

Small Business Decision Makers: Not Enough Time for Growth-Related Tasks

One third of Great Britain small businesses still not utilising a website

LONDON--([BUSINESS WIRE](#))--In honor of the U.K.'s first-ever [Small Business Saturday](#), taking place on 7 December, [Constant Contact@. Inc.](#) (NASDAQ: CTCT) has issued the results of an online survey to identify small businesses marketing pain points. The majority of small business decision makers surveyed report allotting only a small amount of time on tasks that could improve their business' future outlook and pave the way for growth. Only eight per cent of the respondents' time is spent on marketing/promotions, eight per cent on technology, and seven per cent on business planning.*

Growth is one of the most important factors leading to small business success, evident by the fact that 75 per cent of small businesses pointed to finding new customers as a top concern in a recent [survey](#). So why aren't they spending more time focusing on it? It could be that they simply don't have enough time left in the day. Tasks getting the most attention relate directly to the day-to-day maintenance of their business*:

- 20 per cent of time per month is spent on operations
- 19 per cent of time is spent on customer service
- 16 per cent of time is used handling accounting/finance of the business
- 13 per cent of time is spent on sales

"Often, small business decision makers have to do it all—they act as operations manager, customer service representative, head of finance and more for their organisation," said Tamsin Fox-Davies, UK development director at Constant Contact. "So it is not surprising that the tasks required for day-to-day maintenance of their business take priority, possibly leaving beneficial growth-related activities pushed to the bottom of the to-do list."

Slow adoption curve

Small businesses in Great Britain appear to be slow to adopt marketing technologies designed to grow their businesses—not surprising given they are only allotting eight per cent of their time to marketing overall. The data shows low adoption in various marketing activities across the board:

- Website - 68 per cent
- Social media marketing - 29 per cent
- Search engine optimisation (SEO) - 28 per cent
- Local print adverts - 17 per cent
- Email promotional offers - 11 per cent
- TV/radio adverts - 3 per cent

Perhaps most surprising is that one third of small businesses in Great Britain do not have a website for marketing, with only 68% saying that they use one. Time again may be the culprit, with 29 per cent saying they wish they had time to focus on using a website to market their business.

"Those marketing activities small businesses wish they had the time for are also some of the more highly outsourced activities reported in the survey," said Fox-Davies. "However, there is still a disconnect between those with a preference to outsource and those actually doing it."

Of those small businesses participating in each of the following activities, here is who they reported primarily responsible for ongoing execution/maintenance:

In House

Outsource

Prefer to Outsource*

| | | | |
|------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Website | 66 per cent | 33 per cent | 29 per cent |
| SEO | 56 per cent | 44 per cent | 38 per cent |
| Local print adverts | 74 per cent | 25 per cent | 27 per cent |
| Online banner adverts | 76 per cent | 24 per cent | 25 per cent |
| Social media marketing | 93 per cent | 6 per cent | 14 per cent |

*Results from same pool of respondents (small businesses who participate in the activity) but separately asked question.

Perceived barriers preventing outsourcing

Why are small businesses not primarily outsourcing these marketing responsibilities? Affordability is a barrier for many who primarily conduct each of the marketing activities in house: 28 per cent report they cannot afford to outsource local print adverts, 23 per cent report not being able to afford to outsource SEO, and 22 per cent report not having the monetary means to outsource social media marketing. Many expressed the belief that they have the skills internally to handle certain tasks. This was given as a reason for not primarily outsourcing by 60 per cent for online/banner adverts, 65 per cent for SEO, and 61 per cent for social media marketing. However, having the skills internally does not always mean having the time.

“What we’re seeing is that time-starved small businesses understand the value of various marketing activities but simply don’t have the bandwidth to take on everything they’d like to do,” said Fox-Davies. “They need to reach the realisation that time is money and outsourcing can be a smart option. Constant Contact’s 400-plus UK-based small business marketing consultants support many of our customers with marketing resources, and they report that SMEs who bite the bullet and hire a consultant soon appreciate having back those precious hours in their day.”

For more information on Constant Contact’s network of marketing consultants, visit <http://www.constantcontact.com/partners/solution-providers.jsp>.

About the Survey

All figures, unless otherwise stated, are from YouGov Plc. Total sample size was 1,007 Small Business Decision Makers (i.e. from businesses with less than 50 employees). Fieldwork was undertaken between 20 September - 1 October 2013. The survey was carried out online.

*Mean calculations have been conducted by Constant Contact and are based on the YouGov data.

About Constant Contact®, Inc.

[Constant Contact](#) wrote the book on Engagement Marketing™ – the new marketing success formula that helps small organisations create and grow customer relationships in today’s socially connected world. More than half a million small businesses, nonprofits and associations worldwide use the company’s online marketing tools to generate new customers, repeat business, and referrals through email marketing, social media marketing, event marketing, local deals, digital storefronts, and online surveys. Only Constant Contact offers the proven combination of affordable tools and free KnowHow®, including local seminars, personal coaching and award-winning product support. The company further supports small organisations through its extensive network of consultants/resellers, technology providers, franchises and national associations.

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