

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

What is Brand Marketing – and How Do You Create a Brand Marketing Strategy?

Why is this important?

Branding is more than just a logo on your website. Your branding is who you are as a company; it's your values and your mission, it's the way you treat your customers, it's the look and feel of your visual assets. So, before you can move forward with the more tactical steps in your branding strategy like designing your logo, take time to get clear on who you are as company, or in other words, your brand identity.

No matter what your business does, or what your product is, chances are, there are other companies doing the same thing. So, if you want your business and your product to stand out, you need to figure out what makes it distinctive and special. The more clarity you get on who you are and what you stand for, the more you can infuse that identity into your branding—and the more your brand will stand out and grab customers' attention as a result.

To truly stand out in today's hyper-competitive market, it's not enough to talk to the talk—you need to walk the walk, too. It's about what you do once you've connected with those customers. The reputation you gain—and what customers say behind your back—is the most important part of your branding and your business' long-term success.



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

What is a brand?

A brand identifies and represents your product or service and the attributes and values of your business. A brand helps your customers to position and distinguish your product or service from your competitors and is a promise of what your customer will experience by doing business with your company.

Your point of difference/point of distinction (POD) is what makes you special; it's what makes a customer choose your company to do business with over your competitors—and it should be infused into every part of your branding strategy.

Brand Marketing

Brand marketing is a way to promote your product or service by promoting your brand as a whole. Essentially, it tells the story of your product or service by emphasizing your brand in its entirety.

It's important that you understand the difference between branding and marketing so you can efficiently use

them together. In essence, marketing is how you build awareness of your brand and its products, and generate sales. While branding is how you express who your business is for, what it's all about and why it matters.

Think of marketing as your revenue-generating toolkit and branding as your overall approach to reaching your target audience. Branding is one of the primary building blocks of your marketing strategy, so it will always come first.

Take a company like Nike, for example. From its iconic "swoosh" to its powerful "Just Do It" messaging, Nike's branding is instantly recognizable and has inspired long-term loyalty among its fans. Nike's marketing is everything it does to engage, influence and activate athletes of all abilities, like TV and radio ads, billboards and social media ads. Nike's brand recognition and reputation were not achieved overnight but are the result of an ongoing and painstaking process of investing in its brand and showing up consistently across every customer

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

touch point over many decades.

No matter what business sector you're in or how large you aim to grow, it's important to define who your business is as a brand before you create a marketing plan.

That means clearly identifying your company's personality by carefully creating your brand's logo, typography, color palette, illustrations, voice, tone and style to embody your brand's values.

Brand marketing is an all-encompassing, constantly evolving strategy that revolves around creating brand awareness, recognition, trust, and visibility with

the goal of igniting a distinct **feeling** that will stay with your audience forever. A brand marketing strategy defines a brand's approach to communications, customer service, sales and the products themselves by promoting products and services in a way that highlights the overall brand to clearly and consistently enhance affinity and reputation.

Here are three questions every business should answer when putting together their brand marketing strategy:

- Who is your target audience?
- What is your brand's primary goal?
- How does your brand define success?

While different for every brand, there are five simple steps to take in marketing your brand that will help define what your objectives should be, how you should talk to your audience and how you'll measure the success of your brand and your business.

When everyone has a shared understanding of the brand's importance, employees feel a deeper investment in their work. This fosters a sense of ownership that encourages them to take greater responsibility for the brand's success.



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Brand Marketing in Five Simple Steps:

1

Understand Your Brand Purpose

Understanding why your brand exists is core to your brand marketing strategy. These questions will help you articulate your brand's purpose.

- **Who is our target audience?**
- **Why would they trust us?**
- **How does our brand make them feel?**
- **What challenge does our brand solve?**
- **Who are our competitors?**
- **What is our brand's background story?**
- **Why was our brand created in the first place?**
- **If our brand was a person, who would she, he, they be and why?**

This first step is where you'll start defining how your brand will look and feel. This means choosing your brand color palette, typography and imagery to visually represent your brand persona and identity so as to be recognizable and distinctive.

2

Research Your Target Market

Understand who your customers are by creating customer personas. A customer persona is a comprehensive picture of your perfect purchaser that helps you create an emotional connection with your audience. Ask yourself questions such as:

- **How old is this person?**
- **Are they single, partnered?**
- **Where do they live?**
- **What is their job?**
- **What do they do every day?**
- **What's their educational background?**
- **What do they care about?**
- **What was their most recent purchase and where do they like to shop?**
- **What do they need from our product or service?**

A clear vision of your ideal customer persona can be used to inform and guide everything from your business name to the art style you choose for your logo to the best ways to reach them and when with your brand story and product attributes.

3

Define and Sell Your Story

To sell your brand's story you must create the right message. Your story should connect your brand with your target audience, encourage loyalty and trigger brand recall.

Often a simple, heartfelt story that captures your audience's attention is the most memorable, and creates an opportunity for engagement with your brand and loyalty over time.

Great stories on your website, packaging, or social media channels are often shared by customers whose strong networks can influence new customers to try – and buy – your products.

4

Get To Know Your Competitors

Getting to know your competition is as important as knowing your ideal customer. Research their story, know their products and determine how you're different from them, then focus on those differences in your marketing messaging.

For example, if your competitor is known for being the lowest cost, you may want to focus on why quality is more important than price in your brand communications.

5

Create Brand Guidelines and Governance Standards

Once you understand your brand and audience, think about how to connect them in your marketing. Creative brand guidelines are where you'll document and detail your logo, colors, fonts, tone of voice and more. These guidelines will help any designers and marketers you work with tell your brand's story and deliver your message in the best possible way, as well as ensure brand clarity and consistency.

Brand governance boosts collaboration and enthusiasm within your business too. At the heart of any successful branding strategy are the people who champion it, which is why it's essential to have brand champions throughout your business who truly understand your brand's essence and values. These ambassadors must possess a deep understanding of your brand's story and be able to seamlessly articulate its nuances to their colleagues, your current and prospective customers, the media, your board or advisors, etc. By equipping employees with the knowledge and tools to find and utilize different brand assets in their daily work through a centralized digital asset management system, you ensure the use of the right logos, images, videos, collateral, etc. and consistency in the delivery of your value propositions.

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at [VSJF.org](https://www.vsjf.org)



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[Learn More](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

The Power of Branding—Your Brand's Positioning Statement

Building out a solid brand strategy can help attract your target audience, increase sales and grow your company.

What's in a Brand?

A well-developed brand is one that communicates what a business does best and the value of the business to its' customers. A well-crafted brand also evidences how the business is different from its' competitors, not

only to its' customers but also to its' employees. A brand is not a logo, a slogan, a tagline or a mission statement. Rather it's the rationale, cultural and emotional attributes unique to your business. In essence, your brand is your best sales pitch.

Your Brand Positioning Statement

The purpose of a well-crafted brand positioning statement is to convey a brand's value proposition to its' target customers, and to increase the brand's perceived value and trust. It also frames the brand's identity, goals, and distinguishing features within the context of the buyer's experience.

Unlike your mission statement, your brand positioning statement is not public-facing. Rather it's an internal positioning statement intended to summarize the value that your brand, products, and services bring to your current and prospective customers.



Four Elements of a Brand Positioning Statement

- 1 To (Target)**
 - **Who is the consumer target?** What slice of the population is the most motivated to buy what you do?
- 2 Your brand is the (Category)**
 - **Where do you play?** What is the frame of reference that helps to define the space in the marketplace that you compete in?
- 3 That is the (Benefit)**
 - **Where do you win?** What promise will you make to the prospective customer, thinking about main benefit (rational/emotional)?
- 4 That's because (Support Points)**
 - **Why should they believe us?** What support points help to back up the main belief?

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

To craft your business' brand positioning statement, you'll need to get clear on a few key facets of your business (*Write in your answer*):

Who You Serve?

What Value You Offer?

How You Position Your Offer?

Why You're In Business?

What Makes You Different From Your Competition?

Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at VSJF.org



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[**Learn More**](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

Know Your Customer

Why is this important?

The first rule in sales is to know your customers. Knowing who your customers are and understanding their needs, expectations, lifestyle and habits, is key to increasing revenue and profits and building brand loyalty. When you truly know your customers, opportunities for connection are easier to find and aligning sales and marketing tactics with actual customer needs is more efficient and less costly.

Depth of customer knowledge is crucial to sales success. It requires knowing more than your customers' name, age, gender and income. It requires knowing their habits, interests, likes and dislikes as well as what motivates them to take action or keeps them from purchasing. You need to have a thorough understanding of why they should even consider your product or service in the first place. How can you provide a product or service that meets their needs if you don't know anything about them? How can you reach them with your marketing if you do not know where to find them? How can you convince them to purchase your product or service if you do not know what messages will attract and engage them?



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Knowing Your Customer is Knowing Your Market

Providing a product or service that meets a specific need is often referred to as a **Product-Market Fit**. It requires having a clear value proposition for your goods or services that answers the question "why choose this product or service over all other options?" Only by understanding your customers can you create a value proposition that meets their needs. Companies who achieve a successful Product-Market Fit, spend a lot of time learning about their customer, adapting their value proposition and fine-tuning products to what they learn.

What is Your Value Proposition?

Your value proposition is a brief statement that identifies your company's unique products, services or features. It helps attract customers to your brand by defining what your company does well and what it can offer customers. Your value proposition may include information on how a product works, how the customer can benefit from using it and why your brand's value is better than other available options on the market.

A good value proposition is clear and relevant to the brand.

As an example, VRBO's value proposition is simple and direct; it tells customers how the company can help them find a place to stay during their next vacation. Its value proposition lets travelers know they can find and book a rental property in a few easy steps.

Knowing Your Customer is Knowing Where to Reach Them

In today's market, there are so many places that potential customers can be found. We split our time between the real world and the online world and receive information from an infinite number of sources. It is no longer possible to effectively reach customers without knowing their lifestyle and their habits. When you know where they go and what they do, you can meet them where they are and spend your marketing dollars wisely.

Knowing Your Customer is Speaking Their Language

Consumers live in a world where they encounter hundreds of marketing messages each day. When you are

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

able to speak in their language and use words, phrases, quotes, and metaphors that directly resonant with their wants and needs, you attract customers more quickly and retain them longer. By talking with them (not at them) your brand can stand out in a crowded marketplace and win them over. Knowing their language enables you to create sales and marketing materials that gain a potential customer's attention, provoke interest, stimulate desire and prompt action. All of this is easier when you know your customer and what makes them tick.

Knowing Your Customer is Giving Them the Experience They Want

A basic tenet of sales is that it is more costly to acquire a new

customer than to keep an existing customer happy. Knowing the kind of experience that your customers want, and then focusing on meeting their needs, is an important step to creating a long-term valuable relationship. When needs are not met, an opportunity is lost. Research shows that consumers will walk away from brands, even if they love them, if their experience does not meet their expectations. Understanding the kind of experience that satisfies your customer creates loyalty and repeat business. It lets you focus your time on what matters most to your customer.

Take Time to Get to Know Your Customer

Knowing who your customers are forms the foundation for all of your business, marketing and

sales planning. Learning about your customers takes time and requires both quantitative data and qualitative stories from your target and actual customers. Customer data is a valuable asset in your business and provides insights about how to deliver the right experiences at the right time, from lead-generation to long-term retention. It is helpful to develop sales and marketing strategies that include touchpoints to collect relevant and up-to-date information about your customers and to learn why they like (or dislike) your company. Surveys, website analytics, landing pages, search engine data, interviews, focus groups, sign-up forms, loyalty programs and social media conversations are a few ways to gather data on your customers.



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

De-mystify your Customer Information with Customer Personas

Personifying your target customer is an excellent way of understanding the people you are trying to sell to and how they will be using your product or service. Buyer Personas are fictional representations of your ideal customer based on the research, data and stories you collect. They can be both actual (who you are selling now) and aspirational (who you want to sell in the future). Depending upon your business, you could have one persona or as many as ten. Well-developed buyer personas help you determine what prospects to nurture, guide sales and marketing messages and strategies, and provide focus to anything that relates to customer acquisition and retention. Buyer personas are not static. They need to be tested and refined regularly, based upon feedback and data, to ensure that they are accurate, relevant and effective.

Customer Personas Include:

Demographics: age, profession, income, gender identity, marital status, geographic location, etc.

Psychographics: habits, interests, values, likes, dislikes, lifestyle

Motivators and Goals: What drives them to action? What problems are they looking to solve or desires are they hoping to address?

Roadblocks and Challenges: What keeps them from taking action? What do they fear?

Purchase Objections: What would keep them from buying your product?

Solution You Provide: Why would they buy from you?

Real Quotes: What would they say about how your product addresses their needs and wants?

As an example, if your business sells hiking boots or outdoor equipment, you might create a buyer persona like "On-the-Go Eddie". Eddie is male, and a Gen Z who gets his information from outdoor catalogs and websites, hiking and adventure travel blogs, and social media. His biggest frustration is buying outdoor gear that doesn't last or doesn't meet his needs. Eddie is comfortable paying more for quality hiking boots and gear that will endure his rigorous adventures in the wild. Although he



has a limited budget, Eddie doesn't hesitate to buy premium hiking gear that will last. He relies on reviews, influencers and blog posts for unbiased information about the best equipment for the types of trails he prefers.

Eddie has a few favorite brands, but he's always open to new ideas as long as they're recommended by a trusted source. Currently, Eddie is looking for a new pair of hiking boots to replace his previous pair. They held up well, but he didn't love them enough to buy another pair. He's also more experienced now, and he wants the best he can afford.

If your target customer is not the end consumer but another business, the demographic and psychographic information will be different:

Demographics becomes POSITION INFORMATION: title, role in the business, role in the buying process, personal targets and compensation

Psychographics becomes ORGANIZATION PRIORITIES: mission, values, culture, revenue goals, department priorities

B2B buyers now demand an entirely different kind of relationship with your organization – they expect to be treated as equal partners. As importantly, over three-quarters of business-to-business sales have more than one person involved in the purchase process.

A typical B2B buying process involves three stages - awareness, evaluation and purchase stages. The process usually begins with the realization of a need for a product or service.

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

As an example, meet Gwen, the specialty food buyer at Fresh Market seeking to add gluten free tacos to her assortment. For B2B businesses, understanding Gwen's job title and level (manager, merchandiser, etc.) can help you to figure out how much influence this person has over procurement and the final purchase decision. Equally important is understanding the level of knowledge and experience Gwen has in her role as the buyer and about your product category in general. Providing Gwen with valuable end consumer data, as well as the attributes of your product include messaging its value to her targeted consumers with merchandising and promotional plans will help her save valuable time, address pain points, and enable her to focus on other priorities.

As you gather all your customer information, you will start to see common characteristics and unique

customer personas will emerge. Give each of your unique customers a name, whether business to business or business to consumer. Naming them will help you think and speak about this persona as a real person and guide you to craft sales and marketing messages targeted specifically to them. Share these

personas with all members of your team and include them in discussing all decisions that your company makes. If you do right by these personas, you will build a direct connection with the real customers that they represent – boosting sales and building and brand brand loyalty.



Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at [VSJF.org](https://vsjf.org)



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[Learn More](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

Digital Marketing

Why is this important?

A digital marketing plan is a document in which you strategically map out your digital marketing objectives, as well as the actions you'll take to achieve those objectives. Among other things, it can include business goals, digital strategies, and competitive landscape analysis as well as timelines, budgets, digital channels, and more.

Without a well-defined plan in place, your digital marketing efforts will be inefficient and ineffective – and it's likely you'll waste money and see diminished returns.

As digital marketing continues to grow and take over market share from traditional marketing, many small business founders and marketing managers are asking how much they should be spending on digital marketing.

The U.S. Small Business Administration suggests allocating 7-to-8% of your gross revenue to marketing and then spending approximately 50% of that marketing budget on digital marketing specifically. While this varies by industry, how long the company has been in business, and whether your business is B2B (Business to Business) or B2C (Business to Consumer), that guidance is reasonable and expected in current times.

As an example, if your revenue is \$1,000,000 you can expect to spend \$70,000-\$140,000 on total marketing. That would bring your digital marketing budget to between \$35,000 and \$70,000 for the year.



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

How to create a Digital Marketing Plan

1. Define your digital marketing goals and business objectives

Clear, concise, measurable, and attainable digital marketing goals and business objectives with goals help you define exactly what you want to achieve and measure. You should also include specific numbers and timeframes to benchmark your progress.

For example, double organic search traffic in the next 12 months. This provides you with a deadline, a framework for setting milestone goals, and specific actions to take (e.g., optimize your site, create amazing content, and conduct strategic outreach for SEO, etc.).

2. Define audience segmentation and buyer personas

For any digital marketing campaign to be successful, you need to know who you're targeting. Segmenting your audience and then building buyer personas for each of those segments can provide you with insights about what types of marketing will be most effective.

Start by defining the different segments in your target audience. From there,

begin building out the personas of your ideal customer within each segment. Personas include specific information like age, gender, occupation, location, pain points, goals, and desires. When you understand the goals and struggles of a specific market segment, you can create highly relevant content that resonates more deeply with them. You'll know what messaging is most effective and how to get your message in front of each persona. More importantly, you'll find better ways to move them through your sales process.

Your buyer persona information will vary depending on whether you're Business to Business (B2B) or Business to Consumer (B2C) and the price of your product/service. Some demographic and additional information you may want to include is:

Age range

Income

Job title

Location

Priorities

Goals

Challenges

Interests

Social media platforms

Industry

Pain points

Products/features desired

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Your goal in creating personas is to get inside the minds of your target customers and to see things from their perspectives. When you understand what matters most to them, you can make a digital marketing plan that speaks to their deep desires and big challenges.

3. Conduct a competitive analysis and determine market share

In order to be effective in your marketing efforts, you need to know your competition. A competitive analysis allows you to identify your competitors, calculate your market share and determine the marketing strategies they employ.

When doing your competitive analysis, consider the following types of things:

- Which audience segments are they targeting?
- What digital marketing channels are your competitors using?

- Where are they strongest?
- Where are they weakest?
- What portion of their traffic is earned/owned/paid?
- What's their positioning in the market?
- What's their claimed differentiation?
- What type of messaging and specific language do they use?
- What is their tonality and brand personality?

A thorough competitive landscape analysis will give you insights into how you can use online marketing to surpass your competitors. For example, you may realize that your competitors' positioning and differentiation are well known, so you'll benefit from crystalizing your own in contrast. Or, you may discover they're

strong in social media marketing but weak when it comes to SEO performance.

4. Conduct a SWOT analysis

SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats) is the counterpart to a competitive landscape analysis. It offers a framework to analyze your business against other forces in your market. Use this process to identify what's working, spot potential organic growth opportunities, and prepare for external threats. Organic growth opportunities may include an ecosystem of content, SEO, PR, word-of-mouth, emails, and social media that produces a flywheel effect that amplify your value proposition and increase organic sales.

Start by analyzing the **strengths** of your company. What are your primary advantages over your competition?



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Which things do you do particularly well? What unique resources do you have at your disposal?

Next, look at your **weaknesses**. What elements of your business aren't working particularly well? What things keep you from making sales? Where do you fall short of your competitors?

The third step is to look closely at the **opportunities** available to your company. Are there any market trends you can take advantage of? Can you utilize new technology that your competitors can't? Is there an under-served segment in your audience?

Finally, identify any potential **threats** to your business. Could a competitor steal market share? Are there any obstacles blocking growth? Are there potential financial issues on the horizon?

The data from your SWOT analysis will help you develop your digital marketing plan. Your plan should cater to your strengths, mitigate your weaknesses, move toward opportunities, and proactively avoid potential threats. All in the name of helping you to increase sales.

Social Media as an element of your Digital Marketing Plan

A lot goes into building a successful social media campaign—creative assets, social copy, paid strategy, reporting and much more. If you're using social media as a component of your digital marketing plan, you need a social media budget. As a general rule of thumb:

- B2B companies should allocate 2-5% of revenue to marketing
- B2C companies should allocate 5-10% of their revenue to marketing

Here's the average amount each size of business spends on digital marketing per year although numbers vary based upon gross revenue, product, distribution channels, etc.:

- Small businesses (<20 employees): \$30,000
- Mid-sized businesses (20-49 employees): \$60,000
- Large businesses (50 employees or more): more than \$100,000

Respective to the marketing spending above, the percentage allocation for social media aligned to consumer products is 21.8% for B:C social media campaigns. In the next five years, that percentage is forecast to rise to 25% as more consumer package goods brands utilize social media to greater degrees.

What should your social media budget plan include?

- Content creation - photography, video, talent, graphic design, copywriting, editing - content is critical to capturing your audience's interest and more importantly engagement.
- Software and tools - design, editing, video, monitoring, media analytics, etc.
- Paid Social Media campaigns



- Influencer marketing to expand your campaign reach
- Training
- Social strategy and management

Strategies to Fuel Organic Growth in your Digital Marketing Plan

1. Unite and amplify your marketing mix through Search Engine Optimization/SEO

SEO is the single most effective organic growth marketing strategy. The reality is that organic search is the only marketing channel that increases in value over time. Even if your SEO budget remains relatively fixed, the amount of traffic and revenue you generate goes up. That's because improved rankings lead to greater visibility which translates to more backlinks which improves visibility, and so on. Compare this to digital channels like PPC (pay per click), where you get a fixed, temporary, more modest return on ad spend. In other words, you get no more — or no less — than what you pay for. In fact, Google openly acknowledges that the ROI on SEO is 5.3X compared to just 2X for paid search advertising.

Beyond that, you can also leverage SEO to improve brand awareness and sentiment, leading to greater brand equity. As a result, you'll reduce risk and control your messaging more effectively.

Why is organic search so effective at driving growth? One of the big reasons is that it exactly mirrors the way your audience is thinking at the precise moment they are most receptive to your message. SEO allows you to come alongside potential customers and provide them with content, answers, and solutions that actually helps them

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

and supports their buyer journey - and the lifetime value of your brand.

2. Develop engaging high-value content that's differentiated from your competitors and memorable.

Content 'wins' when it:

- Evokes an emotional response
- Solves a customer problem, or answers a question
- Inspires or uplifts
- Tells/shares stories that resonate with customers
- Includes an element of surprise

3. Track SEO Metrics / Performance

Whether you look at rankings, traffic, engagement, leads, orders, revenue, or authority, SEO metrics give you key insights into exactly how your organic search strategy performs and the impact of your digital marketing plan. SEO metrics include:

- New Referring Domains
- Domain Authority/Domain Rating
- On-page Optimization
- Text Readability

- Impressions
- CTR/Click Through Rate
- Keyword Ranking
- Organic Visibility/Organic Market Share
- Organic Traffic
- Organic Conversions
- Number of Pages Indexed
- Page Speed
- Pages per visit
- Crawl errors
- Bounce rate

4. Tools to track SEO metrics

There are a several tools that make it easy to measure the top SEO metrics.

Use Google Analytics for tracking metrics like organic search traffic, pages per visit, and bounce rate. Use Google Search Console for monitoring impressions, CTR from the Google Serach Engine Results Pages (SERP), crawl errors, and number of pages indexed.

Ahrefs, Moz, and SEMRush help you stay on top of new referring domains, domain authority, and keyword

rankings. ContentKing, Lumar, and Screaming Frog make it possible to identify technical errors within your site and then fix them. Google PageSpeed Insights and Pingdom help you measure page load time. Use Yoast and Clearscope for on-page optimization and text readability.

Ahrefs - [Ahrefs - SEO Tools & Resources To Grow Your Search Traffic](#)

Moz - [Moz Pro 30 Day Free Trial - Moz](#)

SEMRush - [Semrush - Online Marketing Can Be Easy](#)

ContentKing - [Real-time SEO Auditing & Monitoring Platform - ContentKing for Conductor \(contentkingapp.com\)](#)

Lumar - [Lumar — Eye-Opening Website Intelligence.](#)

Screaming Frog - [SEO Agency - Screaming Frog](#)

Pingdom - [Website Monitoring Service - Availability and Performance | Pingdom](#)

Yoast - [SEO for everyone • Yoast](#)

Clearscope - [Clearscope: The A++ SEO content optimization platform](#)

Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at [VSJF.org](#)



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[Learn More](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

Creative Briefs

What is a Creative Brief?

A creative brief is a short 1 to 2 page document outlining the strategy for a creative project (i.e., logo, product packaging, print ad, social media campaign, etc.). A creative brief is a map that guides a design or advertising agency, or a company's internal creative team on how to best attain the goals of the initiative or campaign. At a design or advertising agency, the creative brief is usually created by the account manager in close consultation with the client, who can be the business owner or a delegate of the owner most often responsible for the marketing and sales activities of the business.

To that effect, it's an interpretation of the client's ideas and vision for the brand and the product.

In many instances, this brief is created by and for the agency, and is open-ended in nature. That said, this same tool may be used in-house by the business owner, led by a skilled marketing staff member to facilitate the process of defining the Creative Brief to attain the campaign goals. You can, and should, include anything and everything that will help the agency,

designer or internal creative team understand your brand and product better.

Most creative briefs include the following:

- A short **brand statement**. A brand positioning statement explains to customers the values, benefits and ideals of your specific brand. It is a complete strategy that implements different unique elements, such as a logo or slogan, to show why your business is better than the competition. For example: Amazon: *"For people with limited time in their day who want to reduce the stress of heading to the store or the mall to shop, Amazon has nearly everything you need all in one place. Plus, it delivers products to customers quickly, using a dedicated fleet of drivers."* Key takeaway: Amazon's aim is to be different through efficiency and customer convenience
- A brief overview of the initiative's background and objectives – or **project background**.
- Key challenges or insights that this initiative aims to resolve – or **project objective**.
- **Target audience** for the initiative with demographic/psychographic information.
- A list of chief **competitors**.
- Primary message describing the brand's values and market positioning – or **consumer message (your driving idea or single-minded thought) with key consumer benefit/s** and supportive statements that validate the benefit/s.
- **Communication channels** on which the initiative will be distributed. For example – website/s, social media channels, blogs, etc.
- **Advertising tone or brand voice** – in keeping with the brand positioning; for example, friendly, innovative, hip.
- **Advertising medium** – as applicable from print to digital, social networks to point of sale.
- **Mandatory elements** – as applicable to include trademarks, patented technologies, brand colors, etc.

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Essentially, the creative brief describes the “what” of the project (i.e., its’ objectives) and “how” to achieve them (i.e., the creative approach). A creative brief ensures that all creative messages are clear, consistent and “on brand” and gives the creative team that you’re working with a broad vision for your brand, business, and the project at hand. It should offer inspiration and serve as a jumping off point for brainstorming ideas as well. A creative brief reduces the potential of conflict by ensuring that you and the creative team/agency with whom you’re working are on the same page. It also serves to align your resources – time and money – and expectations with the creative media strategy or design solutions. Finally, creative

briefs are flexible in their content and design. The format simply needs to work for both you as the client and the creative team with whom you’ve partnered for the project.

The Five Elements of an Effective Creative Brief

To write an effective creative brief, you need to focus on these five elements:

1. Your Product

A creative campaign starts and ends with the product that you are selling. If you don’t understand the product and are unable to convey its’ attributes or benefits succinctly, you can’t expect your creative team to do a good job.

As the product’s owner, be prepared to educate your creative team by answering the following fundamental questions:

- What product are you advertising?
- What category does it belong to?
- Where is the product currently being sold?
- Where is it being advertised? Where will it be advertised in the future?
- What is the product’s current status in the market?
- What are the product’s existing brand values?
- How many variants are currently available?

Your goal is to map the product’s current brand perception. This will



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

be a combination of factors, such as price, quality, perceived quality, etc. Be ready to provide sales reports, market surveys, and consumer data to help your creative team understand the product and your brand well.

2. Your Business

Your business and your product can often have a complex relationship. In some cases, the business brand might be completely independent of the product, particularly in larger businesses with multiple brands and products. In most other cases, the product and the business affect each other in a symbiotic relationship.

In developing your creative brief and working with your creative team, your goal should be to provide:

- An analysis of the business' brand perception.
- An understanding of the business' relationship to the product brand.
- A map of the factors affecting the business' brand perception.

3. The Market

The 'market' is a combination of the "Three C's":

(1) Competitors - their strengths, weaknesses, market position, and media strategy.

- Who are the product's and the brand's chief competitors?
- What is their market share compared to the product?
- What is the competition's marketing strategy? Where do they advertise?
- What kind of messaging and tone does the competition use?
- What kind of customers buy the competitor's products?

(2) Context for the campaign - political, social, and technological movements.

- How does the market currently see the product or its' category?
- Is there a cultural moment you can tap into to promote the product?
- What cultural values, ideas, or events can you align the product with?

- How is the economy doing? Is it a time for optimism? Or are people concerned with saving?

In a time of "personalization/customization" and "activist brands", businesses are increasingly aligning their products with social and cultural movements. Think of how you can tap into these biases or trends to create a better brand message.

(3) Category - how people see the product category.

- How do people perceive this product category? What factors affect this perception?
- Is there a change in people's perception of the category? Is this change positive or negative? What is leading this change?
- Are there any category conventions you can use in the campaign?

The Three C's have a marked influence on the campaign and must be considered in the creative brief.



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

4. Your Customers

Your customers are the most important ingredient of the creative brief and of your business. In developing your creative brief be prepared to convey your deep understanding of your target audience, its wants, desires, and tastes. To do this, start by describing the following:

- Demographic data (age, sex, income, marital status)
- Other data (interests, aspirations, lifestyles, habits)
- What they think about the product and the brand right now (“boring”, “fun”, “not for me”, etc.) from your formal or informal research, social listening, comment cards, etc.
- What you want them to think about your brand (“change perception”, “shift frame of reference”, etc.)
- Frustrations, aspirations, life

needs, and shared beliefs you can tap into in order to interest them in your product and convert them to your brand

The purpose of all this data is to understand how to ignite the sparks that will motivate your target audience to buy your product. This action should align with the campaign’s objectives.

5. The Campaign

Every campaign has a specific goal, message, and audience. It’s not uncommon for brands to run several campaigns at the same time with different messages in larger businesses, or if products have a seasonal lifespan. As the project and/or business owner, your job is to convey the goals for this project/campaign so that the creative team can define the campaign’s strategy and approach.

In summary ...

Together you should be able to answer the following questions

within the context of the creative brief:

- What is this campaign trying to do? Increase awareness? Increase traffic? Get more shares? Be as specific as possible.
- What customer action would make the campaign “successful”? Fill out a form? Click a link? Call the business?
- What specific challenge is the campaign trying to address? State this in a single sentence. Example: “We want to advertise new features to get more trials.”
- What is your media strategy? Where will the campaign run?
- What is the chief message for the entire campaign?

Your collective goal in completing the creative brief is to find the “driving idea” for the project/campaign and how best to leverage it to achieve the intended results.

Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at [VSJF.org](https://www.vsjf.org)



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[Learn More](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

Brand Ambassador Program

Why is this important?

A brand ambassador program is a strategy that lets you formally recruit your biggest advocates – people who love your brand and are already enthusiastically engaged with it – to be your long-term promotional partner. Usually, it involves mobilizing these evangelical ambassadors to accomplish a specific goal, such as increasing sales, driving conversions, improving social selling/engagement or building brand awareness and trust.

Brand ambassadors work closely with your business for long periods of time. In many ways, they serve as the face of your brand and an extension of your mission, vision and values – as well as the eyes and ears of the marketplace, providing you valuable insights on your product.

Effective brand ambassadors spread positive messages about your business, influence product sales, provide customer service and act as authentic voices and spokespeople for your brand. Importantly, brand ambassadors humanize your brand. Today more so than ever, consumers prefer to purchase products from people with whom they have a trusted relationship rather than faceless companies. A brand ambassadors' shared experience about a product or service is a source of information that consumers trust most.



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

The Benefits of a Brand Ambassador Program

A brand ambassador program formalizes all the details and expectations of the relationship, including any requirements, guidelines and incentives that have been agreed on. The benefits of a structured brand ambassador program include:

1. Brand Ambassadors are trusted.

According to a Nielsen report, [92%](#) of consumers believe recommendations from family and friends far more than direct messaging from a brand. Product recommendations that come after a personal experience, such as brand ambassador's first-hand testimonial, are one of the most trusted sources of information. Also 75% of consumers decide what to buy based on social media posts yet 96% of the people who discuss brands online do not follow that brand's online presence. If your business is tapping into a new target market, the right brand ambassador can help you do so authentically and in the quickest way possible.

As importantly, besides driving more visibility, brand awareness, and sales, brand ambassadorship can

be a very efficient way of improving your business' employer brand and, therefore, driving more high-quality candidates for your open positions.

2. Brand ambassadors promote your products authentically, without the formalized 'sales' pitch approach.

Brand ambassadors have purchased – and used – your products repeatedly. Therefore they offer their own perspective and words when sharing your brand with others. This genuine affinity translates to promotions that are infinitely more effective than press releases or sales pitches.

In fact, you may notice brand ambassadors will even promote products without prompting (because they honestly love your brand). It's this real, powerful testimony that leads to more sales conversions.

3. Brand ambassadors who are active on social media create and share content for you.

Shining the spotlight on your product is what a brand ambassador lives to do. As long as you furnish ambassadors with your latest products and information, you can sit back as they roll out fresh content in their

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

own distinct style. Their personal, unique content is posted and shared widely throughout their network expanding your reach in ways difficult to replicate. You can also repost the content on your own site and channels, demonstrating the diverse audiences you serve with your product.

4. Brand ambassadors influence - and even expand - your market.

Choose an ambassador with good communication skills and who has authority with an audience that is also your brand's target market. Even if a brand ambassador has a smaller audience, as long as they provide regular engagement, you

have the makings of a word-of-mouth campaign and the opportunity to expand your product reach into a community you may not be able to access on your own.

5. Brand ambassadors provide valuable user feedback, market intelligence and consumer insights.

Brand ambassadors are already fans of your product – which makes them great testers and listeners. They'll share what they love, as well as what they, and those in their circle, think you can improve on. This honest feedback helps iron out any rough spots before launching a new product to the general public as well as helps to hone your launch

strategy and product-to-market plan. Brand ambassadors can also help protect your reputation in the case of negative comments, defaming news or opinions about your company.

6. A brand ambassador program is cost-effective.

Whether you reward your ambassadors with free products or discounts, brand ambassador programs are still one of the most cost-effective marketing strategies. Payments should be based on results, meaning you only incur costs after you make a new sale or meet another goal.



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Signs your business is ready to start a brand ambassador program:

1 You are confident in your products and services. The best brand ambassadors already use your products and are eager to share them with their audience. Before you jumpstart your word of mouth with a formal brand ambassador program, make sure you iron out all the kinks and provide the highest quality possible – and that you have the capacity to communicate frequently with your brand ambassadors.

2 You have a happy customer base (and some are already sharing your product!). No matter how large your market, having happy and loyal customers shows you're doing something right – and others need to hear about it. In fact, many ambassadors start out as loyal customers who have shared your product with others, without you even asking them to. (Hint: These are the customers who you should look at when creating your brand ambassador program.)

3 You have the resources to create strong marketing campaigns. If you run a brand ambassador program, that isn't a replacement for your entire marketing strategy. While ambassador programs are a great source of content and promotions, brand ambassadors still need something to share. It's important to communicate frequently, maintain a lineup of engaging campaigns, and work with your ambassadors to maximize exposure.

4 You're active on social media. These days, the majority of marketing happens online and through social media – this is the same for brand ambassador programs. When an ambassador shares content about your brand, you want to be present on the platform so they can direct viewers to your business account. It's also a good opportunity to directly engage and answer any audience questions.

Furthermore, brand ambassador programs are highly recommended if your business also meets the following:

✔ You're in a highly competitive industry. Even with the best products, it can be difficult to stand out in a highly competitive industry where it's difficult to differentiate yourself. This is where affiliating yourself with an expert or notable personality can give you that edge you need. Brand ambassadors can help make your product stand out from competitors with their unique perspective and content.

✔ You're targeting a niche audience. While new brand ambassador programs are popping up across all sectors, it can be especially effective if you're targeting a niche audience (i.e., athlete, health-conscious, dietary restriction, senior, etc.) In niches, there are usually a few prominent individuals who stand out and audiences follow. These are the individuals to invite to your brand ambassador program.

✔ You have the capacity to manage your ambassadors. With so many benefits, ambassadors are a great addition to any marketing strategy. However, managing a brand ambassador program does require a bit of extra work depending on the type of brand ambassador program you establish.

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Types of Brand Ambassador Programs

Requirement-driven brand ambassador programs

This is what many marketers consider to be an official brand ambassador program. In this type of program, an ambassador must complete certain requirements on behalf of a brand within a specific time frame – say, 10 social media posts a month, or five brand mentions on their personal blog.

This type of ambassador program is very versatile and gives you direct control over your budget.

Plus, brands can use requirement-driven promotions across any industry, and can easily refresh the requirements to fit their overall marketing strategy.

Affiliate brand ambassador programs

Building on the marketing efforts of brand ambassadors, this type of affiliate program aims to ultimately generate purchases. Affiliate brand ambassadors promote products and services on their own platforms (usually social media and personal websites), including a unique affiliate link that attributes the sale back to them.

In exchange, they receive a commission for every completed purchase.

It's common to offer tiered incentives – the more sales an affiliate brand ambassador drives, the higher their commission percentage.

Informal brand ambassador programs

Informal brand ambassador programs are basically an open invite to anyone who loves your brand. With this type of program, there are no signed agreements or requirements. Often, there are no rewards, although some brands offer special incentives to their top-performing ambassadors.

An informal brand ambassador program is great for generating word of mouth and referrals. But without any guidance or structure, it can be hard to track and optimize where your new customers are coming from.



BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners

Employee ambassador programs

Employees already know what sets your business apart, are familiar with your products or services, and are committed to your company values. Why not use this to your advantage and recruit employees as your ambassadors?

If you choose to start an employee ambassador program, give your employees the freedom to use their own voice and methods to promote you (as you should with any other ambassador) with some training, guidance and 'best practices' to ensure the skills necessary to do relationship-building in their brand ambassador role. This will ensure that they are authentic in their promotion.

Employees who are proud to work for your company can spread the word about your organization's core company values and their own employee experience. As a significant percentage of employers say that they use social

and professional networks to recruit talent, leveraging your own employees to build interest and pools of the best talent available can be a highly productive recruitment strategy.

Customer ambassador programs

Customer ambassador programs tap into your customers' genuine love for your brand, and equip them to authentically promote it to people who trust them.

These programs can be formal (where your company handpicks ambassadors and trains them to promote you in the long term) or informal (where any customer can join and share your brand with others). This informal version is a more typical customer referral program that rewards your current customers for converting friends and family to your brand. Recruitment can range from targeted invitations to holding a contest to find the next brand ambassador.

Setting up a brand ambassador program in six, easy steps:

- 1. Set goals for your brand ambassador program**
- 2. Define your ideal brand ambassador**
- 3. Determine program criteria and guidelines**
- 4. Find and reach out to potential brand ambassadors**
- 5. Reward and recognize your brand ambassadors**
- 6. Track the progress of your brand ambassador program**

Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at [VSJF.org](https://www.vsjf.org)



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[Learn More](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

B2C/End Customer Persona Template

Persona 1	Persona Name: [Insert your primary persona's name here & picture]
Quote	What would they say about your product?
Background & Demographics	[Insert information about a prototypical customer. Age, Profession, Gender, Income, Marital status, etc.]
Identifiers (Psychographics)	[Where are they spending their time? Habits, Interests, Values, Likes, Dislikes]
Goals (Pain Point)	[What drives your persona to action? Why would they be looking for you in the first place?]
Challenges	[What are the major roadblocks getting in the way of your persona reaching their goals? Why would they not buy your product?]
Solution Provided	[Why would someone choose to buy from you?]
What sources do they use to collect information and make decisions?	[Who and what do they go to for information and validation?]

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at VSJF.org



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[**Learn More**](#)

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



MARKETING SERIES

B2B/Customer Persona Template

Persona 1	Persona Name: [Insert your primary persona's name here & picture]
Quote	What would they say about your product?
Position Information	[Insert information about a prototypical B2B persona. Title, role in the business & buying process, personal success targets, reporting structure.]
Organization Priorities	[Where are they spending their time? Habits, Interests, Values, Likes, Dislikes]
Goals (Pain Point)	[What drives your persona to action? Why would they be looking for you in the first place?]
Challenges	[What are the major roadblocks getting in the way of your persona reaching their goals? Why would they not buy your product?]
Solution Provided	[Why would someone choose to buy from you?]
What sources do they use to collect information and make decisions?	[Who and what do they go to for information and validation?]

BUSINESS SENSE

Next Level Tools for Entrepreneurs & Small Business Owners



Business Sense is a no-fluff source of information that gets right to the heart of what small business owners need: essential tools and informational resources to help their businesses grow. Written by our team of business coaches, this series shares their decades of experience in areas such as financials, operations, sales and marketing, human resources, leadership, and governance. Business Sense is designed to provide entrepreneurs and small business owners in various sectors, including agriculture, forestry, waste management, renewable energy, and environmental technology, with recommendations and practical advice to help their businesses not only survive but thrive.

Our business management coaching and Business Sense Resource Guide are designed to accelerate the growth of the enterprises we work with and expand the leadership capacity of the entrepreneurs who own and manage these businesses.

Let Us Help You and Your Business

The Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund provides tailored business management coaching, entrepreneurial support, and training to position Vermont-based entrepreneurs and small business owners in our designated market sectors for growth and long-term success. We partner with state government, private sector businesses and nonprofit organizations to build a thriving economic, social and ecological future for Vermont. Learn more at VSJF.org



Vermont Sustainable Jobs Fund

Accelerating Sustainable Economic Development

[**Learn More**](#)