

6 DIGITAL AREAS TO DEVELOP IN 2018

> Consumers of all ages, and all over the country, are going digital to shop — and retailers have to follow. Consumers spent more than \$5 billion online during Black Friday 2017 alone. More than \$2 billion of that money was spent using mobile devices.

Keeping ahead of this trend can be intimidating for small local businesses. Fortunately, you can tackle the goal in stages. Here are six recommended resolutions for 2018, each of which will help you catch more electronic business this year and in the future.

1. Take Photos of EVERYTHING.

Consumers expect accurate photos of what they purchase (and send to loved ones). You also need to capture your creations to post them on your website and/or social media.

Resolution: Set up a photo studio in your shop. You'll need a light cube for a pop-up studio (about \$40-60); three utility light fixtures with stands (\$30); and three 100w equivalent LED lightbulbs (\$30). You won't need a fancy camera. A smartphone is the way to go, especially if you open a Google Photos account, which is free, has unlimited storage and lets you access photos from any device quickly. To set up Google Photos, create a gmail account using your shop name, such as RenatosFlowers@gmail.com. Then, download the Google Photos App on your smartphone.

2. Build Your Brand Through Video.

More than 8 billion videos are watched on Facebook every day. Five billion videos are viewed each day on YouTube.

Resolution: Capture more video. Use the same Gmail address you created for Google Photos to start your YouTube channel. Again, your smartphone is a great option. Practice taking single take, one-and-done videos of 30 seconds to a minute. The only edits you'll need to perform are at the beginning and end. Give a tour of your shop, talk about your daily specials, share care and handling information, or broadcast a design demonstration.

Upload every video to YouTube and Facebook. When you feel more confident, try a live video on either site.

3. Start a Google AdWords Account.

If you aren't advertising on Google, competitors are siphoning your business. Ads appear above organic listings and, unfortunately, competitors may legally use your business name as a keyword. How many of your customers have clicked on one of those ads, believing it to be your business? The few you heard from probably weren't happy. Think about those who didn't call.

Resolution: Start advertising! Begin with a budget of \$150 a month using your business name as a keyword. You'll get that \$150 back three times within two months. Expand your AdWords investment to capture searches for general terms such as "florist, flowers, your city, state."

4. Advertise on Facebook.

The largest social media outlet could be considered its own Internet, with more than 2 billion users you can market to by gender, age, interests and a lot of other determining factors.

Resolution: Start Facebook Ads advertising to grow segments of your business, specifically weddings and events. When you dive into the geography, demographics and interests, you'll want to target potential brides in your area with interest in "weddings," "wedding flowers," etc.

5. Explore Voice Technologies.

Consumers already relay commands to iPhone's Siri, Samsung's Bixby and Android devices' Google Assistant. Now, with Google Home and Amazon's Echo devices, they can make purchases in the comfort of their home or business, using just their voice.

Resolution: Use Siri, Bixby and Google Assistant on your phone and buy an Alexa or Google Home device for the home. Discover how you can ask questions, control the house lights remotely, create lists or ask for directions. The experience is already changing the way consumers live and purchase. You need to understand what's happening.



SOMETHING NEW Augmented reality is a trend more retailers are exploring in 2018.

6. Discover Augmented Reality.

You've seen those funky photos of people with dog or cat noses or switched faces. Or you may have heard of last year's Pokémon Go craze. These all rely on augmented reality, which allows you to use your smartphone camera and screen to add virtual elements to the display.

Resolution: Play around. Even if you're not in the market to buy furniture, download mobile apps such as those from IKEA and Wayfair, which allow customers to virtually place furniture within a room space. Dive into the augmented reality features of Snapchat, Facebook Messenger, Google Hangouts or Instagram. 📍

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