practices, or other financial questions? Business students from the University of Michigan can help you with that for free. Sign up online for a free appointment with [DNEP Free Accounting](). Open to for-profits and non-profits throughout Michigan, year-round.

Need a bookkeeper? Detroit SCORE trains bookkeepers each year to work with local Detroit micro-enterprises. Email David Broner at [david.broner@scorevolunteer.org]() to request an updated list of recommended bookkeepers.

Need a CPA? [Accounting Aid Academy]() works with dozens of volunteer tax preparers and accountants each year to assist sole proprietors and non-profits. Accounting Aid also hosts workshops for business owners and provides assistance with financial statement preparation.

Point of Sale System

> "I want to accept credit cards, but I don't know how to go about choosing or setting up a point of sale system. How do I decide which point of sale system is right for me, and how do I go about setting it up?"
>
> Anonymous

Point of sale systems allow you to streamline your business operations, and different businesses are suited to different point of sale systems. By choosing a point of sale system that works for you, you can increase business efficiency and effectiveness.

How to decide: the DNEP +Impact Studio for Local Business provides information on how to choose a point of sale system that is right for you.

Popular Options:

- **Square** (best for high-volume, low-dollar transactions; easy to use)
- **Clover** (geared toward restaurants, requires equipment purchase)
- **Toast** (geared towards restaurants)
  Toast Set-up guide
- **Quickbooks** (for more established businesses; does not integrate with Shopify)

- **Lightspeed** (geared towards retail products)
  Lightspeed set up guide
  Lightspeed L Series App tutorial video
- **Vend** (geared towards retail shops)
  Vend set up guide
  Demo video

Email Communications

> "I want to boost sales by building stronger, longer customer relationships focused on repeat sales, but my social media ads don't reach all of my followers, even when I pay to boost them. How can I get customers to come back?"
>
> Anonymous

Automated emails are a terrific way to keep your happy customers coming back for more. By capturing email addresses, you can send regular sales promotions, tell customers about new products or changed hours, or reach out when they leave something in their shopping cart without purchasing.

Popular Email Options include:

- *Mailchimp* (affordable plans for smaller businesses with tons of features and email templates)
    - Mailchimp's guides and tutorials
    - Full video tutorial for Mailchimp
- *Constant Contact* (easy to use for nonmarketers, but with fewer features and more basic design templates)
    - Constant Contact's quickstart guides
    - Full video tutorial for Constant Contact
- *MailerLite* (Best free option but less user friendly than others)
    - MailerLite short video tutorials
    - Full video tutorial for MailerLite

Comparisons of popular email software:

- 6 Best Email Marketing Services for Small Business
- Email service finder survey
- Video comparison of popular options

Pricing plans differ by platform and will depend on how many subscribers you have and how many emails you plan to send per month.

Payroll

Organization is key for managing payroll effectively. Technology allows efficient storage and retrieval of information, so finding a good payroll app for you will enable you to juggle and keep track of your various payroll tasks in a more effective way.

Popular Options:
- *Gusto*
  - [How to install](#)
  - [How to operate](#)
- *Quickbooks*
  - [How to install desktop version](#)
  - [Step-by-step video](#)
- *Onpay*
  - [How to install](#)

Comparisons:
- [Payroll Management Software](#)
- [Best Payroll Apps](#)

Storing Your Business Data in the Cloud

Organization is key to successfully running a business. Running a business involves keeping track of a great amount of information, which is difficult to do when the information is stored on paper. How can I use cloud software to easily store and retrieve information?

Primary Tools Businesses Use for Online Data Storage:
- Google Drive
- Dropbox
- iCloud
- Amazon Drive

Resources
- [Comparison chart](#)
- [What is a clouding software guide](#)
- [9 Common Uses of Cloud Computing](#)

Project Management

Project management tools help you stay on top of to-do lists and calendars, track projects from start to finish, and divide/assign work among multiple people. Templates for recurring projects (like employee onboarding or regular events) can ease the burden of managing these projects.

There are dozens of options for project management software. Most offer great free plans, with paid integration to connect outside apps. Selecting the best option will depend largely on personal preference, so we recommend clicking around to see what works best for you and your team.

Popular Options:
- *Asana (most flexible for structuring varied projects; multiple project views like timeline, board, list, calendar, etc.)*
    - Asana user guide
    - Asana video tutorial for beginners
- *Trello (intuitive drag and drop interface; most visually appealing)*
    - Trello user guide
    - Trello video tutorial
- *Basecamp (less intuitive; best option for chatting with team in real time, storing files, and automating check-ins/meetings in one place)*
    - Basecamp how-to guides
    - How to use Basecamp video tutorial

Comparisons of Project Management Software:
- The best project management software for small businesses in 2021
- 6 Key Benefits of Using Microsoft Teams

Electronic Inventory Control System

Keeping meticulous track of inflow and outflow of products in your inventory is important for your business to be economically healthy. By using electronic inventory control system apps, you can organize and maintain your inventory in a more meticulous way.

Comparisons Charts and Tools:
- [Inventory Management Apps](#) - Nerd Wallet
- [Inventory Management Comparison](#)

Popular Options:
- ***Fishbowl*** *(integrates with Quickbooks)*
  - [How to install](#)
  - [Fishbowl Youtube Channel, including how-to's and tips](#)
- ***Netsuite***
  - [For more on info on how to use and install](#)
- ***Stockpile by Canvus*** *(Free)*
  - [Comprehensive how-to guide](#)

Task Automation Software

Task automation can reduce some of the operational burdens of running a small business. These services connect with your accounts on popular platforms like google sheets, gcal, dropbox, slack, trello, mailchimp, quickbooks, etc. Once your accounts are linked, you can create triggers that automate tasks and connect these platforms. For example, if you use paypal to accept payment from customers and use quickbooks for accounting, you could use task automation software to automatically create quickbooks invoices or receipts for paypal sales. There are countless automations that can be setup with a huge array of apps.

Popular Services:
- ***[Zapier](#)*** *(automate tasks across software platforms; designed for business purposes)*
  - [What can I automate?](#)
  - [Apps that integrate with Zapier](#)
  - [Zapier video courses](#)
- ***[Calendly](#)*** *(automate scheduling appointments and sending reminders)*
  - [Getting Started with Calendly](#)
  - [Video tutorial for Calendly](#)