

## **Tips in 10 | Grow Your Online Presence**

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Welcome to Tips in 10! I'm Gayle Schultz, Senior Digital Marketing Consultant at M&T Bank, here with tips to build and grow your business using some standard online tools.

First, let's take a quick look at what we'll call "your online presence." Using a few digital tools, you can make it quick and easy for customers and prospects to:

- Find you. Whether it's a physical address or website, you want people to be able to get in touch
- Understand what you do. What service you provide and how you're going to make their life better
- Learn more about your latest business offerings or current info
- Stay in touch or share exclusive offers via email

If you're thinking you're not sure which digital tools help you do any of these things, or that it's been a while since you updated anything sounding remotely like this, that's okay. With a few quick tips, updating your online presence should start to become part of your business fitness routine.

Let's start with how you can make it easier for customers to find you by following a few simple steps...

In a time when most folks are using their phones to find services in their area, you want to make sure your company name is coming up top of the list in some key places. Check out Google, search your business name. What comes up? Let's imagine that you own the 'Enhance Yourself' beauty salon...

- Are your company details (name, address, phone number) accurate?
- Are your business hours up-to-date?
- Can you link to your website from the listing?

Search engines, like Google, or ratings tools, like Yelp, will pull details from your website to fill in the blanks of their standard results "card." If your website is inaccurate, your search results will be as well.

To make sure results are up-to-date, you can "claim" your listing by registering with Google My Business. This will allow you to supply pertinent details, add your own photos, and generally make sure the details that are shared are in line with what you want people to know about the company. Make sure you are updating those details with Google My Business as frequently as you are elsewhere. For step-by-step directions on how to claim your business you can visit: [support.google.com](https://support.google.com).

For example, if you change store hours, it's important to update your online listings not just the sign on the door.

Next up, let's take a look at your website to ensure it clearly communicates what you do...

An online presence is a must these days. It doesn't need to be anything super fancy, but it does need to accurately depict your company and the product or service you provide. First impressions are important – even online!

As you are building – or updating – your website, make sure you are sharing four very important things:

- Name of your company
- What product or service your company provides
- Your physical address if you're a brick and mortar
- Your store hours

Take a look at the 'M PC Services' About Us page. Does it contain the four components we just talked about? What could the company include to make their page even more informational for prospective clients?

In addition to claiming your Google listing, keeping your website up-to-date ensures that search engines are sharing accurate details to those out in the Internet looking for something like the service you provide.

Up next, we've got social media – let's dive in to how you can keep your followers active and engaged...

Social media is a great way to share more than just the pertinent details you've included on your website. This is really your opportunity to share your business personality. You can:

- Talk about your product or service – if there's something unique about how you build your product, like a cool cake design or a new service, like home delivery of prepared balanced meals – let people know!
- You can also promote current specials – like buy-one-get one sales, or limited quantity product offers; include ways customers can take advantage of the deal, and emphasize that you want to make sure that your customers don't miss out
- You also interact with comments made about your posts. Show followers how you treat your customers – give a glimpse of what they can expect to experience by utilizing your services. If a customer asks a question on social media, answer them as if they were face-to-face in your shop.

When you're actively posting on a platform, you want to make sure the business details you include, like your web address and current promo links are current. If someone finds a particular post engaging and wants to stop at your shop – make sure they have the right information to get there!

Another cool feature that you can use on most social platforms is the pinning feature. This allows you to keep relevant details at the top of your feed, and by the way, "feed" is just a fancy way of saying "long list of messages," but this could be your current store hours, in-stock items, other things that are important for someone to read before they get into the details of your feed.

You want to make sure that what you're sharing is consistent across all of your social platforms, as well as your website. If you're not already, consider incorporating your social feed right into your website! Depending on the platform you use to build and host the site, there are different options to bring that feed on to the page, many times without requiring you do any additional updates. Just keep posting to your social platforms!

Finally, let's talk about e-mail and how you can use it to keep your customers in the loop on developments with your product or service...

Similar to using your website and social media to make people aware of the new cool thing you're doing, use email marketing as well to spread the word. Promotions, new products, store hours updates, anything that you would use social media to share details of, could be a message to your email list.

It's important to note that customers and prospects provide you with their email address with the understanding you will be emailing them. This is NOT bugging them, they asked *YOU* to send *THEM* information. If you're having a special sale, I'd expect customers to be upset if you didn't send them an email!

If you're interested in growing your email list, consider adding a "sign up" message or pop-up on your website.

So – key takeaways from today's chat:

- Make sure customers and prospects can find you by claiming and updating your search engine results like "Google My Business"
- Maintain your website site and make it clear – this is who I am and this is what my business can do for you
- Use social media to share your latest business offerings, specials or other important details
- Use email marketing to do the same – those people ASKED to hear from you!

Thank you for taking time out of your day to listen to this episode of Tips in 10. I hope you found it helpful and I wish you all success in maintaining your online presence.

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