



# 10 Proven Tips to Authentically Market Your Boutique Online

@NINAPEREZDOTCOM

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Owning a retail store has probably been the biggest challenge of your professional career, am I right? As an entrepreneur and owner, you wear all the hats and your time is precious. It seems nearly impossible to keep up with ever changing marketing strategies like social media, email, content creation, and on and on. But I know that you also know—because I've heard it many times from my shop owner clients—that understanding those things and how they work to increase foot traffic into your store is critical to your success.

We are living in a moment when that old adage of “location, location, location” no longer applies. How customers find you has gone from walk-by traffic to online traffic. First they find you online, then they come in. If customers can't find you, how will they buy from you? And how is it that so many independent boutiques are having success when so many others are struggling?

The pandemic notwithstanding, it's easy to say that online shopping is the problem. That people aren't shopping in stores anymore. Unfortunately, or fortunately depending on how you look at it, the numbers don't support that theory. According to DigitalCommerce360, ecommerce represented 21.3% of total retail sales in 2020. And as Steven Dennis, a strategic advisor and writer on retail innovation and the future of shopping says, “... thousands of new stores open every year.”

The bigger issue is that many retailers, especially the ones who've been in business for a long time, are doing the same thing they've been doing for years and it isn't working anymore. Today you must have a presence everywhere the customer is. For you that means having a shoppable website, being active on social media platforms, and email. She will shop where she wants when she wants. She'll want to be loyal to her favorite shops, but at her convenience.

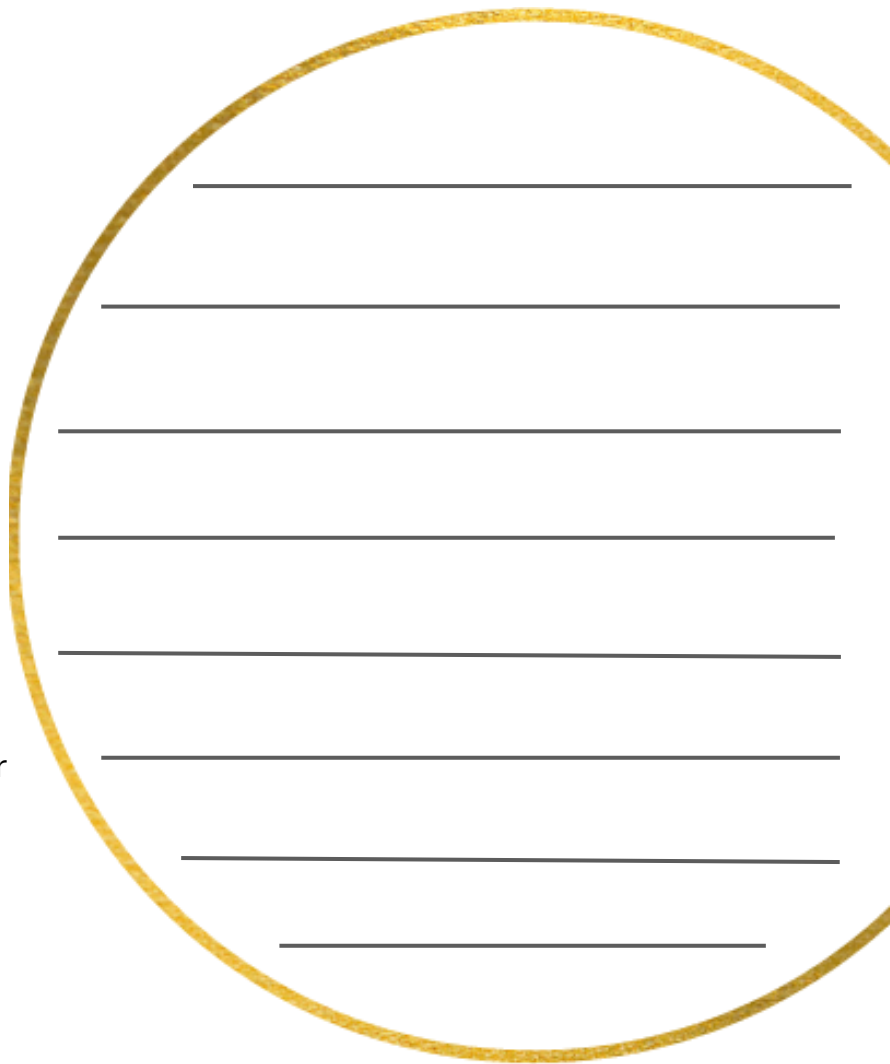
If 2020 taught us anything, you can't put this off any longer. The time to learn and do is now. Look, you have the grit and guts it takes to learn and do something new. How do I know? Because you did so when you opened your boutique. Retail is a complex beast and if you can figure that out, you'll have no problem figuring this out. It'll take time and patience with yourself, but YOU CAN DO THIS.

If you're saying to yourself that you don't have the time, I'll share with you what a previous mentor of mine once said and sticks with me today: “We make time for the things that are important to us. When you say 'I don't have time for this', replace that statement with '[This] is not important enough.’” Ouch, right? Gets me every time.

The fact that you downloaded this Checklist means that you're ready to take your marketing to the next level. Start here with these 10 steps to understand the cycle of marketing your business online. Some of this might be a refresher or maybe all of it is completely new to you. Either way, do the steps and don't give up. Send me an email if you get stuck. I got you!

# 10 Tips to Market Your Boutique Online

**1** Be clear about the **outcomes** you desire. What is your goal? For example: to build your email list, bring in new customers, bring in existing customers more often, promote events, sales, and so on. For most brick and mortar stores, the goal is to increase foot traffic, sales and to grow your email list. Given those goals, your content will focus on the reasons someone should visit your store. Some reasons might include fabulous new arrivals, an event, a sale or promotion, or to redeem a coupon you gave for signing up for your email list. In the spaces here, fill in some reasons particular to your business or industry that would compel people to visit and what your initial goals are.



A large decorative circle with a gold border, containing ten horizontal lines for writing, positioned to the right of the first tip's text.

**2** You need a website. A Facebook business page, while necessary, doesn't replace a website. Your website is where people will go to sign up for your email list. to learn more about your company and the products you carry, to purchase products, and find any other information YOU want them to have. Once they're on your website, you have a captive audience. The experience of your store brand, your vibe, starts here. It's simpler than ever to create a professional looking website. If you don't already have one, consider some of these platforms: Weebly, Wix, Shopify, and Wordpress. Most have trial periods so you can try them out and choose the one that's simplest for you. You may decide to hire someone to help you, but you should still have a basic understanding of what it entails so you know if you're being charged fairly.



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Build your list. Your email list is the life force of your business. The rules keep changing on social media and it seems like less and less followers see your content. Even if someone doesn't open your email, they still see your store's name in their inbox. The seed is still planted. That's 100% views as opposed to 3-4% on social media. When people land on your website, make sure it's crystal clear where they sign up for your email list. Ideally you'll have more than one location where they may do so. Add a pop up window if you don't already have one.

One successful strategy is to give something to your prospect in exchange for their email—much like this Checklist you received for signing up for mine. Many retailers give a discount. Whatever you give, be specific. For example: 20% off one regular- priced item. Without the qualifier “one regular priced item”, you might end up giving 20% off an entire purchase when you didn't intend to!

Once you've decided on your gift, make sure that the offer is stated on your website wherever your email sign up field is located and in your pop up.

Here are a few examples of great pop ups that reflect the personality of those businesses. Wait a few seconds for the pop up window:

<https://shop-belljar.com>

<https://ninaperezshowroom.com>

<https://www.chrislovesjulia.com/>

Jot down some ideas of what your pop up will say and look like. And some ideas for what you'll give in exchange for an email.

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**IMPORTANT:** When someone hands over their closely-held email address, it's because **THEY WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU.** Don't worry about “bothering them”, or whether they read your email. The important thing is to keep in contact and build that relationship. Shoot for sending an email at least once per week. Wondering what you'll say? I'll cover that in #8 below.



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When using social media to build your email list, make sure you have a “call-to-action”, or CTA, in your posts and in your profile bio that lead people to your website or landing page where they can sign up for your email list and/or buy your products. In other words, tell them about your offer and how to get it.

Be sure to have a reliable and easy-for-you-to-use email service like Constant Contact or MailChimp. This is where the new emails will be collected and where you can set up an auto-respond message that will welcome your new list member and deliver the fabulous freebie you promised.

LET'S  
GET  
SOCIAL

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Determine which social media platforms are best for your business. Hint: It's the one(s) your customer uses the most. As a brick and mortar retailer, you're probably selling some kind of product whether it's coffee, clothes, or computers. The ideal social media platforms at this time are Instagram, Facebook and TikTok. They have the most daily users and continue to rapidly grow. People use these platforms the most to find new products and places to visit. If you're just starting out, consider starting with one platform. Once you've built momentum, add another!

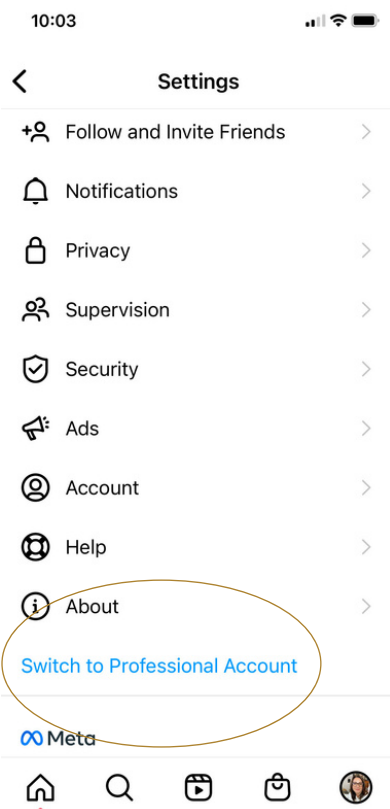


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Set up your Facebook and Instagram accounts as business accounts. By doing this, you unlock many tools you'll need like Insights—to see how viewers are engaging with your content and page— and the ability to show contact info and a physical address so people can contact you or get directions from the app.

Start by creating a Facebook page for your business from your personal Facebook account. When you're on your Facebook page, look at the top bar on the right side. You'll see four bubbles. Select the one with 9 dots inside and you'll see a drop down menu. Select "Page" from the right hand column under "Create" and follow the instructions from there. Once you've created a Facebook page for your business, open Instagram and create an Instagram business account, as well. For specific Instagram instructions, see my [blog post](#). To switch to a business account, tap on the three stacked lines in the top right corner of your screen, select Settings, then select "Switch to a Business Account". It will ask you to link to a business Facebook page. Go ahead and link it to the Facebook business page you just created. This way, you can post to both platforms at once, if desired.



Instagram Settings

Another benefit of linking your accounts is that you can use Facebook's Messenger from your desktop to view the activity on both your FB and IG accounts. Most importantly, you can reply to comments. Replying to comments in a timely manner builds rapport with the person commenting and ranks you higher in the algorithm.





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Have a realistic goal of how often you can post. Ideally, you want to work up to 5-6 times per week or once a day per platform whether it's a post, a live video, or a story. But if you're starting from zero, it's going to stress you out to come up with that many posts weekly. So start with something doable like 3 times per week. Whatever schedule you choose, **be consistent**. If you plan ahead, you may well be able to do more than you think.

Creating a content calendar will help you stay focused and on schedule. A content calendar is a document you can create (in something like excel, for example) where you plan out what you'll be promoting in your social media and email for the coming week or month.

For example, if you have an event on the third Saturday of the month, you know you'll want to start promoting it in the beginning of that week. When looking at your calendar, plug in the events, promotions, or holidays that you know are coming up or are relevant to your business.

Then consider how often you receive new merchandise. New Arrivals is a great reason to communicate with your audience and mailing list! Perhaps you'll promote new arrivals as Fall Must Haves or Fall Capsule Wardrobe. Or is it summer and you'll be talking about packing lists for beach vacays?

Then there's all the other fun stuff like staff or customers wearing or using your products, National Day of (fill in the blank) which you can find [here](#), funny or inspiring quotes, or cross promos like yummy coffee from a local or neighboring business. Draft or create several posts in advance. This is called batching. Pick a day when you take photos of customers or staff or a day you do flat lays. Then set aside time to prep the photos and plug them into a scheduler like Planoly, or Later, or use Creator Studio in Facebook to house and schedule the posts. You can also create your emails in advance and schedule them inside the platform you use like Mailchimp, Constant Contact, or the like. The more you can get done at one time alleviates the daily stress of "What do I post today?"

What

Do I

Post

Today?





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Be a student of the platform. Learn to maximize all the functions and features available on your social media platforms particularly the ones the platforms are prioritizing. With the massive rise of TikTok, Instagram and Facebook added a new feature called Reels. It functions just like TikTok. As of this writing, Reels get the most Reach particularly to new (to you) viewers. Outside of Reels, Facebook Lives and Instagram Stories get the 2nd most views on those platforms. Stories get 500 million daily views. When it comes to Video, think of your social media as your TV station. What could you talk about weekly? Seasonal trends, new arrivals, new flavors, how to wear it...?

To learn 3 important tips for creating video content, [click here](#).

In the space here, brainstorm at least 10- 15 ideas for topics for a weekly video.

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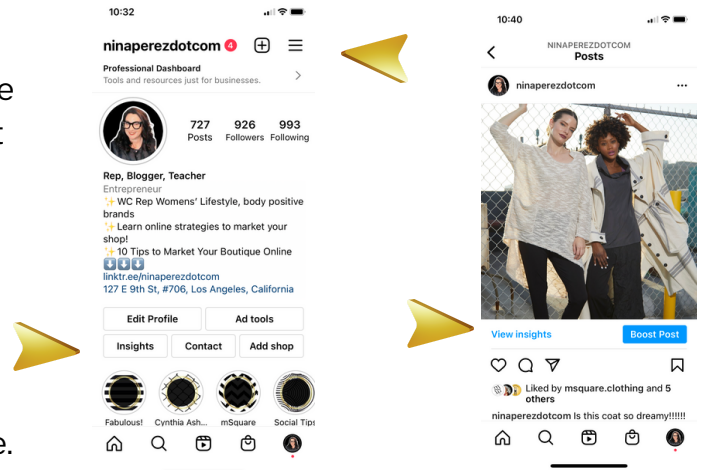
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# 10 Tips to Market Your Boutique Online

**10** Use Insights to analyze the results (and successes!) of your social media activity and adjust your strategy as needed. There you'll see who your audience is, what they like, comment and click on, when they're consuming your content, and more.



You can find your insights on Instagram:

- By selecting Insights from your Profile page.
- By clicking the three stacked lines in the upper right corner, and selecting "Insights".
- Or click on one of your posts and select Insights in the lower left.

On Facebook on the desktop, go to your business page and you'll find insights in the left column. Just scroll down a little and you'll see it.

On mobile Facebook, go to your business page, click on the bubble that says "Overview", scroll down to Insights.

In Insights you'll see all kinds of analytics about your posts, your engagement, and your followers.

**IMPORTANT:** It's easy to get sucked into a post or email's likes views, open rates, etc. You don't have to live and die by those stats. It's good information, but it's not the whole picture. **THE MOST IMPORTANT** thing is that you keep showing up and driving people to your website to sign up for your email list so they keep coming in to buy your products.

In the spaces below, jot down the number of followers on Instagram you have and the number of Likes on your Facebook as a starting point. As you consistently engage on social check in 3-6 months to see if those numbers go up. You don't need hundreds of thousands of followers. You need the right followers who love what you do and what you have to offer.



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I hope that by the time you've implemented these 10 tips you feel empowered by having created a solid foundation for your shop in social media and feel more confident in participating in it. Social media is a process that involves continual adjustment for beginners and experts alike. It's a long game. So as I mentioned in the beginning, be patient with yourself. And feel free to reach out to me via Direct Message (DM) in Instagram, Facebook Messenger, or email with any questions you have as you integrate these 10 tips into your marketing strategy. As my favorite motivational speaker, author, and online mentor Marie Forleo says, "It's about progress, not perfection."

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As an independent sales rep, I've worked with hundreds of retailers over the last 20 years and generated millions in sales for the vendors I've represented. In the last several years, I've taught dozens of retailers the fundamental strategies of online marketing for brick and mortar businesses and helped them grow their following and their revenue.

Be sure to Follow and Like me on Instagram and Facebook. Search for @ninaperezdotcom on both.

