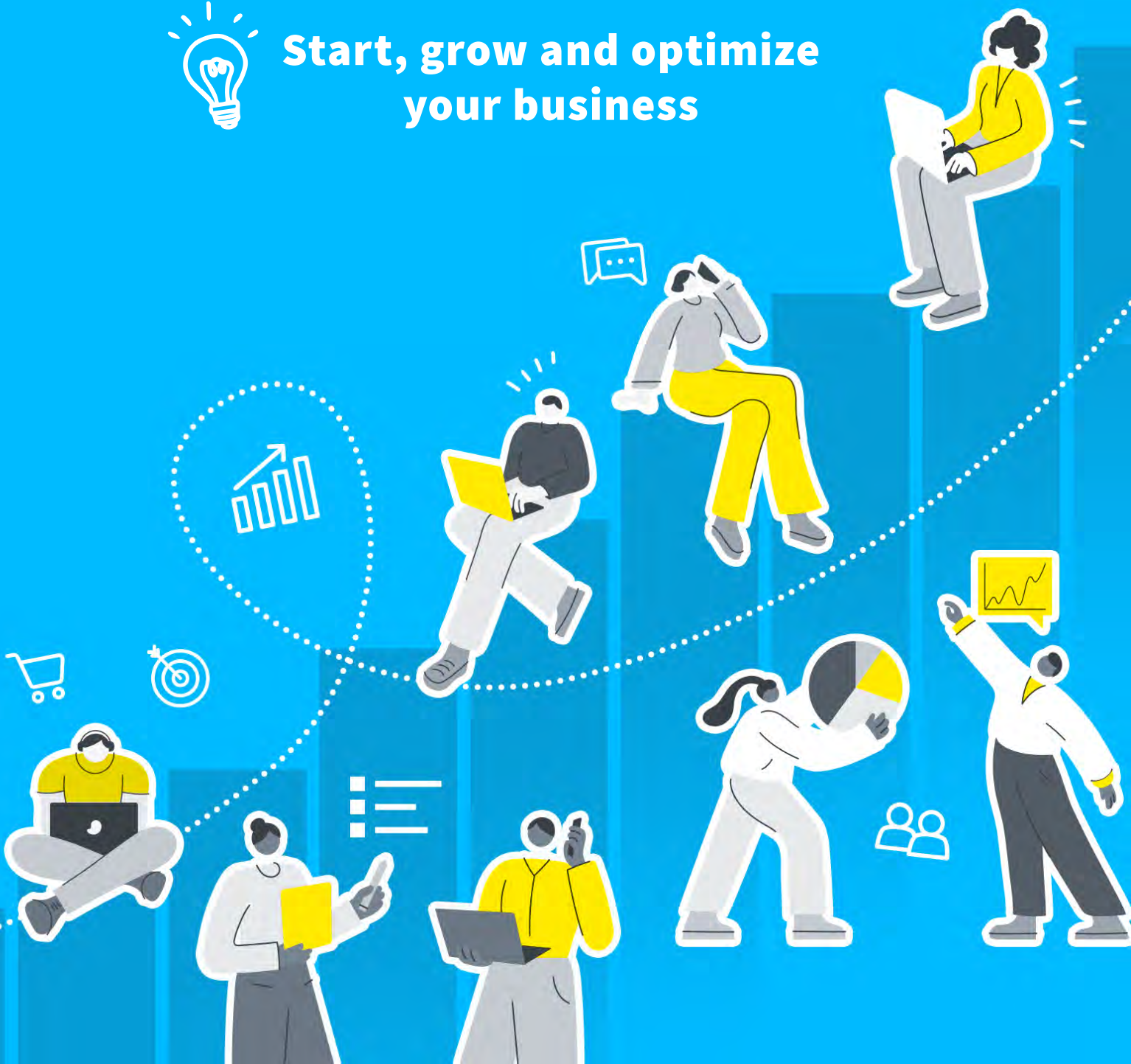




# 20 experts on running your business online in 2021



Start, grow and optimize  
your business



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# Introduction

Let us begin by saying congratulations! You're motivated and ready to successfully evolve your business online during one of the most challenging and turbulent years by far. With the global COVID-19 pandemic and general economic lockdown around the world, the business landscape went through a series of drastic changes. These changes are still shifting every day and will shape trends and dictate the future of online business. That's why being prepared, informed, and flexible is so important. Now the big question every business professional is asking themselves is – “What's next?”



GetResponse gathered together 20 industry experts, digital consultants, entrepreneurs, and online marketers from all over the world to share their top practical strategies on starting and running an online business in 2021. We asked each of them five questions to help us define the current business landscape, its challenges and opportunities, along with predictions for the future.

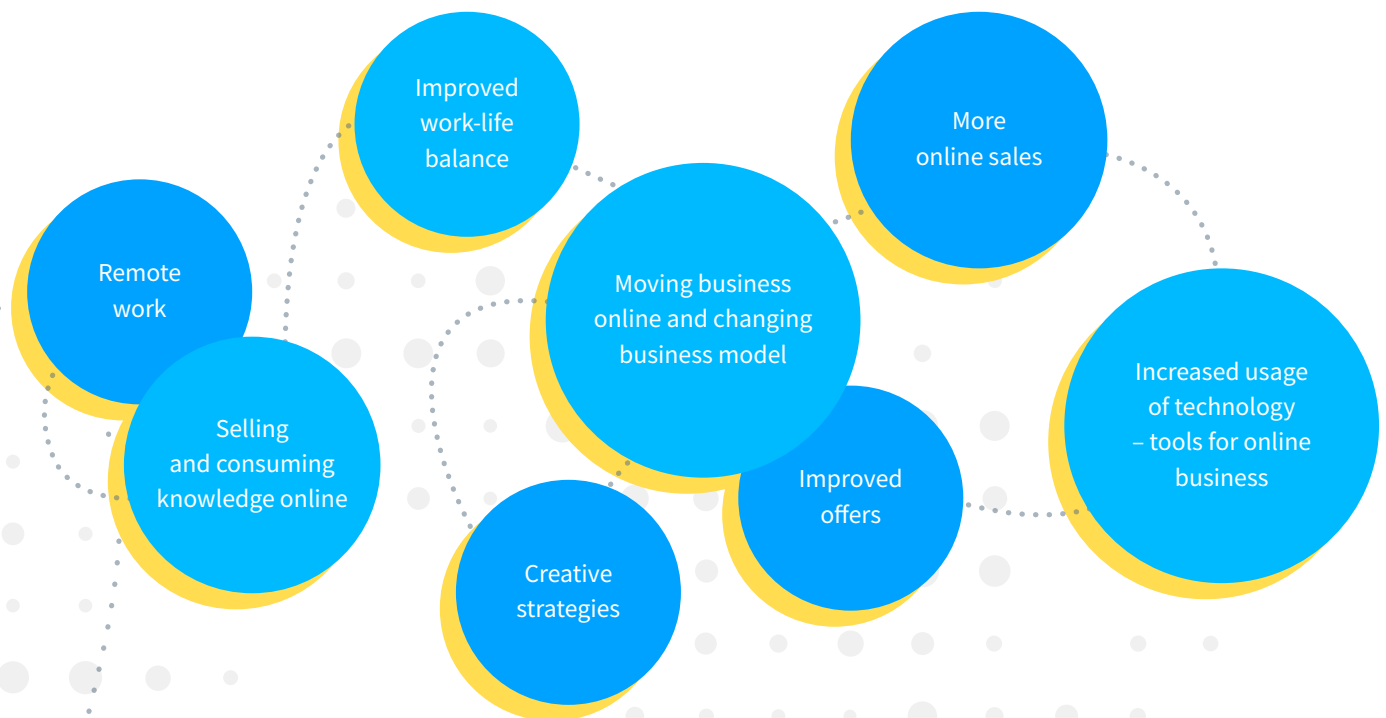
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# Business landscape in 2020

## – Overview

We asked experts to describe how they see the business landscape changing under the current circumstances of the global pandemic and economic lockdown. Additionally, they shared their observations of the trends that began to emerge as a result of the above-mentioned circumstances. Based on their replies, we've identified major positive and negative changes which we listed in the tables below.

### Major positive changes in the current business landscape



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Among the positive changes, most of the experts endorsed the emerging global trend of teams shifting to remote work. Not only is it expected to bring greater flexibility for working professionals, but it's also expected to improve general work-life balance.

*“Employees will demand more of a work-life balance and many more will be working at least part time from home. There will be a higher number of people setting up their own business as some employers won't want to give in to the trends. And more people will be buying online. Shops are for experiences, online is for sales”*



– Ian Cleary, CEO of RazorSocial

*“People will place more focus on their existing connections and less on building new relationships. The pandemic opened people's eyes to the importance of community and those that already exist in their network”*



– Jason Hunter, CEO of Merged Media

It's also predicted that most businesses would have to change their entire business model and move their operations online. In addition, businesses will be forced to come up with better offers, implement creative marketing strategies, and capitalize on online marketing tools.

*“Digital marketers like myself have always been evangelizing a Digital First approach to marketing because your customers are spending so much time online. With the current pandemic, businesses now have no choice but to be digital first in their marketing”*



– Neal Schaffer, Digital & Social Media Marketing Speaker

*“Businesses are being forced to go online, and as a result actually being forced to come up with a better, more sustainable and scalable business model as a result (in many cases). This could be a big silver lining as many businesses will come out stronger”*



– **Andrew and Pete, Entrepreneurs and SMB strategists**

As a result, experts also predict a rise in online sales and a thriving ecommerce sector in particular.

*“Customers are pushing the boundaries of ecommerce, moving their acquisitions online more than ever before and demanding very fast delivery. Somehow, they want to have their goods delivered as fast as a pizza. Especially for low-volume goods, e-tailers should partner with food and shopping delivery companies, or create a delivery force of their own, to assure local delivery the same day and as fast as two hours – and even less.*

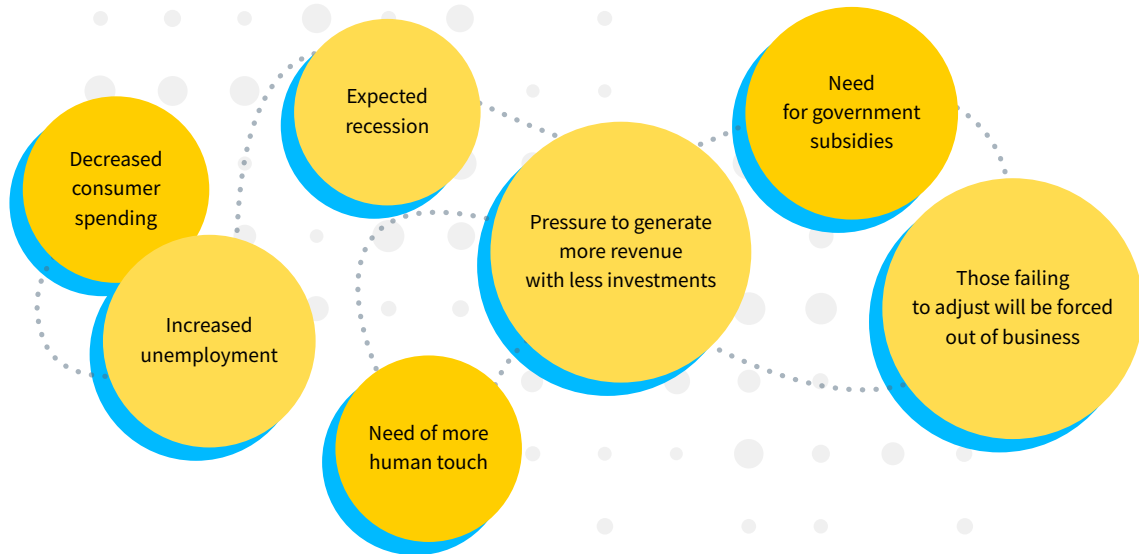
*I see the trend of knowledge commerce – selling online courses – developing very fast because more and more people will be forced to learn new skills to pivot their careers, and they can only attend online classes. The current period will also put a question mark on the future of formal education, because everybody, from children at kindergarten to educators, teachers, and MBA high-profile professors, are reduced to interacting and communicating from their mostly-mobile device.”*



– **Adrian Niculescu, Digital Transformation Expert**

Along with the positives, there are expected to be quite a few negative changes as well.

## Major negative changes in the current business landscape



Experts predict that economic turmoil will result in increased unemployment and a decrease in consumer spending. Both of these factors will follow the general economic recession which is expected to hit the global economy.

*“The United States is officially in a recession; unemployment is three to four times higher than it was at the end of 2019. This means that everyone, consumers and businesses, will be more conservative with their spending. Marketers will be expected to generate more revenue with less investment in resources and technology, and they will be marketing to a group of people that are hesitant to spend on nonessential products and services.”*



– Jeanne Jennings, Founder of Email Optimization Shop

All over the world, businesses will be pressured to generate more revenue, while selling their products cheaper and cutting on their investments. They will also need to incorporate new marketing strategies, like putting more emphasis on the human touch.

*“Businesses need to be very human in the current economic climate. Everyone is struggling in some way. From the CEO to the frontline customer facing staff, everyone needs to address business issues with compassion for the people they serve through business. This demeanor needs to be communicated in all forms of communication, from the website to sales conversations.”*



– Bernie Borges, CMO at Vengreso

Most of the experts we spoke with agree that virtually every business will have to undergo certain changes (or already have) to adjust to the new reality. Those who will fail to adjust might even be forced out of business.



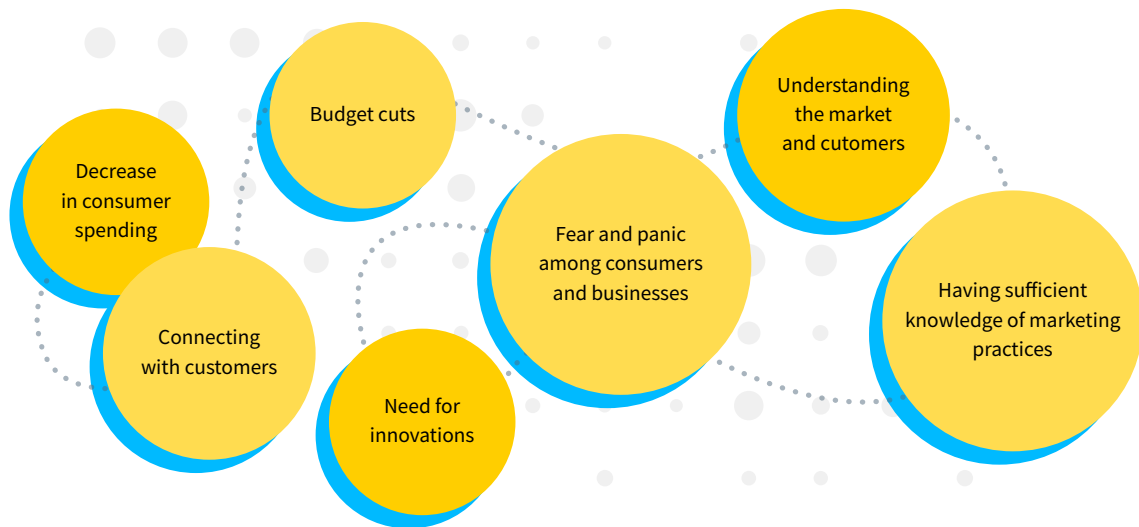
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# Main challenges

Next, we asked our experts to name the biggest challenges that marketers and SMBs are facing while running their businesses during these economic conditions? Their answers can be summarized in the table below.

## The biggest challenges for marketers and SMBs under the current economic conditions



Again, our panel of experts agrees that understanding the market and tailoring offers to customer needs will remain the biggest challenge for marketers.

*“Marketing is still seen as a hard-to-learn foreign language, and very few people are doing the effort to really master this science. The biggest challenge I see is knowing and understanding the psychology of customers – why they buy, how they make purchase decisions – so they can formulate successful and scalable marketing strategies. During our digitally connected time, the marketing is a mix between emotions and technology and if you are savvy here, you can pivot, diversify, and not just survive but thrive during hard times and crises. Many jobs are lost, many companies are going bust, and the biggest challenge of understanding the market will translate into the challenge of staying afloat.”*



– Adrian Niculescu, Digital transformation expert

During times of social distancing and online shopping, human touch and customer relationships become one of the prevailing challenges for businesses.

*“For marketers and small-to-medium businesses, the challenge is connecting with their prospects and customers more deeply, it’s no longer about ‘buy now.’ It’s about building relationships that drive loyalty, to gain some share of wallet now, but also so that when the economy does come back their brands will be top of mind.”*



– **Jeanne Jennings, Founder of Email Optimization Shop**

*“I would say the biggest challenge is how to serve your customer when you can't physically meet them. How can you communicate with them? What are their needs? If you never had direct communication with your customers you are probably lost at what you should be doing now.”*



– **Neal Schaffer, Digital & Social Media Marketing Speaker**

Among the most serious challenges are budget cuts across marketing teams and decreased consumer purchasing capacity.

*“One of the biggest challenges businesses face is earning the right to speak with prospects and customers. In particular, salespeople are struggling to reach their buyers. The modern buyer is less responsive. The modern seller must be adept at virtual selling from prospecting to close.”*



– **Bernie Borges, CMO at Vengreso**

*“Most likely, budget cuts. Businesses are trying to save money wherever they can and the marketing department is usually one of the first to take a hit. Beyond that, another huge challenge is getting your messaging right. It's a complex, unexpected, and completely new situation, and it affects people in so many different ways, which makes it difficult to find the right tone and messaging as a business.”*



– **Lilach Bullock, Content Marketing Expert and Speaker**

Some of the less obvious but still very profound challenges are feeling overwhelmed, and fear and panic among consumers and businesses.

*“The level of stress and uncertainty is impacting businesses of all sizes. Marketers must accept that things are changing. The online world is noisy and people are inundated with digital sales messages. Brands must find their ‘new normal’ and learn to work within the current landscape. Wishing things were like they use to be is a waste of time. Brands must learn how to adapt and engage their audiences in real and meaningful ways that build meaningful relationships for both the short and long term.”*



– **Pam Moore, Social Media and Online Marketing Strategist**

*“The biggest challenge is fear. When people are fearful about their jobs and their health they will hold money back, and this leads to deflation which is a problem for everyone. If the pandemic gets worse there will also be a supply issue.”*

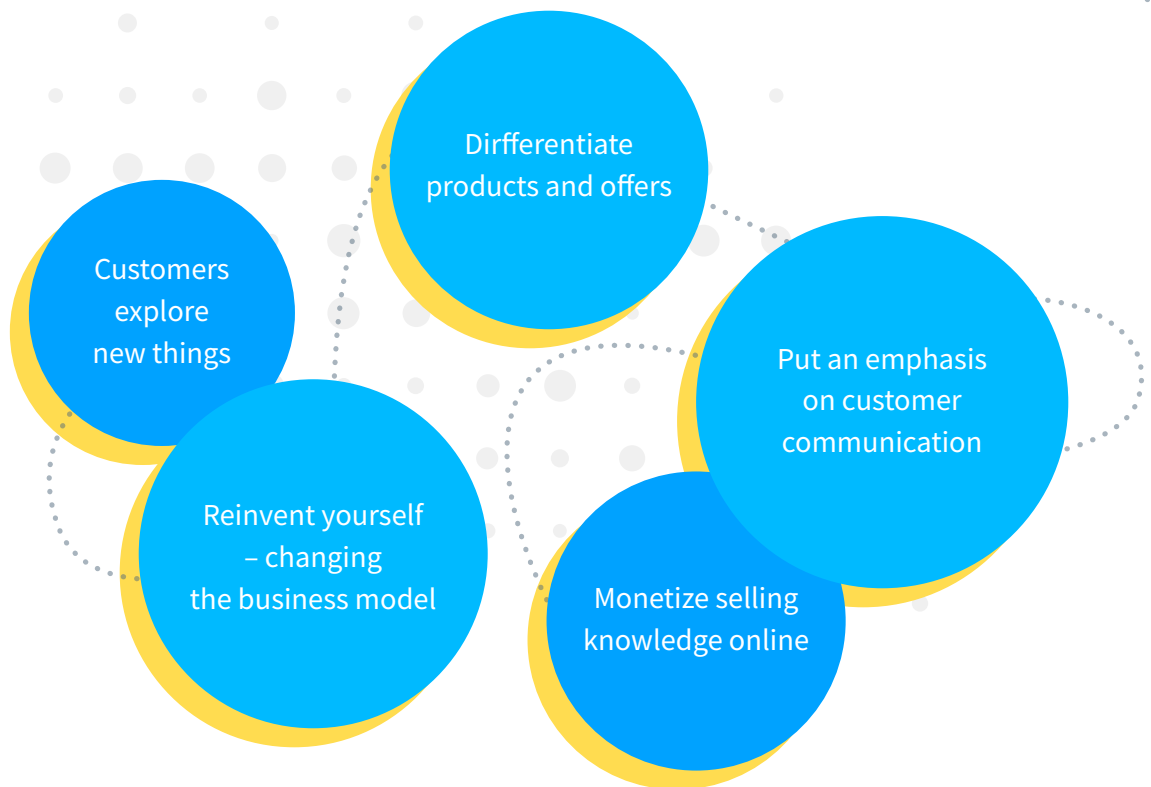


– **Ian Cleary, CEO of RazorSocial**

# Main opportunities

As the old saying goes “Whenever one door closes, another one opens.” Therefore, challenging economic times can also bring potential opportunities. We asked our experts to share some of the growth opportunities that marketers and SMBs can find for their businesses during these challenging times. Their surprising and enlightening answers are gathered in the table below.

## The main opportunities for marketers and SMBs under the current economic conditions



Many people changed their habits and interests during the quarantine. Many of them have more time which spikes their curiosity (or just boredom) to learn new skills, discover new products, and experience new things.

*“Opportunities are everywhere. If you sell a product online, now more than ever people are on social media, some are even shopping online for the first time ever. People are bored and need something to make them feel good. Some examples I have seen in my Women’s Inspire Network community (womensinspirenetwork.com) are a music school that now teaches music lessons over Zoom, a Yoga teacher who now teaches classes over Zoom (with clients now joining from all over the world), and events now moving online, too. I have even seen tourism sector businesses starting to share memories and photos for #Whenwetravelagain – there are lots and lots of beautiful photos being shared here using this hashtag. They are also selling gift vouchers.”*



– **Samantha Kelly, Award-Winning Twitter Expert and Social Media Trainer**

One of the major growth opportunities for businesses and marketers lies in rethinking and reinventing themselves. By redefining their business models, working structure, and portfolio, they can expand the range of their offers and even enter new markets.

*“The biggest opportunity in any crisis, and this is not an exception, is to reinvent yourself, create new business models, new markets, new products, and services, strengthen the relationships with your online followers, the leads, and the customers from your email lists. The reinvention process can be very painful, especially if you are used to staying in comfort zones and expecting a crisis to make you think more creatively. I see a great opportunity in developing content marketing and dominating search engines with valuable and meaningful content. Embrace TikTok and the power of 15- to 60-second videos and their ability to generate awareness, leads, and sales and what I call over-freaking-delivery when dealing with your customers, the stakeholders many businesses are taking for granted during peaceful times.”*



– **Adrian Niculescu, Digital Transformation Expert**

*“This varies widely by industry. Some industries, like travel, hospitality, and anything that involves hosting a crowd for a live event (think industry conferences, sporting events, concerts, theatre), are struggling. The growth opportunity here lies in rethinking how they do things, delivering experiences virtually instead of in-person, and figuring out how to monetize that.*”

*Companies that offer products and services that make it easier to work from home are seeing a sudden explosion in demand, and this creates a different set of challenges. Their growth opportunities lie in acquiring the resources, in terms of personnel and technology, to meet the increased demand and support these new customers without interruption.”*



**– Jeanne Jennings, Founder of Email Optimization Shop**

*“We’ve seen lots of opportunity in how business owners have pivoted – bakeries providing sourdough starter, manufacturing plants making PPE, restaurants providing curbside pickup. Take a look at what your customers need right now and see if there is an opportunity in their questions or requests. For instance, you might be able to ‘unbundle’ a premium product and sell portions of it for less or perhaps you can offer free shipping (I love that some wineries in Napa Valley are doing this if you buy a case of wine).”*



**– Gini Dietrich, Founder of Spin Sucks and Author**

With changes in consumer habits and attitudes, businesses need to change the way they market their products. Experts say that greater emphasis should be placed on communication with customers.

*“A lot of untapped growth is in pre-promotion and presales. Meet your audiences in the different channels ahead of time and convert that into marketing contacts, preorders, reservations, and online transactions. Micro-conversions make up the bigger part of the journey.”*



**– Jordie van Rijn, Email Marketing Consultant and Strategist**

*“Every crisis provides opportunities to innovate and beat your competition who cannot adapt quickly enough. Now is no different. The ability to know your customer, serve your customer, and promote your digital products and services will differentiate your company in a positive way compared to those who are still trying to play catch up in today's digital age.”*



**– Neal Schaffer, Digital & Social Media Marketing Speaker**



# Online marketing strategies for 2021

Now that we've got some insights into the potential challenges and opportunities, we asked experts which specific strategies should marketers and SMBs focus on to grow their business? The table below summarizes their answers.

## Online marketing strategies for 2021



We can clearly see that experts stress the importance of building relationships with customers and focusing on retention. As more people turn to online shopping, the perceived value of human touch increases. And the best way to build and maintain long-lasting relationships with your customers is via email marketing.



*“Brands should focus on strategies that help them inspire and connect with their audiences with a goal of helping them achieve their objectives. Inspire – Connect – Achieve. When brands do this their goals are achieved by default as their goals are one and the same with their audience. Getting ‘into the head’ of target customers is a key step for any form of marketing such as video, social media, podcasting, or blogging. You must understand the audience you are helping before you waste even one moment creating content. Be the brand that understands your audience better than anyone in your industry and niche!”*



– Pam Moore, Social Media and Online Marketing Strategist,  
Entrepreneur

*“If marketers/SMBs are able to implement a single strategy only, they should be focusing on email marketing starting from their current clients, people who contacted the business and didn't buy anything yet and lastly to work on building new potential clients lists.”*



– Itay Paz, CEO of Morning Dough

Once again, monetize on your knowledge – release educational materials, online courses, and host live webinars and workshops. Most of our experts are united by the idea that selling knowledge online and establishing thought leadership are the most important trends of online business in 2021.

*“Education is a huge area because before you sell your service you can prove your expertise. Share more content through blogs, videos, social media and make sure most of it is value driven. Provide lots of value now and reap the rewards later.”*



– Ian Cleary, CEO of RazorSocial

Along with selling knowledge online, experts recommend creating content at a scale and releasing it consistently to keep the conversation going with your customers.

*“I highly advise marketers and SMBs owners to blog on Medium, publish content on LinkedIn, create videos for TikTok and YouTube, and expand their reach. Each piece of content has to provide value first to create reciprocity with the audience, this being the most important marketing trigger which will create rapport, attention, awareness, leads, and sales.”*



**– Adrian Niculescu, Digital Transformation Expert**

*“Content marketing: people are getting out less, so they are spending more time online. Create relevant, useful content in multiple formats including video, written content, and visual content. Influencer marketing: build relationships with industry influencers to expand your reach and knowledge. Online events: engage your customers and prospects online in interesting ways beyond standard webinars. There are several interesting collaborative meeting and events platforms available beyond the standard tools like Zoom, WebEx, and Skype.”*



**– Tom Pick, B2B Digital Marketing Consultant**

Most experts agree that you have to put greater emphasis on innovation – differentiate your offers and services and seek out new channels to get your message across.



*“Make a point out of diversification and product extensions. Everybody says focus, so use your strengths, but with a twist so your business is less dependent on one success or channel and can take a punch. Capture the online audience, grow your list – follow up – this will work for any type of business.”*



– **Jordie van Rijn, Email Marketing Consultant and Strategist**

*“Paid advertising. Facebook announced that they’ve seen a 70% increase in time spent across its apps. We’ve seen our cost per action decrease substantially across the board. Fewer marketers are on the platforms and more eyeballs are on the platforms.”*



– **Jason Hunter, CMO of Merged Media**

Last but definitely not least is the main strategy of 2021 – go fully online. One of our experts, Neal Schaffer, summarized it quite well:

*“A digital first strategy for 2021 should include the following:*

- *Digital products and services*
- *An ability to serve your customers directly through ecommerce even if you work with distributors or retail outlets*
- *Digital customer education*
- *Email marketing and marketing automation, as email becomes a critical way to communicate with your customers*
- *Influencer marketing, to better humanize your brand and better reach new customers in social media.”*



– **Neal Schaffer, Digital & Social Media Marketing Speaker**

# The future of online businesses

Lastly, we asked the experts what is the future of online businesses? How might they adapt and evolve in order to keep growing and stay profitable in the future?

*“The future of online businesses is bright, crowded, and it looks like a price war. This meaning that for regular products the customers will look for the best price and the fastest shipping and the best strategy I see is to have many of the products which could be purchased from other stores transformed into offers. I would advise marketers and SMBs to escape from the red oceans where everything is a commodity and the cheapest win and build blue oceans for their products and services so they can serve better their customers. An offer that is unique to you as a seller can have a better-perceived value so it can bring more sales, even a better margin, and will not be found anywhere else.”*



– Adrian Niculescu, Digital Transformation Expert

*“It's all about innovating – about finding new ways to promote yourself and your products, and new ways of packaging and delivering those products or services. Businesses need to think about what their customers need and want at any given period and change their strategy accordingly so that they serve the current need. And whenever there's a crisis, customer priorities and needs always change.”*



– Lilach Bullock, Content Marketing Expert and Speaker

*“The future of online businesses relies on you to be able to guide your customer on their digital buying journey. This includes:*

- Leveraging influencers to be aligned with your community*
- Having direct communication with your customers through email marketing*
- Providing your customers digital customer education*
- Continuing to innovate digital offerings that can survive any pandemic and provide business value to your customers.”*



**– Neal Schaffer, Digital & Social Media Marketing Speaker**

*“The only guarantee we have in the digital world today and in the future is CHANGE. Business leaders must embrace change and learn to be more agile, relevant, and human. Brands must prioritize investing in their audiences and customers as human as a top priority. You can never go wrong by investing in communities and human beings within them.”*



**– Pam Moore, Social Media and Online Marketing Strategist, entrepreneur**

*“Be different – the world doesn't need more redundant products. Be easy – tools like Zoom, Visme, and GetResponse are leaders in their segments because they are simple to learn and use. Be complete – business technology users are looking to minimize the number of tools they have to learn and use. Grow your product to grow your business.”*



**– Tom Pick, B2B Digital Marketing Consultant**

*“The future of online business is being flexible and adapting as the business environment changes. Big businesses are not nimble, so we have a huge advantage as an SMB. But we need to be ready to adapt our strategy as required. Be aware. Be nimble. Be successful.”*

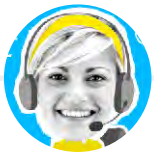


– Ian Cleary, CEO of RazorSocial

Now that we’ve learned the main insights on the present and future challenges and opportunities of online businesses, let’s move on to the specific user cases. Throughout the next chapters, we’ll focus on four target personas which represent different segments of businesses. Each chapter will briefly present the story of the target persona and their main challenges (table below). Along with the potential problems, we will outline the ideal solution for each of the target personas.

Once again, we asked 20 experts from various industries to share the specific strategies and their tips and tricks. Comprised they present a solution to the problem that a particular persona is facing.

## Our GetResponse personas



### Goal 1

Chelsea need to **move her business online.**

### Problem

She is not able to operate the old way (offline), trying to move quickly online to reach customers needs basic things to move online.



### Goal 2

Charlie need to **grow fast online.**

### Problem

He need to scale fast but don’t have resources and feeling time pressured to not to lose more clients.



### Goal 3

Mason need to **optimize cost.**

### Problem

He need to sell more at cheaper prices to get rid of the stock, make people buy. Also need to create promotional offers and flows for them; pressure for pushing higher volumes.



### Goal 4

Ann **lost her job/searching for side jobs.**

### Problem

She is looking to start her business.  
Need to learn marketing skills and tools.

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## Goal 1

# Moving your business online

This section discusses challenges and offers potential solutions to those marketers and SMBs who **need to move their business online**. They cannot operate in the traditional offline way if they're committed to growing their business. However, **they struggle to move their operations online** due to the lack of knowledge regarding online marketing strategies and tools. To further discover challenges and opportunities of this persona, we now turn to the example of Chelsea.

Meet Chelsea,  
a language teacher.



### Chelsea's story:

Chelsea has been teaching languages for over five years when she decided to open her own school. Her business was doing rather OK, but it was far away from her initial expectations. So Chelsea decided to start offering her classes online, and now she needs a way to get her business up and running quickly.

### Challenge:

Chelsea is not able to operate the old way (offline) using old strategies. She is trying to move online quickly to continue giving lectures to her former students and attract new customers. However, she struggles with moving her business online as she lacks the knowledge of online marketing strategies and tools.

## Solution:

We've asked five online marketing gurus to share their insights to help business owners, like Chelsea, take their business online in 2021. In this section, experts like Neal Schaffer, Jason Hunt, and others will share their top strategies on transforming your business from offline to online.



### Neal Schaffer

*Digital & Social Media Marketing Speaker,  
Author & Educator*

<https://www.nealschaffer.com>

If you need to move your business online FAST, you obviously need to either **provide an ecommerce store** to allow consumers to directly purchase your product, which can be done through technology like Shopify, or be able to **communicate with potential customers online** through having a web portal. Either way, the key to success digitally is to **meet customers where they are at, and that is: Search, Social, and Email**. In order to be found by search engines as well as have something to say in social media, you will need content. You will also **need a way to communicate with customers** outside of social media, and for that email marketing is the perfect solution. Creating lead magnets to incentivize people who come from search or social to your website to receive your marketing communications becomes strategically important. It is a lot of work, but if you begin with the combination of **website + content + email and add social + lead magnets**, you will have a long-term solution for a robust digital presence!





## Jason Hunter

*Digital Strategist, CMO of Merged Media*

<http://www.merged.ca>

Since March 2020, Facebook has reported a 70% increase in time spent across all of its apps which includes Instagram and WhatsApp. With marketers cutting their marketing budgets in industries such as Dental, Travel, and Food, and with more eyeballs on social media than ever before, ad costs have dropped substantially, creating an opportune time for you to advertise on social media.

Firstly, **create your custom and lookalike audiences** around your best customers and capture their attention with a short 30-second video. **Retarget** 15-second viewers with a second ad directing them to the website. The goal here is to **warm the audience prior to the pitch**. You only get one chance to make a first impression, so make it count.



## Bernie Borges

*Online Marketing Expert, CMO at Vengreso*

<https://www.vengreso.com>

B2B brands whose businesses have been affected by the events of 2020 are shifting their business online. For some B2B companies, this is a major culture shift as well as a skillset shift. These businesses need to have both the mindset and the skillset to **deliver clear messaging online** through their website, social media channels, email, text, and bots. They must **have a strong content strategy** that delivers value to their target customer in order to attract them. Their content can include short form, long form, video, audio, etc. They must **measure which content formats are most effective** in engaging their customers. And, they need to have a well-defined sales funnel that meets the buyer's needs. However, the buyer should experience the buyer's journey, not a brand's sales funnel. This mindset shift to online also requires a team of professionals with the skills to develop and execute this plan.



## Adrian Niculescu

*Digital Transformation Expert*

*Founder of Mushbloom Agency*

<https://www.mushbloom.uk>

A business can't exist without its customers. And most customers when they are looking for what you are selling are doing the research online.

With the advancement of technology, now it is easier than five years ago to create an online presence which will not have weekends, pay leaves and holidays, will not ask for a raise and that can sell for you 24 hrs. a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The more you delay taking the plunge you are exposed to the big risk of not being able to sell and lose your customers as it will be more convenient for them to order from your competitors. Having an online presence and gaining knowledge about online marketing is not a luxury, it is a basic survival need for any business owner in 2021 and you can start on a budget. No matter what excuse you might have for resisting creating an online presence, it is complete nonsense. Get online today as the week has 7 days and “Someday” is not one of them!



## Itay Paz

*Entrepreneur and Affiliate Marketer,*

*CEO of Morning Dough*

<https://www.morningdough.com>

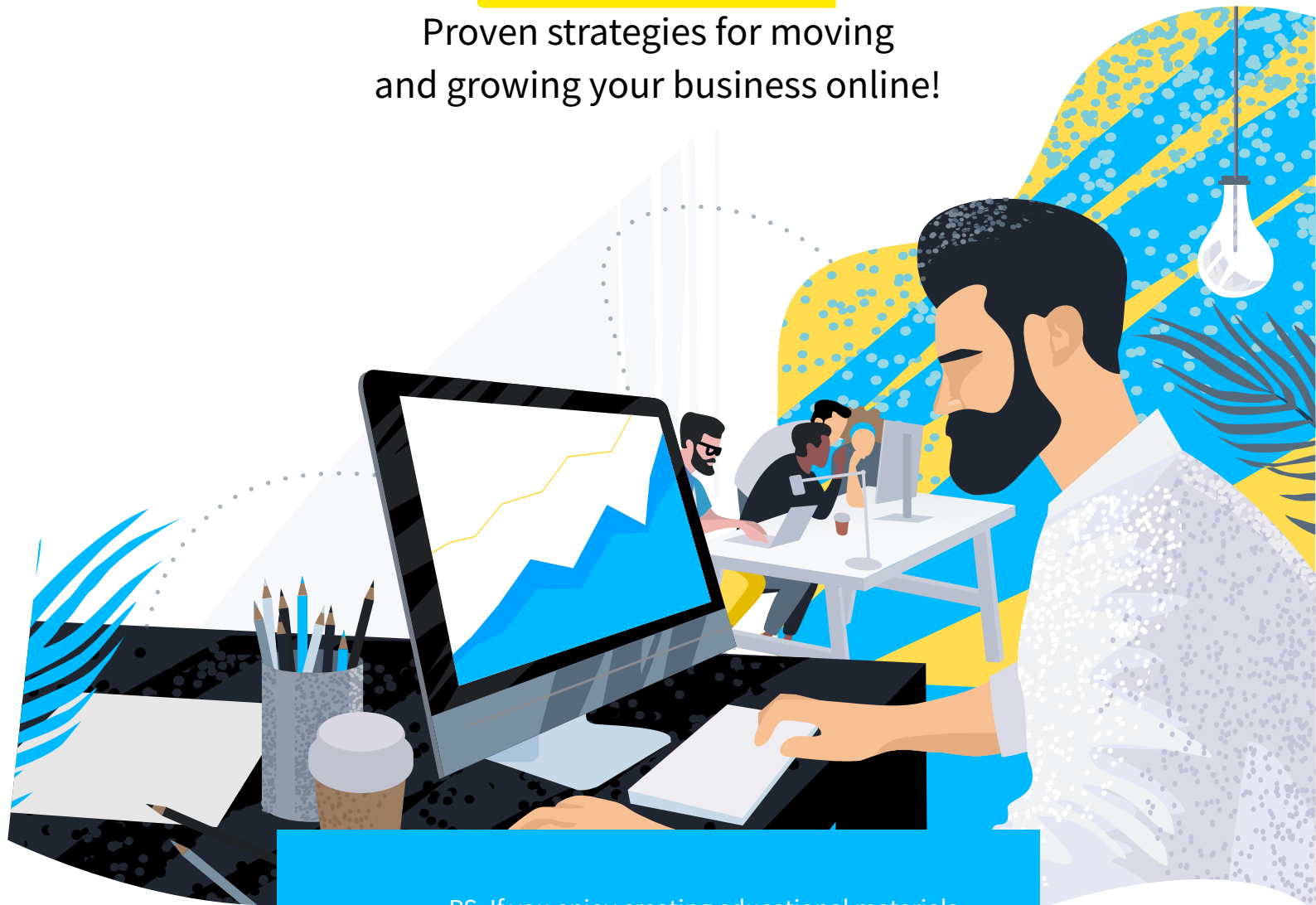
8 Simple Tips & Tricks For Businesses to Take Their Business Online Quickly During The Current Pandemic Days

1. Get a domain (example: NameCheap).
2. Build a one-page website (Wix is a great solution for SMBs).
3. Create a one-page tipsheet in a pdf format to give out online.
4. Open an autoresponder account (GetResponse).

5. Leverage the power of social media (Facebook).
6. Communicate with current & past customer lists using email & phone.
7. Contact family & friends asking for their help.
8. Lastly, if there is a small budget, I would spend it on Google Adwords.

## There you have it!

Proven strategies for moving  
and growing your business online!



PS: If you enjoy creating educational materials, check out a dedicated toolkit by GetResponse for selling **knowledge online**.

## Goal 2

# Growing your business online

In this section we'll focus on the needs of those marketers and SMBs who are **committed to grow their business online**. They aspire for fast growth and **need to scale their operations**. However, they **do not have the resources** to do so. In addition, they're constantly **feeling time pressure to not lose more clients** while in the process of scaling online. To further discover the challenges and opportunities of this persona, we now turn to the example of Charlie.

This is Charlie and  
he's a music teacher!



### Charlie's story:

Charlie's been giving guitar and piano classes in the music school for many years now. His job's been bringing him not only lots of joy but it also compensated him rather well financially. Charlie decided to set up an online store so his customers can buy and attend his lessons online. His online store started out pretty well, yet he struggles with scaling it.

### Challenge:

Starting his own business was easy! Now Charlie needs to scale his business online fast, but he doesn't have the resources or knowledge of the online tools to do so. He is overwhelmed with so many online marketing platforms offered on the market as he is not sure which one to choose. In addition, he's feeling time pressure to not lose more clients.

## Solution:

We've asked five online marketing gurus to share their insights to help business owners, like Chelsea, take their business online in 2021. In this section, experts like Neal Schaffer, Jason Hunt, and others will share their top strategies on transforming your business from offline to online.



### Andrew and Pete

*Entrepreneurs and SMB Strategists*

<https://www.andrewandpete.com>

If you need to grow fast, but have limited resources, then it's critical for you to only **focus on the high impact activities** that will take your business forward.

By attempting to take on too many low-impact activities and projects you are going to find yourself overwhelmed and lacking resources to execute effectively. **Follow our 90:10 Rule** with everything you do, that is, to **focus 90% of your efforts on just one thing** and do it remarkably well. Your **leftover 10% can be used to test and experiment** with other projects, but if you truly focus, then you will see much faster results with a much shorter to-do list. So rather than having six offerings, focus your efforts on just one of them – drop the rest. You will find that all of a sudden you have the energy, time, budget, and resources to make that service remarkable and sell it better. You will suddenly have time to **build the funnel** for it, the **sales pages** for it, a **better customer experience**, and so on. The same goes for everything – just focus on one business, one avatar, one content platform even. For example, don't try to create content for all platforms, just focus 90% of your efforts on one. This way you can reallocate your energy on one platform, create remarkable content, and grow it 10x faster than if you were creating average content on all the platforms.



## Pam Moore

*Social Media and Online Marketing Strategist, Entrepreneur*

<https://www.pammarketingnut.com>

The digital world is getting noisier by the minute. As more businesses move online it's critical to build a solid platform that will enable you to attract, inspire, engage and connect with your ideal customers in meaningful ways. While it's tempting to launch quickly with a goal of being everything to everyone, it's important to have a solid plan that helps you be THE chosen solution for the RIGHT customers. Before building your website and hiring an expensive designer to create your logo, make sure you **know who you are**, what your brand promise delivers, what audience you are serving and how you are going to position your business in the market. **Knowing your ideal customer** and how you can serve them better than your competition is what will separate you from the digital sea of noise and help your online business grow fast. Take the time to understand your audience needs and how you can best communicate with them in the language and tone they can relate to. **You have one opportunity to make a first, second, and third impression.** Make sure you leverage each brand touch for maximum results. Once you know your goals, your audience, and your unique positioning in the market, building your website, brand architecture, social media presence, and more is substantially easier and more cost effective. Take the time to slow down in the beginning stages so you can zoom turbo with real measurable results more quickly.



## Gini Dietrich

*Founder of Spin Sucks and Author*

<https://www.spinsucks.com>

Growing fast online seems like an oxymoron. After all, “overnight success” takes 10 or more years to come to fruition. But there are some things you can do to scale quickly, even if you're just starting out.

First, an email list is critical. Even if you start with only 20 people on the list, that's better than nothing. I liken this to a friends and family round of funding if you're a tech startup. You don't get Series A funding – and major investors – without first asking your friends and family to invest and to help you prove the concept. The same idea holds true when you scale online. Ask your friends and family to “invest” in your concept and help you find customers. **Second, a very clear product or service with a specific call-to-action is necessary.** It might be a beta launch with a special price or a special coaching program that you purposely keep small so you can provide one-on-one attention. Whatever it is, start small, make it specific, and create some urgency by offering a special discounted price for a limited time. **Last, create a mechanism to get honest feedback** that will help you evolve what you've created so that you can scale even more quickly. As part of that feedback, ask for testimonials and referrals. This is the fastest way to build your email list, make money, scale...and rinse and repeat.



## Jordie van Rijn

*Email Marketing Consultant and Strategist*

<https://www.emailmonday.com>

The money is in the list: the bigger your list, the more effective your email marketing. To get off to a flying start, set a goal for number of subscribers at launch, 1, 3, and 6 months. How fast you can grow depends on resources: time, budget, and proximity.

Make a list with all the places you are and aren't yet in contact with your audience. For instance: your own blog, store, personal contacts, current clients, websites, social media groups, physical, your current customers, even your partners, vendors, and competitors.

### Quick wins are often:

- Exit-intent pop-up, adding more signup forms on your site and blog
- Add a PS in your personal/business mail
- Paid media: Ads and SEA
- Do a webinar or copromotion with a big site or partner
- Giveaway or exclusive content for first X number of subscribers
- Current customer activation

Score the ideas on Impact, ROI, and Effort, and your personal quick wins will appear. Oh, and follow up with a kickass welcome sequence.



## Tom Pick

*B2B Digital Marketing Consultant*

<https://www.webbiquity.com>

In challenging economic times, **customer retention has to be a top priority**. So, first off, **talk to your customers**. Work to understand their most immediate and pressing needs, and develop messaging that is empathetic, specific, and helpful. **Utilize that knowledge to develop new content**. It's likely there are still active buyers in your market, but fewer of them. So now, more than ever, you need to go where they are. That means using both organic SEO and pay-per-click search advertising to reach prospects who are actively searching. It also means partnering with trusted influencers and community websites in your market. For example, if you sell human resources software, work with sites like HR.com and Human Resources Today. Virtually every industry segment has targeted sites that offer programs for lead generation and business development.



## There you go!

If you're currently struggling to scale your business – use these strategies and take your business to the next level!



## Goal 3

# Optimizing your cost

In this section we'll focus on business owners and marketers who **need to optimize their costs**. They need to **figure out how to sell more at cheaper prices** to get rid of their stock. They need to come up with the way to **make people want to buy** their products and services. Such business owners and marketers are **struggling with creating promotional offers** and coming up with the right online marketing strategies. We will discover more about their needs, struggles, and solutions to their problems with the example of Mason.

Say hello to Mason –  
experienced online  
marketing professional.



### Story:

Mason's been working in online marketing for quite some time, yet he still feels challenged at his job every day. At the moment, Mason handles online marketing operations at a local video game shop. He's been given the task to create promotional offers to sell more products online.

### Challenge:

Mason needs to come up with a plan to help his company sell more at cheaper prices to get rid of the stock. To achieve that, he has to create promotional offers and flows for them. In addition to that, he's dealing with the pressure of pushing higher volumes of products in a relatively short period of time.

## Solution:

We reached out to five industry-recognized experts and asked them to share their tactics for cost optimization. On the following pages, we will present their strategies to help online marketers like Mason create appealing product offers, optimize their costs, and maximize their profits



### Jeanne Jennings

*Founder, Email Optimization Shop*

<https://www.EmailOpShop.com>

There are three key areas a business in this situation should focus on: retention, relationships, and authenticity.

**Retention over Acquisition:** It's less expensive to keep an existing customer than to gain a new one and this will be even more critical during these difficult economic times. Existing customers can also facilitate referrals, which marketers should actively ask for, as they usually carry a lower cost per acquisition than cold marketing efforts.

**Relationship Building over 'Buy Now':** People will want to buy from organizations that they feel good about, so a move to empathy in marketing is needed. Relationships are also built when companies act in socially responsible ways, and this will be important as well.

**Authentic over Slick:** This should impact every aspect of your marketing, from your copy and images to your offers and policies. More than ever, people want to buy from people. This is as true for consumers as it is for people with responsibility for purchasing in organizations.”

Online businesses need to think in terms of the benefits and value they provide customers, rather than the products or services they sell. Marketing spend needs to be analyzed, so that low performing initiatives can be cut or eliminated, while higher performing programs can be expanded. It sounds like a paradox, but paring down is needed now, so that smart growth can begin and sustain the business in the long term.



## Samantha Kelly

*Award-Winning Twitter Expert and Social Media Trainer*

<https://www.womensinspirenetwork.com>

**Strengthen your brand and get more sales!** Build a community around your brand. Use content created by your community and raise their profile, raise them up and encourage customers to share your content. Keep top of mind and learn how to use the chosen platforms correctly. Learn as much as you can and create an event or even a virtual interview series to show you are being innovative and helping others. You will shine online showing kindness, helping others, and sharing your knowledge.

**Diversify your offers** – create workshops or courses online. Do free webinars to show your expertise first then have a call-to-action at the end. Focus on building a community around your brand. Surprise and delight your customers. Find out what people want – ask your audience. Do a survey, find out what would add value. People are really stressed either with kids at home or missing a loved one, so show compassion, understanding, and kindness during this time. Show leadership and help others and people will remember you, trust you, and want to work with you.



## Ian Cleary

CEO of RazorSocial

<https://www.razorsocial.com>

When you want to sell your stock fast and optimize your costs, you need to **focus on the audience you already have as much as possible**. This includes previous website visitors, email subscribers, and social media followers. **Build out a sales funnel using GetResponse** and leverage scarcity tactics to encourage people to buy quicker. For example, it's only available at this price until X date or limited to 100 people. When you have an optimized funnel then you can **start targeting cold audiences** as you will have already improved your conversion rates, so running profitable ads will be easier. GetResponse funnels are great because you can track your analytics at every part of your customer journey.



## Robert Indries

CEO of X27

<https://www.x27marketing.com>

**Everything can be negotiated.** Even if you're not a good negotiator, you might still get 5-10% off half a dozen tools/services, helping you maintain profitability.

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Another tactic you can implement is, instead of giving discounts on products, create bundles that include more items. Remember, it's almost never a price problem – it's a perceived value problem. Don't be afraid to **think outside the box and come up with new ways on how you can add extra value** to your services and products. More so, it is your MAIN responsibility as an entrepreneur to come up with solutions other people didn't think of!

**Don't copy. Create.**



## Sean Smith

*Marketer and Master Results Coach*

<https://www.CoachSeanSmith.com>

Once a business is successfully generating consistent cashflow with a proven product, the next stage is growing its profits by increasing sales revenues and maximizing margins.

Think about how you can **get your products in front of more potential customers** who are eager to purchase. Create strategic customer funnels and marketing flows to automate the sales process so it can be scaled exponentially. **Get innovative** – temporary discounts, extra bonuses, and referral incentives are a few revenue growth ideas.

The second way to increase profits is by **growing your profit margins through raising prices, reducing costs, or both**. Most businesses have multiple areas where material costs, delivery systems, and operating expenses can be lowered significantly, if the business owner is ambitious enough to scrutinize everything!

Once these systems are optimized and scalable, your main focus all day long should be increasing your sales volume every way you can.

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**If your business struggles  
with optimizing costs –**

try the above-mentioned strategies  
and maximize your profits with ease.



## Goal 4

# Starting your online business

This section is dedicated to those people who are searching for a new job (or side job) or trying to start their own business. Those are ambitious risk-takers on their way to becoming entrepreneurs. They might already have big business ideas and hopes, but they lack full knowledge of marketing strategies and tools. We will dive deeper into the struggles of aspiring entrepreneurs as well as the solutions to their problems, based on the example of Ann.

Meet Ann – an aspiring entrepreneur!



### Story:

Ann has been working various jobs over the past few years but couldn't find her place in any of those settings. Eventually, she decided to start her own business designing and selling crafting kits for families. To create her online shop, Ann needs to find an affordable tool that will provide her with resources and support. In addition to that, Ann needs to learn basic marketing skills to perfect her business plan.

### Challenge:

As Ann is looking to start her own business, she needs to learn more about various marketing tools. Most importantly, she needs to get the knowledge and skills necessary to not only establish her business, but to make it grow and thrive online.



## Solution:

Ann is not alone in pursuit of her dream career – many people all over the world decided to quit their corporate jobs and start their own business (even during current pandemic times!). We reached out to five online marketing experts to find out how entrepreneurs like Ann can establish their business during the current challenging times.



### Candace Spears

*Entrepreneur, Mom, Marketer, Investor*

<https://www.CandaceSpears.com>

The number one thing every aspiring entrepreneur needs is a good email nurturing strategy. It's likely that many will spend on ads to try to get in front of eyeballs, but I'm a firm believer that if you're going to pay for that attention, capitalize on it. That capitalization comes in the form of follow-up strategies like email sequences. If they're on your list, you own the relationship and should then be leveraging any of the advertising spend that you've given to say, a Facebook, Instagram, YouTube, or other ad's platform, to turn into future revenue opportunities.

When starting a business in current turbulent times, recognize what people are facing. They are human. What you're experiencing as a human they are, too. Don't ignore it. I love authenticity in marketing and communications, so if you can bring the reality of human life applied to the products and services that you sell, that will connect with people. If up until this point you haven't found a way to be present and a personified brand voice in your marketing communication, now is the time. As people have so much to be worried or concerned about, I truly believe that sincerity, authenticity, and empathy wins going forward.



## Jamie Turner

*Author | Speaker | CEO*

<https://www.60SecondMarketer.com>

Commerce is going to shift online even faster than it already was. That means that businesses will need ecommerce consultants, digital marketing agencies, marketing automation consultants, online seminar trainers and a whole slew of other experts. In other words, there are some opportunities out there and the people who move quickly will grow the fastest.

If you already started your business, you need to move it online. And if you're saying that is impossible, then reinvent your business so that it can function online. That may mean a big shift in how you do business, but that's where things are headed – online. The good news is that the GetResponse platform can help you achieve that objective. That's an extra bonus.

There's an old Chinese proverb that says, "The best time to plant a tree was 20 years ago. The second-best time is today." What it means is that it's never too late to get started on something. So don't delay – dive into online today. It's never too late to get started. In fact, now is a perfect time to get started.



## Leslie Samuel

*Entrepreneur, Speaker, and Blogger*

<https://www.becomeablogger.com>

The biggest challenge I see for marketers and SMBs during these economic conditions is being able to distinguish between legitimate opportunities and get-rich-quick schemes. There are many experts out there providing “quick tactics” that don’t actually help you grow your business. Cutting through the noise and finding a strategy that actually works for you can be a challenge. As a result, it’s easy for marketers/SMBs to feel overwhelmed. Regardless of the challenge, there’s a lot of opportunity. Online spending is skyrocketing. As one study shows, businesses have seen an increase of up to 563% in online consumer spending as a result of the pandemic. Starting your business and leveraging the internet right now is smart.

What should be your strategy then? The name of the game is quality content. If you’re a marketer/SMB, you should be focusing on creating quality content that provides value to your target customer. Become that trusted expert by showing up consistently with the answers to their questions. Teach them how to do what they are trying to do. And leverage online videos to do so. Do it freely, and give generously. Then create products or provide services that help them solve specific problems. If you create valuable content consistently and have a system for converting some of that audience into customers, you have a recipe for success.



## Lilach Bullock

*Content Marketing Expert and Speaker*

<https://www.lilachbullock.com>

Trying to start an online business can seem very overwhelming at first as there's so much competition. However, the good news is that you have a lot of options to suit your skill set, your personality, and your knowledge. From starting a blog business to YouTube channels to setting up an ecommerce store, the possibilities are endless.

But whatever route you choose, you first need to learn how to leverage online marketing – that is how you ultimately build a successful business. My recommendation? Start with search engine optimization because it's the best source of traffic you'll ever find. By ranking high up in the right search results, you'll not only get more organic traffic, but you'll get highly-targeted traffic: traffic that's specifically looking for the products and services you're selling or promoting. So, take your time, learn as much as you can and consider taking part in a few online courses – it will really make a difference in the long run. Another important lesson I've learned in business? Start building up an email list as soon as possible!



## Moss Clement

*Founder, B2B Freelance Writer and Content Manager*

<https://www.mossmedia.biz>

With several employees losing their jobs due to Covid-19, you might be looking for how to make money online. If you want to start a small business online and make money on the side, here are the tips I used to grow my business.

Set realistic goals to enable you to monitor and measure your performance and successes. Also, conduct market research to find a profitable niche – it helps you know whether your by-products or services are in demand. Moreover, to drive quality leads, you must know your target market, where they are hanging out, at what times, and what content types they're consuming.

With this information, start searching for online jobs by reaching out to possible clients with personalized messages. It increases your chances of finding paying clients online.

**Here you have them –**  
top tips and strategies from five online  
marketers and entrepreneurs!

Now you know what it takes to start your own business in 2021. The only thing you need now is a robust system in place to turn your ideas into a successful online business. GetResponse offers a dedicated toolkit **tailored for needs of entrepreneurs** that will help you build your list, engage with your contacts, and grow your business.

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# What's next?

At the beginning of this guide we raised a very important question that is currently being asked by the majority of marketers and business owners – “What’s next?” It is our hope that we answered this question and gave you some great insights and tools to handle whatever comes your way next.

Throughout this ebook we shared expert insights and user cases on working from home and running a business online in 2021. Based on that, we can clearly see that the future remains uncertain and change is the only thing we can expect for sure. However, we believe that with these strategies your business will be able to overcome all the current and future challenges to take advantage of the opportunities that arise. Here are a few insights and key takeaways worth remembering if you want your business to grow and thrive online:

## Key Takeaways

1. **Go fully remote** – embrace the new normal workplace.
2. **Move your business online** – move your business where your customers are.
3. **Reinvent yourself** – reevaluate your strategy and business model.
4. **Innovate constantly** – differentiate your product offer and look for new promo channels.
5. **Create and release content at a scale** – keep the conversation going with your customers.
6. **Monetize on selling knowledge online** – create that online course and host live webinars.
7. **Build relationships** – focus on customer retention and communication.
8. **Leverage technology** – invest in robust online marketing tools.
9. **Get your head in the game** – keep learning new marketing strategies.
10. **Be authentic** – don’t forget to add a human touch to your communication strategy.

# Methodology

The insights on the current business landscape and online marketing strategies presented in the introduction section were gathered via the questionnaire.

The open-ended survey was developed, distributed, analyzed, and presented in this ebook by Dariia Kuchynska, member of GetResponse marketing team.

The four target personas for this ebook were developed based on customer research conducted by the GetResponse marketing team. All the stories of personas featured in the ebook are fictional. However, their struggles and solutions to their problems are very real. It is our hope that the strategies shared in this ebook will help business offers and marketers overcome similar challenges.

**Start, grow and optimize your  
business now!**

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